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,

It is a fact of life that we will all, God willing, age.

As I visit with the more senior members of our Holy Cross community, it occurs to me that someone forgot to tell these men of this fact. Even in their seventies, eighties and older, they remain young in heart and spirit, vital members of our community. It is not unusual for one of our older priests to say, “I wouldn’t think of retiring.” They heard and answered the call to religious life as young men and they continue to answer yes to this call to serve where they are needed.

The stories of their lives as priests could fill volumes and yet they continue to write new stories each year. Some have spent their ministerial lives walking in solidarity with people in the poorest areas of the world, such as Bangladesh, East Africa and Chile. Others have dedicated their service to parishes, schools and universities in the United States, sowing the seeds of hope and building relationships to create a stronger Church. They have served as educators, mentors, counselors, guided by the Holy Spirit, answering the call to fulfill their mission as witnesses of Christ’s love, proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

A life dedicated to such a purpose deserves the best of care as age and ability force a change in lifestyle and ministry. Throughout this issue of Pillars, we focus attention on caring for our elder and retired brothers in Holy Cross, and reflect on how our friends, our donors, have been instrumental in helping us care for these special and holy men.

In this issue, you will learn about Holy Cross House, our community dedicated to serving our elder brothers, as well as those from other Holy Cross Provinces in the United States. I also want to update you on the status of renovations at Fatima Retreat Center where our senior, yet quite active religious, will soon reside. You’ll enjoy reading the story of Jerry and Dorene Hammes, a couple that demonstrates a special devotion to Holy Cross, particularly our senior members, and lastly, you are invited to join us in celebration of our 50 and 25 year Jubilarians.

When I reflect on the long and fruitful lives of these men, I realize what an awesome responsibility they have handed on to us ... a responsibility to not only provide caring support for them in their golden years, but also to sustain and build on the ministries they worked so diligently to create and nurture. I also reflect on how much you, as part of our mission, have contributed to help us meet these wonderful responsibilities.

God’s blessings!

(Rev.) David T. Tyson, C.S.C.
Provincial Superior
HOLY CROSS HOUSE: THE JOURNEY FULFILLING THE SPIRIT

REV. CHARLES W. KOHLERMAN, C.S.C., SUPERIOR

The footsteps of those men who called us to walk in their company left deep prints, as of men carrying heavy burdens. But they did not trudge; they strode. For they had hope. It is the Lord Jesus calling us, “Come follow me.” (Constitutions of Holy Cross, Constitution 8, The Cross, Our Hope)

Holy Cross House

As young men who are candidates for religious life in the Congregation of Holy Cross study and are tutored in the Constitutions, traditions, life and history of the Congregation, these are the last words we read in the Constitutions of our community. We are called, invited to walk in the footsteps of the men who have gone before us. We are challenged to walk together learning from the “deep prints”, the history and experiences of those who “strode” before us, filled with the Holy Spirit and letting the Spirit unfold within us and within our ministries. We are becoming aware that we are instruments of God and God’s work among his beloved people.

In our journey through our lives of active ministry, the Spirit continues to unfold, but often with some difficulty. As we become more involved in our work, our prayer life and our journey with God may become less prominent and apparent to us as we strive to care for the flock that God, Church, and Community entrust to us.

The years and the experience of our journey continue, and we begin to realize our dependence more and more on God and the Spirit and, slowly, we begin to appreciate, more fully, our need to accept a life of less active ministry. It is a life where we begin to embrace the reality that we need to share our gift of ministering to others by being ministered to in a religious environment. The setting at Holy Cross House is deeply conducive and supportive of our maturing religious life, our continuing journey in “hope”.

When our need for medical, physical, or psychological assistance warrants, we turn to a very special place, an environment of prayer and fulfillment of the Spirit, Holy Cross House. Here we accept the most precious ministry of our religious lives, the ministry of prayer and of mentorship. We are now called to let go of our “active” ministry among God’s beloved people, and are invited to a deeper participation in the journey with God. We are asked to pray for God’s people, but even more, to reflect and discern the deep meaning of the wisdom and experience that God has given to us in our “active” ministry so that we can share these gifts with those who follow us as they stride in our company. This is a time when we are asked to become special partners with God in dispensing God’s love for all through prayer and meditation.

