

BROTHERS OF HOLY CROSS

Newsletter of the Midwest Province of the Brothers of Holy Cross

Fall, 2020

Celebrating St. Brother André—a friend, a brother, a saint

God calls all of us to be saints. But a doorman? A quiet, diminutive, wisp of a man, worthy to be a saint? Yes, he was friendly and had a welcoming spirit. But he could barely read. He was always in poor health. He had no real skills. Except for one.

Brother André was a man of incredible faith with a deep devotion to St. Joseph. His life was one of prayer and intercession. People recognized this attribute in Brother André and came with their sick, crippled and dying to find healing and strength.

It was Oct. 17, 2010, that Pope Benedict XVI canonized Holy Cross Brother André Bessette in St. Peter's Square in Rome.

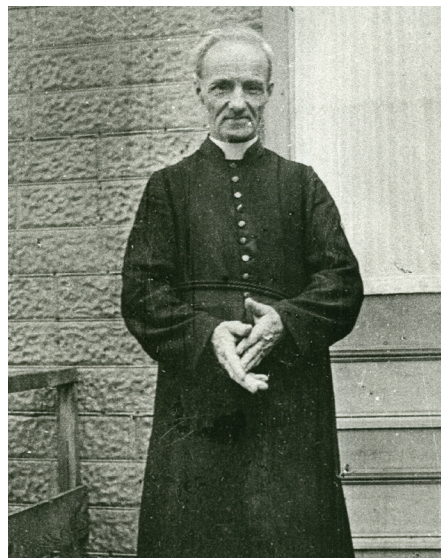
The Congregation of Holy Cross is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the canonization of St. Brother André Bessette. So far he is the only recognized saint of the religious congregation of priests, brothers and sisters.

"We believe many of our priests and brothers have lived virtuous and holy lives through our 183 years," said the Rev. Robert Epping, Superior General for the Congregation of Holy Cross.

"Yet St. André's canonization assures us that true holiness is possible for us

if we abide faithfully according to our Constitutions and Statutes, our rule of life sanctioned by the church. This anniversary reminds us of the perennial value of our call, the vocation of holiness in Holy Cross," Epping said.

St. Brother André was a friend to all he welcomed at the doorstep of Notre Dame College in Montreal, Canada,



for 40 years. Visitors to the college witnessed his deep devotion to St. Joseph, and thousands of people sought out Brother André to pray for them and intercede to St. Joseph on their behalf.

Four members of the Congregation recently shared their thoughts of St.

Brother André in preparation for the anniversary of his canonization. Rev. Jimmy Mathew of the South India Province serving in the Philippines, Brother Francisco Gillette of the District of West Africa, Sister Norma McDonald, sister of Holy Cross and the Most Rev. William A. Wack, Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee respectively viewed St. Brother André as a friend, as a brother, as a saint and as a model of holiness for all.

"Brother André, being a poor, obedient and humble servant of God became a true friend of all who visited him for divine intervention in their lives," Father Mathew said. "In prayer St. André lived God and God lived in him.

"He is affectionately called the miracle man of Montreal. He lived the call of Jesus to come follow Jesus in letter and in spirit. He communicated to them all the healing power of God's merciful love," Father Mathew said.

Born on Aug. 9, 1845, in the little village of Saint Grégoire d'Iberville, Québec, Alfred Bessette was the eighth of 12 children. His early life was marked by physical frailty, poverty, illiteracy and family tragedy. Amid them all, prayer was his peace and joy.

His parish priest encouraged the orphaned Alfred to seek the consecrated

Continued on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE:

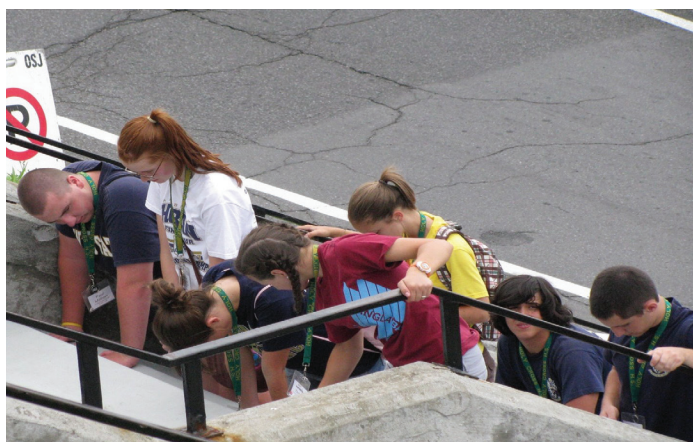
St. André—a friend, a brother, a saint • Message from Provincial • Annual Report • Brother Columba • His legacy lives on

Finding peace and holiness in a world filled with challenges

Dear Family and Friends of the Brothers of Holy Cross,

Over the past few months I have heard several people comment that they wished this year would end. The year 2020 is certainly one few of us will forget. The stresses of a pandemic and the rhetoric of an election year have intruded on our sense of the normal and challenged us to find new ways to stay grounded in the love, compassion and forgiveness to which God calls us.

