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.
Easter Sunday arrived later than usual this year. Here, in South Bend, it's as though Spring is delaying its arrival, also. The trees are finally leafing out and the early flowers are finally making their appearance as we enter into the Easter season. All around us are the signs of new beginnings.

Two new beginnings we are celebrating at this time are the ordinations of Rev. Paul Ybarra, C.S.C. and Rev. John Britto Antony, C.S.C. Fr. Ybarra hails from Southern California and has most recently been serving at St. Ignatius Martyr parish in Austin, TX. Fr. Antony is from India, where he spent over two decades as a Holy Cross brother before answering the call to the priesthood. We are grateful for the many gifts they bring to the Holy Cross community and the Church, especially in the field of education.

Another new beginning we look to with great anticipation is the merger of the Eastern Province of Holy Cross into the Indiana Province of Holy Cross. This merger has been in discussion for many years with final approval coming in July 2011. Much prayerful planning has gone into this momentous step, and I ask your continued prayers as our two Provinces join in mission to create the United States Province of Priests and Brothers.

We celebrate new life this Easter season as we remember the resurrection of our Lord and the new life he promises us. “Resurrection for us is a daily event,” our constitution states. But resurrection cannot occur without death. This means that each day we face a dying to oneself, an acceptance of our own humanity and a release of that false sense that we are in control. Daily we must surrender, die to ourselves and trust in God’s Divine Providence for that is how we will experience resurrection.

Fr. Charlie Kohlerman, C.S.C., describes a personal resurrection story. He delves into the necessity of dying in order to fully experience resurrection. As he battled alcoholism, he discovered resurrection through the support of his brothers in Holy Cross, for “they were the conduits of God’s grace and love for (him). They helped (him) to find (his) way through this valley of death to (his) own resurrection.

Many of those served by Holy Cross carry heavy crosses of poverty, homelessness, addiction or mental illness. Others experience hopelessness from a slow disintegration of their relationship with God and family. Fr. Eric Schimmel, C.S.C. shares some resurrection stories from his experiences at André House in Phoenix, where the forgotten members of society can go to find hope and an opportunity to start over.

There are many who overcome the death of addictions, illness, poverty and hopelessness and experience resurrection, and, as Fr. Charlie so aptly states, “These surely are resurrection stories, but I suspect that most of us would identify more readily with transformations of our spiritual and moral lives, transformations that stem from the heart and soul of ourselves and others.”

May God bless us all as we journey along our path of life. May our eyes be opened so we may experience the resurrected Christ as his disciples did on the road to Emmaus. And may God give us the strength and insight to guide others along the same path so we may walk in solidarity with them to a new life of hope.
Reflections on the meaning of Easter...

Resurrection Stories
by Rev. Charlie Kohlernan, C.S.C.

When we think of the Resurrection of Jesus, we are drawn to His Passion and Death which not only preceded His Resurrection but were an essential element of it. There would be no Easter without the Passion and no Easter without His death on the Cross.

As we have walked through the season of Lent in preparation for Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection we have meditated and reflected on the journey of Jesus. We have experienced times of intense joy and other times of intense sorrow and rejection, and at all times His knowing that He would ultimately suffer and die for our sins. Such was the great love of His Father, Himself, and of the Holy Spirit for each of us by name.

Jesus wanted us to understand that His life here on earth mirrored ours in all things except sin and that in our lives there would be “resurrection stories” that we too would suffer and bear our crosses.

“He who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of Me.” Matthew 10:38

In the Gospel stories we find a number of resurrection stories and one such example is the parable of the Prodigal Son. We know how the Prodigal Son took his inheritance and squandered it. Then when he was destitute, suffering from hunger and rejection, walking close to the valley of death, he turned back to his father for forgiveness and reconciliation, and returned home. He returned to his father who knew he would welcome him with generosity and compassion. And when the elder son became angry over the generosity of his father, the father said, “But we had to celebrate and rejoice! This brother of yours was dead, and has come back to life. He was lost and is found.” Luke 15:32

Like the parable of the prodigal son, the story of Jesus’ resurrection reflects the patterns of our own lives. It is spun out of the fabric of our own existence. In this life of ours there are all those mysterious twisting and turnings that lead from life through the valley of the shadow of death toward a new creation. And always following, the joyous homecoming, the resurrection to new life.

