

BROTHERS OF HOLY CROSS

Newsletter of the Midwest Province of the Brothers of Holy Cross

Jubilee 2022

Through God's generous grace, jubilarians have thrived

BY BROTHER KENNETH HADERS, CSC, PROVINCIAL

One of the privileges I have had over the past few years is to visit our brothers in Ghana. It is always an inspirational trip, even though I dislike the heat you encounter about 400 miles from the equator. I am invigorated by the enthusiasm they share in both the way they lead their lives as Holy Cross religious and in their zeal for the mission.

They want to develop strong relationships with both their God and the people they serve.

I have often shared that when I meet new people in Ghana, they say, "You are welcome," and they actually mean it. I always feel welcome, even though I am in a different climate, with different people and a different culture. But the welcome I receive is only one way I am invigorated. I am also invigorated by their normal, everyday way of speaking and living with the knowledge that God is a part of their lives. When one of the brothers includes the comment, "By God's grace," I know they are sincere. They recognize that God is generous

and that it's by His grace that we thrive.

This theme of being aware of God's grace and the logical extension of that thought, that we, each one of us, can be both an instrument and a recipient of God's grace, is a theme I am thinking of as I reflect on our jubilarians.

This year is a special one for me because my reflection on the lives of our jubilarians includes a reflection on my

own life, and I'm acutely aware that I am where I am, and how I am, by God's grace. I know the brothers I am celebrating with, and I admire them for the way they have allowed God's grace to work in their lives. With God's grace, we have tried to humbly become God's instruments of love, mercy and compassion for others. With God's grace, we have accomplished things we never could have expected. With God's grace, we are living proof that, as Blessed Basil Moreau wrote, "Providence varies all of its works," if we are open to his grace. And with God's grace, we have realized far more than we ever could have planned or imagined.

Thank you, my fellow jubilarians, for being open to God's graces in your life and for sharing those graces with so many others.



Brother Kenneth Haders, Provincial, gives a talk in St. Brother André Chapel at the District Center, Brafoyaw, Cape Coast.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Message from Provincial • Jubilee Celebration • Biographies of Jubilarians • Serving the lepers in Ghana

Jubilarians to renew vows in April at Mass of Thanksgiving

The renewal of vows for eight Brothers of Holy Cross will be Saturday, April 30, with a Mass of Thanksgiving at 10:30 a.m. in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame. Celebrating jubilee anniversaries will be a brother with 70 years of religious profession, five brothers with 60 years, one with 50 years, and one with 25 years. Four of these brothers reside in the Notre Dame area, three in the Sarasota, Fla., area and one in Ghana, West Africa.

Brother Ken Haders, CSC, Provincial of the Midwest

Province of the Brothers of Holy Cross, will join in the brothers' renewal of vows. The Rev. John Blazek, CSC, Gilmour Academy, Gates Mills, Ohio, will be celebrant of the liturgy. Halle McGuire Hobbins will be musical director and Andrew McShane will be organist. Brother Joseph Fox, CSC, of Holy Cross Village will be the Master of Ceremonies and coordinator of the entire jubilee celebration.

A dinner will follow the Mass, for invited guests, at the Downes Ballroom, Corbett Family Hall, Notre Dame Stadium.

MEMORIES OF JUBILEE 2021



70-YEAR JUBILARIAN

Brother Robert Henry Dierker, CSC

Reliability, dedication to duty and cheerfulness are three descriptive terms that fit Brother Robert Dierker perfectly.

He was born in 1931 as the only child to Milton and Katherine Dierker in Columbus, Ohio.

Robert joined Holy Cross in 1950 on the advice of a Dominican priest and teacher who told him, "If you want to be a priest, be a Dominican.

If you want to be a brother, join a community of brothers."

In Brother Robert's words, "What good advice!"

While working at Ave Maria Press in 1952, Brother Robert fought off the effects of polio, rallied, and continued to work there for 20 years. Following a year as



assistant librarian at St. Edward High School in Lakewood, Ohio, he went to St. Joseph High School in South Bend, Ind. At St. Joseph's he worked in the attendance office, where he remained for the next 33 years until his retirement in 2006.

After living 11 years at Riverside Place, Brother Robert retired in 2010 to Columba Hall—a place he has always thought of as his home.

Following retirement, Brother Robert continued to volunteer at St. Joseph's High School once a week. In addition, he was a driver for the brothers in the area and maintained a rigorous exercise schedule of walking and biking, until he broke a hip in November, 2021.