Our days are centered on the Eucharistic liturgy as we gather with the people of God in worship and praise. We remember those for whom and with whom we minister including our community, friends, relatives and benefactors.

This special place, this spiritual oasis, Holy Cross House, is a dynamic religious home for our “elders” and others in need of special care, as we walk the journey of fulfillment of the Spirit in our lives and those entrusted to us by God in the ministry of prayer and mentorship.  

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Holy Cross House: the Journey Fulflling the Spirit

Continued from Page 2

It is a outstanding facility where the daily needs of all of the brothers and priests are met to the degree possible. The physical, medical, psychological, spiritual, and social needs of each of our men is addressed so that we can continue the work God called us to do at the beginning of this journey.

Holy Cross House is under the direction of a Religious Superior in partnership with a spiritual team consisting of an Assistant Superior and a Spiritual Director and an administrative team comprising an Administrator, Director of Nursing, and Physical Therapist. Holy Cross House is staffed 24/7 by an incredible, committed staff of nurses, nursing assistants, activities director, housekeeping staff, maintenance staff, and food service personnel. The medical director of Holy Cross House is a doctor, board certified in Geriatric Medicine and a member of the team at the local Catholic Hospital who oversees the Doctor Residency Program. As a consequence, we are blessed to have the 3rd year residents working with the men at Holy Cross House on an ongoing basis.

Holy Cross House also has an outpatient clinic which serves the members of the Indiana Province who are actively engaged in ministry. We provide rehabilitation services to our men on an inpatient and outpatient basis through our physical therapy unit incorporating a new therapy pool to assist stroke, orthopedic, arthritic, and other patients who can benefit from such therapy, or water aerobic exercise.

The ongoing effort of the team here at Holy Cross House is to be ever vigilant for the wellness of all of the members of the community sharing our resources to all members, regardless of age, medical condition or location of ministry. The resources of Holy Cross House are being expanded to include a data base of medical information that can be shared with community leadership, medical facilities and personnel throughout the country and the world as needed.

As our brothers come to join us here at Holy Cross House our hope is that they will be able to continue to grow and use their talents to the degree possible, continuing their ministry within the scope possible to them at this time in their lives. It is our further hope that we will have the resources available to assist them in the fulfillment of the Spirit within their lives and that we will always respect the precious gift that they are to all of us at this stage of their journey.

All of these efforts find their roots in the Constitutions, traditions, and history of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Our constitutions tell us that; 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 Holy Cross, Constitution 2, Mission)

At Holy Cross House the men of Holy Cross find the fulfillment of the Spirit within their lives, the ultimate meaning of Jesus saying to each of us, “Come follow me.”
GIVING BACK - A LIFELONG HISTORY WITH HOLY CROSS

Dorene and Jerry Hammes share a history with Holy Cross nearly three-quarters of a century long.

Jerry first encountered Holy Cross in 1934 when a former employee of his father’s automobile dealership, Romy Hammes Ford, was hired as secretary to Fr. John O’Hara, C.S.C., newly elected president of the University of Notre Dame.

For Dorene, it began a few years later at Immaculate Conception School in Morris, Illinois, where she was taught by Sisters of the Holy Cross.

Since then, their lives have been intertwined with Holy Cross, and their personal values, their personal missions, have evolved in union with those of the Holy Cross community.

Dorene and Jerry could fill volumes with stories of their part in the history of Holy Cross. At the core of each story is a mutual respect, admiration, and a genuine spirit of gratitude that has enabled and supported both Holy Cross and the Hammes.

This spirit is what prompted the Hammes to give of themselves to the Priests of Holy Cross, and they have done so in virtually every facet of Holy Cross’ ministry, from its parishes and formation program to buildings and caring for retired and elder religious.

Why such selfless giving? Dorene and Jerry describe it as giving back, of being able to do something for a group of men who have given so much to Dorene, Jerry and the world. While they have given back to Holy Cross in many ways, through many ministries, and for many years, their recent focus has been on Holy Cross House.