Our resurrection stories are our encounters with the risen, living, real, presence of Jesus living among and within us. Our resurrection stories are often when we drift in our relationship with Jesus and lose our spiritual and moral bearings. Our resurrection stories often involve a loss of hope as we find ourselves exhausted, seemingly depleted of all resources resulting from a crisis in our lives or just a gradual loss of our spiritual energies, our faith. Our resurrection stories might involve vocations, marriage, careers, children, loss of jobs, addictions, deaths and so many other aspects of our daily living.

As a Holy Cross priest, I am often reminded of a passage from the Constitutions of Holy Cross, which are the guidelines of our lives as religious and priests:

“Some of the most decisive transformations are God’s gracious gift to us when we conform to His will but when we have gravely failed him. However the benefits of our formation may disintegrate, however we may fail, we need the supportive confrontation and sensitive encouragement of our confreres for us to be rehabilitated. This is the way some of the wisest and strongest men in our community have, by God’s grace, been raised up among us.”

Holy Cross Constitutions, Constitution 6.

Early in my religious life and priesthood, I found myself drifting away from my brothers in Holy Cross. Something was causing my resolve as a religious and priest to be undermined. I fulfilled the duties of my ministry; but I did so mostly outwardly and for show. I was decaying inside and the goodness and graces of my formation were slowing vanishing. I was not the person, priest, and religious that I wanted to be, but I was helpless to do anything about my dilemma. I was suffering from the addiction of alcoholism. I was walking in my own valley of death.

God, however, would not cease loving or pursuing me, much like the story of the Prodigal Son, and would not let me be destroyed by my grave failure to conform to His will. My brothers in Holy Cross sensed my dilemma and realized I was struggling with addiction. They confronted me with sensitive but tough love, getting me into treatment and onto the path of recovery. They showed me what community and commitment to each other really means: we stand by each other no matter how much we may have failed. They were the conduits of God’s grace and love for me. They helped me to find my way through this valley of death to my own resurrection, to rekindle my relationship with Jesus.

My addiction constituted a major resurrection story in my life, but was certainly not the only one. There is daily dying to self and rising to new life in my relationship to Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit. There is a daily understanding of the transience of life and the need to place my total trust in Divine Providence. I need to remember that what God asks me to do will sometimes appear illogical and incomprehensible. Faith and trust based in hope is our only path in our journey with Jesus, and these can be acquired only through our passion and suffering united with His.

We are all challenged to confront and assist those whom God places in our care and in our lives when they have fallen and need help in finding their way back to Him. From our weaknesses and failures from our own passion, death and resurrection we can gain great strength and experience to share with those with whom we walk the journey to Him. We can be the instruments of “resurrection” in the lives of others.

In the gospel stories, we often find
Greek Orthodox icon of Christ's resurrection, Thessalonica, Greece.
“resurrection stories” stemming from Jesus’ healing of lepers, casting out of demons, raising people from the dead, but all are reminded that it was “faith” that made them whole. We often associate resurrection stories with healing miracles, with physical transformations from sickness and disease. These surely are resurrection stories, but I suspect that most of us would identify more readily with transformations of our spiritual and moral lives, transformations that stem from the heart and soul of ourselves and others.

The Constitutions of Holy Cross which I referenced above tell us, “Resurrection for us is a daily event. We have stood watch with persons dying in peace; we have witnessed wonderful reconciliations; we have known the forgiveness of those who misuse their neighbor; we have seen heartbreak and defeat lead to a transformed life; we have heard the conscience of an entire church stir; we have marveled at the resurrection of justice. We know that we walk by Easter’s first light, and it makes us long for its fullness.”