He reflects, "My life has been a wonderful experience of service to the church and our community."



60-YEAR JUBILARIANS

Brother William Douglas Dygert

When Brother William Dygert turned 76 three years ago, he retired. His most recent position was as Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon. He spent 54 years in Catholic school education, 44 of which were in administration. During that time, he taught English in high school and college as well as education and administration courses on the graduate level. Brother William also served as a middle school president, a high school assistant principal, a high school principal, and for 27 years a Catholic school superintendent. In addition to a Bachelor of Arts and three master's degrees, he earned a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Dayton in Ohio.



"I have been blessed to work with very talented and dedicated individuals in all the places I have served," Brother William said. "My experience in Catholic school education has been engaging, interesting, challenging and fulfilling. The mission of informing, forming and transforming young people in Catholic schools has a profound impact on their futures and the future of the Church and society, a truth which, I think, inspired Blessed Basil Moreau to found Holy Cross.

"Being a brother in the Congregation of Holy Cross has given me the opportunity to grow in my spiritual life. I have been blessed over the years to know, live with and work with many in Holy Cross who were inspiring models of what a religious should strive to be. The community has also provided abundant opportunities for me to grow professionally, for which I am grateful. Being a Brother of Holy Cross and a Catholic school educator have both been a good fit for me and a great blessing," Brother William said.

Brother Jerome Francis Kroetsch

Jerome Kroetsch was born on July 12, 1933, to Charles and Hilda Kroetsch. He was the seventh of eight children growing up on a dairy farm 80 miles north of Detroit, and attended the local public school for grades Kindergarten through 12th grade. He was drafted into the Army at age 21 and worked for the next two years in the guided missile systems at Fort Bliss, Texas. After his military service he returned home to the family farm.

"A seed had been planted in my mind, I don't know where it came from, but it brought thoughts of living the religious life," Brother Jerome said. "This inner voice became dominant in my thoughts, and I later wrote a letter to join the Brothers of Holy Cross. I entered the postulate program in 1960 and made my first profession in January, 1962."



In addition to serving in many of the Holy Cross schools in the Midwest Province area for the past 60 years, Brother Jerome also served as a missionary in Dacca, Bangladesh, for eight years; the Virgin Islands–West Indies four years; and Sekondi, Ghana, for 12 years.

In Brother Jerome's words, "I have greatly enjoyed my 60 years of vocation as a Holy Cross Brother. I didn't know that Jesus and Mary would send me traveling, but through them, I have lived and worked in many places. I believe, when I traded the farm for my vocation, I found the precious gem spoken of in the Bible."

Brother Lawrence Philip Skitzki, CSC

Lawrence Skitzki was born the second of four children to Henry and Florence Skitzki in Cleveland, Ohio. Brother Lawrence attributes his vocation to Brother Robert Siegel, his band director at St. Edward High School, who taught him how to play the flute. Following graduation in 1961, he entered the Brothers of Holy Cross and received a bachelor's degree of Business Administration and Education from St. Edward's University in 1965. His first assignment was Reitz Memorial High School in Evansville, Ind.



In 1971 he earned a master's degree from the University of Notre Dame. After a year at Bishop David High School in Louisville, he returned to Evansville as Comptroller for Southwestern Indiana Mental Health Center. He served there for six years while living with three brothers in the inner city, and volunteering in special education for the diocese.

In 1978 Brother Charles Krupp, provincial, appointed him

provincial steward for the Midwest Province, and he served until 1994, and again from 2003 to 2009. As a provincial steward he ministered ably to missions in Bangladesh, Liberia and Ghana. He was a board member of the National Association of Treasurers of Religious Institutions (NATRI) from 1989 to 1997, and served on its executive committee from 1993 to 1995.

After a sabbatical year, he worked as an assistant to the General Treasurer for the Sisters of the Holy Cross at Notre Dame for two years. He then moved to Anaheim, Calif., and worked as a business manager at Cornelia Connelly High School. Later he took a position as controller at Notre Dame High School in Sherman Oaks, Calif., for 14 years. He served as a founding member of the California Private School Self Insurance Group (CAPS-SIG) Board, and is a member of the Midwest Province finance committee and trustee of the Life Development Trust.

In August of 2016 he “retired” and inherited the job of guest master and accountant for the local community in Sarasota, Fla.

Brother Lawrence’s quiet competence brought comfort to the province in difficult times.