Dorene and Jerry believe that providing for the proper care of our elder and retired priests is nothing less than these men deserve. Each man has committed his life to Christ and to the Church, and as they age and their ministries change, they should be supported with dignified, spiritual and professional care, such that Holy Cross House provides.

The Hammes’ presence in Holy Cross resounds in the daily lives of many of our religious, particularly those at Holy Cross House. Equally, the charism of Holy Cross reverberates in the compassionate spirits of Jerry and Dorene.

To learn more about Dorene and Jerry’s legacy with Holy Cross, and other highlights of their lives, visit their web site at www.JerryHammes.com.

Fr. Robert Hoffman, C.S.C., has been a faithful witness of Christ’s love for over 58 years. Since his ordination in June 1947 he has served the Church and the people of God in Bangladesh and in the United States. With each encounter, with each new assignment, Fr. Hoffman proceeded with the words of Isaiah embedded in his heart, “Fear not, for I am with you.”

There are many stories of Fr. Hoffman’s ministry he has detailed in his later years, stories from his 19 years in missionary service in Bangladesh, of his life as a hospital chaplain, and as a parish priest. One can only imagine the countless number of experiences, challenges and, opportunities that have been part of his life.

And yet, with a life rich in ministry and diversity, a life that has been a testament to God’s love, Fr. Hoffman recently faced one of the most difficult challenges of his adult life—a stroke.

In 2002, while celebrating Mass, Fr. Hoffman had a stroke. It wasn’t completely debilitating, the full effects were not immediate, but in a matter of days it was significant enough to cause a complete change in Fr. Hoffman’s life and in his ministry. He was admitted to Holy Cross House.

As Fr. Hoffman reflects on his time at Holy Cross House, he describes two distinct and important characteristics of the house. On one hand, it provided then, and continues to provide, the best, most appropriate and tailored care he could ever hope to receive. He attributes the significant progress he made to the physicians and staff supporting his recovery and rehabilitation.

Fr. Hoffman describes the other important characteristic as the “Spirit of the House”, the fact that Holy Cross House is a house of prayer and spiritual development, and this spirit permeates not just the religious residing there, but exists in every therapist, nurse, and support staff employed by Holy Cross House.

Combined, the physical and spiritual care create an environment of faith, hope, and love supporting Fr. Hoffman and all of the Holy Cross religious through any stage of their living and dying.

In writing about his various experiences in ministry, Fr. Hoffman summarizes his life-long journey in Christ with these words, “In reality, our schooling is a continuous process as we deal with the concrete circumstances of our lives. The more we learn to walk in His ways, the more we draw close to Him, we continue to progress until the life of faith is transformed into the life of vision in heaven. That is our final graduation!”

When asked what the immediate future holds for Fr. Hoffman’s, he says he will continue to write about his life in ministry, he will take care of a garden outside of Holy Cross House and any other plants that need tending, and he calmly and confidently says he will die at Holy Cross House. With dignity, with the confidence of a life well lived, with complete faith in God’s promise that has served Fr. Hoffman so well, “Fear not, for I am with you.”
A Celebration of Service: 
50 Year and 25 Year Jubilarians Honored

Each year, the Congregation of Holy Cross celebrates the lives and legacies of our religious marking their 50th and 25th Anniversaries of priesthood. Join us in recognizing, with gratitude, the following Holy Cross, Indiana Province, priests, for their tireless and selfless commitment to the Church.