Holy Cross Constitutions, Constitution 8

In the 47 plus years of my priesthood, I have been privileged to witness many resurrection stories, many falling into the categories listed in our Constitution 8 mentioned above. Because I am in recovery, I have had the great privilege of walking with others in stages of addiction and recovery, giving retreats, workshops and seminars to various groups, both 12 step and annual retreats for priests, religious, and lay. And invariably, the resurrection stories are encounters with the risen, living, real, presence of Jesus living among and within us and are often when we drift in our relationship with Jesus and lose our spiritual and moral bearings.

I think, however, that the greatest and most humbling experiences of resurrection stories come from walking with those who are dying, those who are bringing closure to their lives and preparing to “go home to God.” In my ministries, I have been privileged to be with many of these beautiful souls as they walk the final stages of their journey, fulfilling their vocation and purpose here on this earth. At this stage of life, trying to bring everything together, assessing one’s journey in relationship with Jesus can be confusing and sometimes overwhelming. Our sins can flood us with guilt, our sense of our imperfections in God’s eyes can be totally paralyzing. These can be frightening times.

But again, referring to our Holy Cross Constitutions, specifically Constitution 8, “The Cross, Our Hope.”, we read, “But we do not grieve as men without hope, for Christ the Lord has risen to die no more. He has taken us into the mystery and the grace of this life that springs up from death. If we, like him encounter and accept suffering in our discipleship, we will move without awkwardness among others who suffer. We must be men with hope to bring. There is no failure the Lord’s love cannot reverse, no humiliation he cannot exchange for blessing, no anger he cannot dissolve, no routine he cannot transfigure. All is swallowed up in victory. He has nothing but gifts to offer. It remains only for us to find how even the cross can be borne as a gift.”

In this constitution, the statement “it remains only for us to find how even the cross can be borne as a gift” is our direct link to the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. We are the recipients of the fruits of Christ’s Passion and Death anchored by His Resurrection and this inclusion into the risen, living, real, presence of Jesus living among and within us is our reason and the source of our hope that our encounter with the Divine through Jesus will propel us into a share of the eternal life with God.

As mentioned above, “Resurrection for us is a daily event.” Because we priests, brothers and sisters of Holy Cross have the Cross as our model and our standard, and profess “Ave Crux, Spes Unica” (Hail to the Cross, our Only Hope), we are uniquely positioned to be men and women of great hope, men and women with hope to bring.

The Congregation of Holy Cross is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, and constitution 8 goes on to say: “There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother Mary, who knew grief and was a lady of Sorrows. She is our special patroness, a woman who bore much she could not understand and who stood fast. To her many sons and daughters, whose devotions ought to bring them often to her side, she tells much of this daily cross and its daily hope.”

Mary is our patroness and guides us walking with her, along the path of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of her Son, Jesus. All of us have a “resurrection story” and probably many. All of us have found ourselves drifting in our relationship with Jesus from time to time and losing our spiritual and moral bearings. As mentioned above, our resurrection stories often involve a loss of hope as we find ourselves exhausted, seemingly depleted of all resources resulting from a crisis in our lives or just a gradual loss of our spiritual energies, our faith.

And yet, we are not without hope. hope solidly based in the love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness that flowed with Christ’s blood as it flowed from His side on the Cross and authenticated by His Resurrection. We cannot truly comprehend the Paschal Mystery we celebrate at Easter until we have experienced the passion, the death, and the empty tomb more directly in our own lives.

Blessed Basil Moreau, the Founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross wrote to his sons and daughters in Holy Cross, “The Savior gently rebuked His Apostles for being so slow in believing the Resurrection. He then opened to them a vast field for their zealous efforts. He promised them that He was going to remain with them and with all of His future disciples until the end of time.”
Plain!Speaking
by Rev. Herbert C. Yost, C.S.C.