Brother Roy Edward Smith, CSC

Roy was born the eighth of nine children to Archie and Bettie Smith on Aug. 23, 1943, in Indianapolis, Ind. From an early age, Roy wanted to follow his two older brothers and attend Cathedral High School. What he did not know at that

time was that he would meet the Brothers of Holy Cross, who impressed him as very demanding and caring teachers. He thought he would like to do the same for other people as the brothers did for him and his classmates. While at Cathedral, Roy was recognized for his athletic abilities and was named to the all-state team in football.

Upon graduation, Roy entered the Brothers of Holy Cross and was first professed on Aug. 16, 1962. Brother Roy is grateful to Brother James Everett and the other brothers at Cathedral who encouraged him in his religious vocation. After two years at St. Joseph’s High School he was transferred in 1967 to Saint Charles Boys Home in Milwaukee, Wis. While there, he earned his master’s degree in Social Work from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Through his ministry in social work he has served at Boysville of Michigan, Catholic Charities in the Fort Wayne South-Bend Diocese and Holy Trinity High School in Chicago.

Currently, Brother Roy is the Director of Development for the Midwest Province.

“The best part of this job, is hearing the many stories from grateful donors about the brothers,” Brother Roy said. “After 60 years of religious profession God has been so good to me, and keeps doing good things for me. He has blessed me with a wonderful family, great friends and a wonderful brotherhood.”



50-YEAR JUBILARIAN

Brother Kenneth Haders, CSC

“It’s hard to believe that I have been a brother for 50 years, Brother Ken said. “As a boy I never imagined a vocation to the priesthood, and that was the only vocation in the church for boys that I knew about. But my exposure to the brothers at St. Edward High School changed that.

“I’m number six of seven kids—five girls and two boys. I have been truly blessed to be a part of a large family that still enjoys getting together.

In high school, Brother Ken found the brothers were there for him and so many of his classmates. He decided he wanted to be like the brothers who were so generous and helpful to him.

“They were role models I wanted to imitate, and I still try to

do that,” Brother Ken said. “I imagined myself as a teacher moderating a lot of clubs and activities. Fortunately, my family and friends were supportive, but with no pressure.

“After I joined and learned more about what the brothers did, I started moving toward work in the brothers’ boys homes,” Brother Ken said. “But I think God had other ideas, and when I was fired from a position there, I went back to working in a high school, which became my primary focus and ministry for about 40 years.

“I have had amazing and unanticipated opportunities as a Brother of Holy Cross, but I think I am most proud



of the work I've done to preserve the charism, values and traditions of the brothers in our ministries. It has been the most rewarding thing I have done, and it was done with the help and support of hundreds of others who have joined the brothers in being Holy Cross educators.

"I have been blessed to work at Holy Trinity in Chicago, Archbishop Hoban in Akron, Cathedral in Indianapolis—mostly as an administrator. I have also been on the boards of most of our schools and make it a point to keep up with what is happening and how each, in its own way, is preserving and promoting what it means to be a Holy Cross school.

"But my blessings go beyond my connection to our schools. Having been called upon to be a leader among the brothers, I've had opportunity to travel and to learn about the lives and ministries of the Congregation of Holy Cross all over the world. Most prominent in that experience is my connection to our brothers in West Africa. We have learned from each other, and visiting our brothers in Ghana has been an experience beyond expectation. Though I have tried to share my gifts and expertise with them, what I have learned from them about being a brother has been a gift from God that has inspired me in many ways.



25-YEAR JUBILARIAN

Brother Kenneth Kunditani, CSC

Kenneth Kunditani was born on Aug. 15, 1963, in Kaleo, a few kilometers from Wa in the Upper West Region of Ghana. He is the older of two children of the late Kunditani Ninyaga and Beatrice Bomansaan. Although his parents embraced the Catholic faith, his paternal and maternal grandparents were polygamous and followed the local traditional religion while allowing their offspring to willingly choose their religion. Thus, both Kenneth and his only sister Josephine, like their parents, became fervent Catholics.

Ken had his elementary schooling in Nandom and Kaleo, during which time he became fascinated by altar servers, which he devotedly practiced until he came into contact with his teachers in the technical school run by the Brothers of the Immaculate Conception.

Inspired by the FIC brothers, he felt the call to be one of them. This desire kept coming and going even after he gained admission into the teacher training college. After graduating from college, he taught for six years. This was a period of hide and seek with the Lord that ended when a brother introduced Ken to the Brothers of Holy Cross. He told Ken, "I know you love to work, and you will be happy with the Holy Cross Brothers. I observed Brother Vincent Gross and the others at their center and I know that is where you belong." At this, Ken exhausted his excuses and entered the Juniorate at St. Joseph Hall in Sekondi in September, 1994. He made his first vows on

June 28, 1997, in Saaka, Fort Portal, in Uganda, East Africa.

