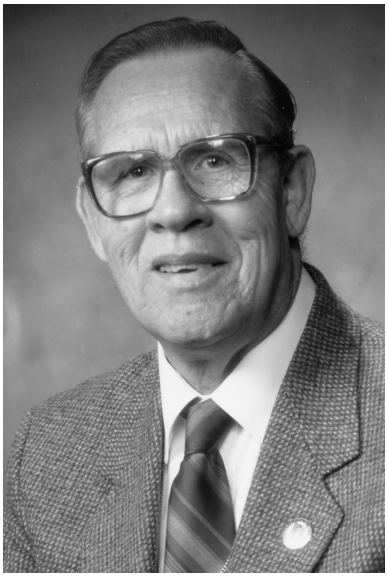
Legacy Project

April 15th

Brother Rex (Charles) Hennel, C.S.C.



born: 12 December 1918

died: 15 April 2008

Rex was born in Evansville and attended Memorial High School. He joined the Brothers, went to the juniorate at Watertown and the novitiate, where he made his first vows in 1938. He studied at Notre Dame, earning a bachelor of arts degree in 1941. Rex was selected to join a group of Holy Cross missionaries to work in India (East Bengal). They sailed from California and arrived in the Philippines. But World War II had broken out and the Japanese invaded the Philippines. All Holy Cross missionaries were placed in an internment camp for the next 4 years. When the War ended, Rex returned to the U.S. and served on the faculty at Holy Trinity. He became the first principal of Notre Dame High in Biloxi. In 1951 he was assistant headmaster of Notre Dame International School in Rome. In 1957, Holy Cross returned to Africa and Rex was the superior and headmaster of the new school in Sekondi, Ghana for 6 years. In 1963, he was headmaster at Gilmour Academy and then became Assistant Provincial. In 1975, Rex returned to Ghana as the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Cape Coast. He returned to Notre Dame to direct the Holy Cross Mission Center and served with the province office staff for 15 years. Rex was a mentor and inspiration to all he met and a very compassionate man. His former students at Biloxi honored him saying, "*Because of you, many of us are different -- more Christian, more human*."

He is merciful, tenderhearted, full of compassion
and embraces all. ***-- Psalm 145:8***

The best portion of a good man's life - his little unremembered
acts of kindness and love. ***-- William Wordsworth***