What does the Church teach about personal judgment? Is it at the moment of death? What about a non-repentant person? Why do we pray or have Masses for a condemned soul? I realize only God can judge, but this has always been a puzzle for me. PS: I pray for the faithful and unfaithful departed.

DV from California

That was an interesting question. It is a church doctrine that at the moment of death, the soul appears before God to be justly judged, and immediately thereafter be consigned to purgatory, hell, or heaven. What I found interesting is there has never been a formal, infallible definition of this doctrine. Popes have written on it, but the last major papal writing was in the Papal Bull Benedictus Deus of Pope Benedict XII, in 1336!!! The Catechism of the Catholic Church is circumspect when it comes to the particular judgment: Each man (sic) receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven through a purification or immediately, or immediate and everlasting damnation. (1022).

Based on some New Testament passages, many Christians believe the dead are judged immediately after death to receive peace or torment. In Luke 16:19-31, it appears Christ represents Lazarus and Dives as receiving their respective rewards immediately after death. Jesus promised the penitent thief, “This day you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). There are many references to judgment in the Bible, but outside of those two statements from Luke, no one really speaks of the timing of the Particular Judgment.

Also of interest is the fact that many of the early Church Fathers believed that after death, the soul went to kind of a waiting room (for lack of a better term). There they would wait till the Last Judgment when the world ended. At that time they would definitively be sent to heaven or hell. This is the root of that statement in the Nicene Creed where we say that “Jesus descended into hell, and on the third day he rose again.”

Why the uncertainty? No one really knows what happens after death in terms of judgment. Christians believe that something happens, but no one can speak with certainty. You asked about Masses for a person who is already condemned. We don’t know that anyone has been condemned. We don’t know if one has repented or not. The Church has definitively said that some people are in heaven (the canonized saints), but has never said that anyone is definitively in purgatory or hell.

It’s that uncertainty which is behind praying for the dead, or having Masses offered for the repose of someone’s soul. This is a little hard to explain, but let’s start with our belief that God is beyond time. There are no years, months, or days with God, no past, present or future. This being so, God can take Masses and prayers we offer after a person’s death and apply those graces to the individual’s lifetime before death. The more the person cooperates with those graces, the better the chances for a peaceful and happy judgment.

Back to the moment of judgment. I have my own reflection about that. Thomas Aquinas says that we cannot fully love what we do not know. This side of heaven, there is no way we can fully know God. In addition, I look at the way Jesus treated the apostles after the resurrection. Instead of reaming them for their cowardice, he says, “Peace be with you.” And then there is the scene at the Sea of Tiberias, where Jesus three times asks Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”

My own Judgment scenario is this: at the moment of death we will come before the Lord and for the first time know him completely. We will be totally flabbergasted at his immense mercy and compassion. And yes, there may be deep shame in remembering our sinfulness. But, face-to-face with that immense love, we intuitively know there’s no way we can excuse our sinfulness. This is, I believe, the moment of purgatory and it is not going to be fun. God’s justice demands accountability and acceptance of responsibility. But then will come the question: “Now that you have experienced me in my fullness, do you love me? Do you want to spend eternity with me?” That’s when we make our choice; it’s not set in stone at the moment of death. We have one more chance.

It’s possible that a sin-hardened soul will say “No!”, and thus go to whatever Hell consists of. But I have a sneaking suspicion Hell is very thinly populated. How can anyone resist the experience of unconditional love and merciful acceptance? I also suspect that God doesn’t give up and continues trying to win over the Hell-bound soul. In some way, known only to God, our prayers for the “unfaithful departed” (to use your words) do help the process.

Questions for Fr. Herb? Send to: Plain!Speaking
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Indiana Province P.O. Box 765
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When I mention to people that I work at André House, a place of hospitality in Phoenix providing basic needs to people who are homeless, many people look at me with serious faces and say something along the lines of, “That must be difficult work,” or “God bless you for taking on such a ministry.” I appreciate the blessings, so please keep them coming. But I also feel like my ministry is a blessing. Sure, I interact with people carrying heavy crosses, some imposed by others and some self-inflicted. But I also get to witness and to be part of many resurrection moments. As a member of Holy Cross, I truly believe our Constitutions that say, “Resurrection for us is a daily event...we have witnessed wonderful reconciliations; we have known the forgiveness of those who misuse their neighbor; we have seen heartbreak and defeat lead to a transformed life... We know that we walk by Easter’s first light, and it makes us long for its fullness.” I want to share a couple stories of resurrection with you here.