50 Year Jubilarians

Rev. Thomas L. Bill, C.S.C. 
Serving the University of Portland

Rev. Eugene E. Homrich, C.S.C. 
Serving in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Province, Bangladesh

Rev. James F. Blaes, C.S.C. 
Serving the Faith, Hope and Charity Chapel, South Bend, Indiana

Residing at Holy Cross House; supporting ministries in South Bend

Serving the University of Portland

Rev. George C. Wiskirchen, C.S.C. 
Entered Eternal Rest May 17, 2005

25 Year Jubilarians

Rev. James A. Bracke, C.S.C. 
Serving the Sisters of the Holy Cross

Rev. Michael Dennis Couhig, C.S.C. 
Serving St. Adalbert and St. Casimir Parish, South Bend, Indiana

Rev. William D. Dorwart, C.S.C. 
Serving the University of Portland
FROM CUSTODIAL CARE TO WELLNESS -
HOLY CROSS HOUSE EXTENDS ITS REACH  ■ KEVIN BAKER, H.F.A., ADMINISTRATOR

The past seven years has brought about significant changes in the way Holy Cross House cares for the religious both locally and abroad. What was once considered a medical facility or, to use a dated term, an infirmary, is now a state-of-the-art facility focusing on wellness across the continuum of life. While Holy Cross House continues to offer the care and compassion needed by those religious who suffer with the effects of aging, its role has grown to cover short term rehabilitation, mental health services, hospice, and community education.

Under the guidance of the Province’s Healthcare and Retirement Committee, Holy Cross House has begun to develop a database for all healthcare related records of the priests. This database will allow religious to have access to basic information in his personal medical file and to help provide information to medical providers in the event of an emergency.

In an effort to promote awareness of wellness concerns, a “HCH Team” consisting of Peg Lammers, RN, Director of Nursing, Mary Pat Russ, RPT, and Kevin Baker, HFA, has visited the communities of Casa Santa Cruz in Phoenix, The University of Portland, and Corby Hall at Notre Dame. Presentations to those houses included information on stroke prevention, fall risks, herbal/medication interactions, and internet fraud.

The Team will also be addressing the men in formation at their gathering in LaPorte this August. The focus for that group will be developing a wellness based lifestyle from the beginning of religious life. In working with the younger members on balanced lifestyles and on wellness, they will be assured a better quality of life in their elder years. Holy Cross House will continue to grow and to respond to the changing needs of the community, both in its traditional role and as an educational resource.

FATIMA - THE NEXT STAGE

Our Lady of Fatima Retreat Center is experiencing a physical and spiritual awakening. For years a center of spiritual care for thousands of persons, Fatima is taking on a new role as a house for active retired religious of Holy Cross, a priority concern for the Congregation.

According to Jim Kavanagh, Administrator of Fatima, interior and exterior renovations are underway and should be completed by July 2006. Highlights of the interior renovation include creating 26 single living units and a guest bedroom, a redesigned chapel, dining room, living room and lounge, an exercise and hobby room, a new entrance with a reception area and offices, and two centrally located elevators. Exterior renovations will provide simplified access to the building via a circular drive.

Physical renovations aside, Fatima will continue to facilitate spiritual development for the priest residents through community living, the presence of a chapel and prayer space, and through the continued service of these men to the community. Each resident will continue his service to the Church through a number of local ministries.

In addition to how Fatima will serve Holy Cross and the local community through the service of the residents, the popular Shrine and Stations of the Cross will be re-positioned and landscaped as a center of prayer and reflection for the public.

Look for more Fatima updates in future issues of PILLS.
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.

VIEWS! We Welcome Your Thoughts.

Our commitment to our elder and retired religious.

A community must reach out in purposeful and sensitive ways to members who are sick or sorrowful or often absent. When members retire or encounter a breakdown in health, we must have communities to receive and provide for them. We gather as a community to anoint any brother threatened by serious sickness or injury or disabled by age....

(Constitution of the Congregation of Holy Cross, 4:37)

____ I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRIESTS OF HOLY CROSS, INDIANA PROVINCE (PLEASE SPECIFY: ____________________________).

____ I WOULD LIKE INFORMATION ABOUT MAKING A GIFT.

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____ PLEASE CORRECT MY CONTACT INFORMATION AS LISTED BELOW.

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ADDRESS: ________________________________

CITY/STATE/ZIP: ________________________________

DAYTIME PHONE: ________________________________ EMAIL: ________________________________

PLEASE MAIL THIS FORM TO: PRIESTS OF HOLY CROSS, INDIANA PROVINCE OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT

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