Ken returned to the District Center in Ghana and completed a year in theological studies at St. Peter's Major Seminary, Pedu, Cape Coast.

Ken was assigned in 1998 to what is now called the Holy Cross Technical Institute in Takoradi. He served twice as the principal of the Institute and played key roles especially in the construction of the buildings on the present campus. Assuming the role as administrator for the first time from Brother Jerome Kroetsch in January 2002, the trainees were trained and tested in only the practical. Brother Ken made it a three-year program with a standard syllabus to help the students qualify for the written national approved examination.



Brother Ken studied management, administration and youth development work at the University of Ghana. He later became principal and manager of the car mechanics training center for the Diocese of Sunyani. He was also the director of the Rex Hennel Formation House of the Holy Cross Brothers in Sunyani from May, 2018 to Feb., 2020.

Brother Ken considers himself privileged to take over the management of the Nkanchina Leprosarium Center near Kpandai in the Tamale Archdiocese. ✚

Remembering our deceased brother. May he rest in peace.

Brother Paul Houston Kelly, CSC • 86 • Jan. 28, 2022 • 60 years a vowed religious

Serving lepers brings Ghanaian brother

In a village called Nkanchina no. 2 located in the Kpandai District of Northern Ghana, dwells a motley collection of men and women who were forced to leave their homes because they had contracted one of the most dreaded and distasteful diseases in the world. Leprosy.

They came from all parts of the West-African Sub-Region, to a hospice on the Oti River, built by the World Evangelical Crusade (WEC) for lepers in 1954 to give medical care to the lepers in the region. The WEC left its mission at Nkanchina in 1974 and handed the hospice over to the government. Even though there were still many “active” lepers among the residents, they were all declared cured and dismissed from the hospice.

Where were they to go? All of them had been disowned by their own families when signs of leprosy appeared on their skins. They could not go back home. In fact, many of them did not have a home apart from the leprosarium. The group of dismissed lepers, about 200 of them at the time, men and women, wobbled one km away from the hospice and put up mud shacks to lay their bodies. They named their new settlement: Nkanchina no. 2, since the nearby village was called Nkanchina. There, they were literally forgotten by society. They had to fend for themselves despite the severe disability caused by the sickness.

The Nkanchina Leprosarium recently became home for Brother Ken Kunditani, a Holy Cross brother from Ghana serving in the Archdiocese of Tamale. This new ministry for the



Brother Ken Kunditani with a few of the dependents of lepers living at Nkanchina Leprosarium.

Congregation has been a special calling of Brother Ken's.

“When my uncle, the Most Rev. Gregory E. Kpiebaya came to Tamale in 1995 as the Metropolitan Catholic Archbishop, he made a pastoral visit to Kpandai and discovered



Brother Ken Kunditani talks with a resident at the Nkanchina Leprosarium in Northern Ghana. Brother Ken has recently assumed the responsibility of administrator for the lepers.

them,” Brother Ken said. “He called on the colony and was appalled by what he saw, the human suffering. The sheds they had strenuously constructed many years ago not only had deteriorated, but had now become death traps.”

Archbishop Kpiebaya decided immediately to get involved in the caring for the lepers of Nkanchina. Brother Ken made personal and regular visits to his uncle and listened to the passion he had for his activities and support of the lepers who had no links with their families and had been forgotten by their relatives. After the Archbishop's retirement he devoted his time and energies for their welfare—materially and spiritually.

In 2006, Archbishop Kpiebaya got the generous attention of the late Dr. David Abdulai, a private medical practitioner who worked for the poorest of poor in Tamale. Dr. David sent relief goods each month to the settlement to be distributed to the residents.

Brother Ken's uncle published numerous articles about these “Forgotten ones” in the *Catholic Standard* and *The Daily Graphic* illustrating their plight. It caught the attention of another kind-hearted man, in fact the “Patron” of Lepers in Ghana, the Rev. Andrew Campbell, SVD. Together with his team, Lepers Aid Committee, a volunteer group in Accra, Father Campbell built a 40 room-compound for the residents to replace the wretched sheds in which they lived. Fr. Campbell also installed a water supply system and solar light in the compound.



Yet even with this help, the Archbishop worried that as he got older he would no longer be able to provide the continued support that they needed.