One story took place several years before I came to André House, but when I heard it I knew I had to write it down. A woman came to us wanting to live in our transitional housing program. When she spoke to the Director and a staff member to interview for the house, she admitted that she was a prostitute and was an alcoholic who had not been sober for anywhere near the usual time we require. However, she was quite sincere about desiring to change her life - and made that emphatically known. The staff at the time decided to bend the rules and give her a chance. She moved out of our transitional house some time later, still sober, with a legitimate job, and moved into her own apartment. We hear that she is still doing well.

In my time here, we had a young man named Chris. He also stayed with us in our transitional housing program. His house was foreclosed and he was in between jobs even though he had already applied to over 150 jobs that year. Those issues by themselves can be enough to get someone down, but he also had a huge medical debt hanging over his head. Chris settled in well at the house, and continued his job search in earnest. Although he looked for various types of jobs, his preference was something in his professional field as he held a Master’s degree. Chris eventually did find work in his field and every once in a while still checks in on us.

Not all resurrections occur when someone moves out of our transitional houses. Michael, for example, was quite the regular at our main building. He would sometimes join us for Mass in the morning, hang
around maybe using the phone in our office, or get clothes from the clothes closet, take a shower, or just hang in the parking lot as a place that was safe from the constant temptation of dealers on the street outside. Mike often would volunteer to clean the parking lot before and after dinner. He, too, has found steady employment, even in this economy. He also has found his own apartment with his girlfriend, and checks in to see how we are doing from time to time.

Not all resurrections happen because someone moved out of our neighborhood and now have their own apartment, etc. I treasure the resurrection moments like when I am working in our office where guests make phone calls for free and I hear the joy in John's voice as he speaks to his children. He got trapped here in Phoenix for reasons he has not shared completely with me. I do know that the medical - and maybe legal - issues don't let him leave the state for another two months. But he loves to come in once a week to use our phone when he knows that his wife and children will be home back East, and he counts the days when he will be able to return to them.

I rejoice in the resurrection moments when someone comes in with their feet swollen from walking and hurting from blisters because their shoes are too tight, and we happen to have the perfect size shoe for this person in the clothing closet. We have resurrection moments when people who were getting on each other's nerves on the streets in the 100+ degree weather sit down at table together and share a meal during our evening soup line.

I experience resurrection when volunteers come to André House for the first time scared about what they will find as they have never actually spent time around “the homeless”, yet these volunteers leave the evening with a smile. Resurrection is fun to see when these volunteers recognize that “the homeless” are actually people first who are homeless now, but people who can show gratefulness, and generosity.

Resurrection indeed is a daily event, even in a place known to be laden with crosses. I feel Christ challenging me to believe this truth of our faith, to have the eyes to see it, and the voice to proclaim it.

André House
Quick Facts

In 2010 we served over 171,000 meals. We average approximately 550 meals a night, some nights we serve close to 700.

In 2010 we had about 30 people stay with us in our transitional housing program. It is small so we can stay more personal. People stay with us, on average, about 2 months. Some much longer. We currently have 6 people staying with us.

In 2010 we gave out over 3,100 blankets.

We average 140 people a week getting clothes from our clothing closet.

We average 140-150 showers each week.

We launder clothes for 35 people each week.

We average 12 international calls each month for free.

We average over 30 free phone calls a day, about half long distance.

In 2010 we gave out 263 boot vouchers at $45/voucher so people can purchase work shoes/boots.