“This helpless situation of my uncle’s compelled me to visit the leprosarium to see things for myself,” Brother Ken said. “That visit opened me to the realities of the concerns of the archbishop.”

Being concerned about what he saw there and wanting to get involved he needed to gather the courage to ask his superiors about his intentions.

Brother Ken describes his encounter with Brother Ken Haders, Provincial for the Midwest Province of the Brothers.

“I mentioned it to Brother Ken on one of his visits to Ghana and he asked ‘why would I have to wait if I have the zeal? I am behind you and will support you with seed money and a vehicle.’

“Instantly, I made a formal appeal to Brother Ken to grant permission and support to take over and institutionalize this special ministry and make it a major ministry of the Congregation. I saw the challenges that would come with this opportunity but was also in love with the idea of serving.

“My uncle is now 88 and cannot do much in caring for these poor souls,” Brother Ken said. “Knowing how dear the welfare of these lepers are to his heart, and knowing it was with the same compassion that he took care of my sister and I when my father passed on while we were still kids, I feel obliged to step in and take care of these lepers. Now that he is no longer strong, physically and financially, I asked my Congregation, the Congregation of Holy Cross to grant permission and support me to take over and institutionalize it and make it a major ministry of the Congregation.”

Current State of the Colony

Currently there are close to 70 adult men and women with 279 dependents occupying 40 dilapidated mud rooms or houses. That means that some of the residents are still living in the old unsafe sheds which they themselves struggled to put up many years ago.

“These ‘ex-lepers’ need more attention, care and protection. As has already been mentioned, many of them suffer from multiple disabilities,” Brother Ken said. “Besides losing their fingers, hands, feet and noses, some have also lost their sight and body feeling. This makes them quite incapable of engaging in any self-sustaining activity. Some cannot even cook or wash their clothing. They live in abject poverty.”

Brother Ken has spent “the best part of my life” for the last 25


years as a Holy Cross brother working with deprived youth—instilling life skills at The Holy Cross Skills Training Center, now Holy Cross Technical Institute. He also worked with organized youth groups in the Catholic Church.

“With this new ministry with the lepers, it will be more or less a

continuation of providing care to the deprived in society at a different level of life,” Brother Ken said. “I think the Archbishop Emeritus might have also sparked the fire in me for this one.”

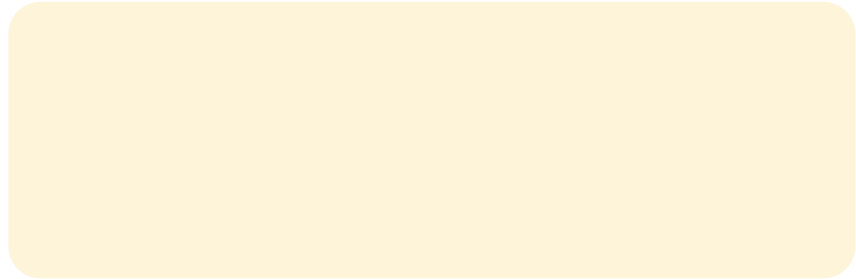
In his new ministry he finds himself administrating to the needs of the residents of Nkanchina. He provides solutions to the day-to-day challenges of the residents and their dependents. He oversees the education and health care of the residents as well as the dependents of the lepers and arranges relief items for them. And most importantly he tries to raise funds to support the entire ministry. Besides the need for better living arrangement, Brother Ken seeks the bare necessities of food, clothing, medical care, toiletries, cleaning supplies and help.

Currently he does not have a support staff but hopes to have a working staff to include housekeepers, nurses, drivers and a secretary. An office for himself would be helpful.

“The challenging nature of the ministry brings me to the feet of the Lord daily,” Brother Ken said. “Coming from a modest and single parental home, I have had the experiences of a deprived and needy home and family and what it means to go to bed with an empty stomach. This special ministry will give me fulfillment of providing care and love to support the needy and the deprived in society. It also accords me the biggest opportunity to bringing me closer to the Lord while I try to live one of our most cherished pillars of the congregation and that is ‘to provide preferential support to the poor’ and I feel privileged to be in this ministry. It is a call on its own. 



Brother Ken Kunditani speaks with one of the nearly 70 lepers at the Nkanchina Leprosarium.



*Loving God, You gave us the example
of St. Joseph to inspire our trust and
faith in you.*

*As he loved and cared for his family,
Jesus and Mary, help us to reach out in
love to those whose lives we touch.*

*Help us to trust in Your loving
Providence and to respond to your call
with faith. We ask this in Jesus' name.*