To learn more, visit the André House website at www.andrehouse.org.
Notre Dame/South Bend

Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C., President Emeritus of the University of Notre Dame, was recently honored by Catholic Charities USA. The 100-year-old social services organization has presented Fr. Hesburgh with its recently-commissioned Centennial Medal, which recognizes the valuable contributions of individuals and organizations to the reduction of poverty in the United States. Agency President and CEO, Rev. Larry Snyder, noted that Fr. Hesburgh’s life has been one of devotion to education and service to his church.

The National Catholic Education Association has awarded Rev. Neil Wack, C.S.C., the distinguished Pastor Award for his outstanding support of Catholic education at Christ the King School in South Bend, Indiana. Since taking the helm at Christ the King Parish in 2007, Fr. Wack has done much for the Parish and the School.

In 2008 Christ the King School was recognized nationally by the U.S. Dept. of Education, earning the status of Blue Ribbon School. Following this, a five-year plan was enacted for school improvement to make the school even better; to take the school from “good to great.”

The five-year plan for school improvement was enacted, parish debt was eliminated, a bullying prevention program was introduced, and Fr. Wack personally raised funds for a safe new playground for the students. His commitment to the school and to the students is shown daily. He begins every school day in the parking lot, greeting students and parents, he is frequently seen in the classrooms and hallways, and is the regular presider at all-school Masses. To raise funds for the new playground, he walked more than 26 miles in a marathon. Following the success of this fund-raiser, Fr. Wack pulled on his work gloves and worked side by side with parishioners, school parents and contractors to install the playground equipment.

Fr. Wack, who is 1984 graduate of the school says, “The school is seen as the biggest ministry at our parish. And that helps everyone to get behind it and helps the future of our world.”

Rev. Kevin Grove, C.S.C., associate pastor at Christ the King parish, has been awarded a Gates Cambridge Trust scholarship. The scholarship, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, provides awards for full-time graduate study and research at the University of Cambridge. Fr. Grove is among 30 successful scholarship applicants selected from a field of 800. Fr. Grove intends to study philosophical theology while at Cambridge.

Rev. Mr. Paul M. Ybarra, C.S.C., and Rev. Mr. John Britto Antony, C.S.C. were ordained to the priesthood on Saturday, April 30th at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart by Most Reverend Daniel Jenky C.S.C., Bishop of Peoria, Illinois. Fr. Paul has been serving at St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin, Texas and Fr. John has been serving in a parish in Bennington, Vermont.

Departments

Portland


The Most Reverend John Vlazny, Archbishop of Portland, has decreed a name change for the parish formerly known as St. Vincent de Paul Downtown Chapel in Portland. To honor the canonization of Blessed Brother André, the parish will now take the name of St. André Bessette Church.

Degrees Conferred

Congratulations to Rev. Jeffrey Cooper, C.S.C. who will receive his Ph.D. from the Graduate Theological Union in May. The title of his dissertation was “Eckhart’s Body: Tracing the Evolution of a Chiasmic Spirituality.” This fall, Fr. Cooper will be serving as an assistant professor of theology at the University of Portland, focusing on the area of Christian Spirituality.

And congratulations to Rev. Randy Rentner, C.S.C. who has received his Ph.D. at Columbia University. Fr. Rentner is serving as an assistant professor at the University of Portland, where he is the first Holy Cross religious to be a member of the School of Education there.

Austin

Rev. Bill Wack, C.S.C. (brother of Fr. Neil Wack – see above!) is serving as pastor at St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin, Texas. In a recent edition of Catholic Spirit, the official publication of the Diocese of Austin, there was a feature on Fr. Bill, profiling his background and his journey to the priesthood.
Our Five Pillars

- Appropriate Stewardship of the Gifts We Receive
- Formation and Education of our Brothers
- Ministry to the Poor and Oppressed in the United States and Abroad
- Care for Our Elder and Infirmed Brothers
- Ongoing Facility Requirements to Serve our Mission

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Thank You.
Portrayed at the Downtown Chapel, Portland Oregon.