But 2020 has also provided some real inspiration from many who don't just see the negatives and the challenges, but still bring goodness to the lives of others. In St. Brother André, we are certainly reminded of the graces of a simple life of faith. I am still inspired when I think back on the celebration I attended in Montreal in October of 2010. I traveled with a few teachers and students from Archbishop Hoban High School, where I was serving at the time. Holy Cross finally had our first officially recognized saint, and thousands were present to celebrate our favorite son.



Archbishop Hoban High School students make their way up the steps to St. Joseph Oratory. Pilgrims are asked to pray on each step. Brother Ken Haders was among a group of students and faculty who traveled to Montreal in October, 2010, to celebrate the canonization of St. Brother André Bessette.

My most indelible memory from our visit 10 years ago to the Oratory of St. Joseph in Montreal is the quiet time the students and I spent in the Votive Chapel near Brother André's tomb. An early snowfall had caused us to change our plans, and we discovered that this holy place, that presents the many titles given to St. Joseph as an intercessor in prayer, was there just for us. This is a place normally crowded with people lighting votive candles, saying prayers, moving in and out of the beautiful crypt chapel dedicated to St. Joseph and waiting for a chance to stand with a hand on the tomb of a

friend, a brother and a saint.

That opportunity to be almost alone with St. Joseph and his little friend, now a saint, was very moving. I was not the only person of our small groups who was moving among the light from the thousands of votive candles with tears stemming from the profound sense of holiness and peace that exists in this holy place near the tomb of St. André.

It is my prayer that you too have a place of profound peace and holiness in your life, and that you can make contact with that place, whether real or spiritual, when you have need. St. Brother André recommended we go to St. Joseph with this advice: "When you invoke St Joseph, you don't have to say much. You know your Father in heaven knows what you need; well, so does his friend St. Joseph. Tell him, 'If you were in my place, St Joseph, what would you do? Well, pray for this on my behalf.'"

Thank you for all you do to support the Brothers of Holy Cross. Know that I pray with you for you and your loved ones.

Your brother in Christ,

Brother Ken Haders, CSC
Provincial



Brother Ken Haders, CSC



This altar is the in the first chapel that Brother André built at the Oratory of St. Joseph in Montreal.

life for he believed it was there that Alfred would find his true home and deepest fulfillment. In recommending Alfred as a religious vocation his pastor told the Congregation of Holy Cross that he was sending them a saint.

This pious young man made his perpetual profession as a brother on Feb. 2, 1874 and received his first assignment as the porter at College Notre Dame.

“At the end of my novitiate, my superiors showed me the door and I stayed for 40 years,” quipped Brother André.

“Thousands of people sought out Brother André to pray for them as they recognized and trusted in his holiness and spiritual wealth of the symbol of friend-in-need,” Father Mathew said.

“He welcomed them and listened to them on his many visits to the sick in their homes.”

Brother André’s responsibilities at the college were doorkeeper and infirmarian, care of the oil lamps, sweeping, maintaining the firewood and school barber. He interacted well with the students, parents and the poor who came begging for food. Brother André treated all of them with respect.

“It is of merit to beg the question of which André we often look at. André the saint, the builder, the humble servant of St. Joseph or André the miracle man of Montreal,” Brother Francisco said. “André became all of these in the context of his vocation—a brother. It is not lost on us that André is often referred to as St. Brother André.

“When we claim him as a brother we see this man as one who was plagued by all the vicissitudes of humanity into sharp focus of who was like us in all things and one who exemplified the identity and mission of brother,” Brother Francisco said.

With blessings from his superiors, Brother André began construction in 1904 of a small chapel on the side of a mountain near the college.

Pilgrimages began and additions

“When you invoke St. Joseph, you don’t have to say much. You know your Father in heaven knows what you need. Well, so does his friend St. Joseph. Tell him, ‘if you were in my place, St. Joseph, what would you do? Well, pray for this on my behalf.’”

—St. André Bessette

were needed because of the number of visitors. In 1909 Brother André was named full-time guardian of the Oratory of St. Joseph. In 1917 a larger church was completed with a seating capacity of 1,000. In 1924, the construction of the basilica was inaugurated and finally completed 30 years after his death.

Brother André was the founder of the Oratory. Pilgrims from around the world have traveled there to ask for miracles through Brother André’s intercession. His reply to these requests was always “Ite ad Joseph” (Go to St. Joseph). More than 2 million visitors and pilgrims visit the Oratory every year and spend time in prayer and silence.

“We witnessed his profound faith, a faith that moved mountains,” Sister Norma said. “He literally moved one at least. But St. Brother André moved more than mountains. He moved the hearts of millions during his humble time as doorkeeper at the foot of Mount Royal in Montreal.

“How can such a simple man have such a great impact on so many? Saint Brother André teaches me that what is important comes from the heart. He teaches me that it is in giving of oneself that counts, not recognition or status,” Sister Norma said. “That gives me hope, that I too may follow his footsteps as a disciple of Jesus.

As word spread of some kind of healing power, pilgrims with all kinds of medical problems poured into the Basilica. On display in the basilica is a wall covered with thousands of crutches

from those who came to the basilica and were healed. Pope John Paul II deemed the miracles to be authentic and beatified Brother André in 1982.

“We in the Congregation of Holy Cross celebrate St. André Bessette as our first canonized saint, but he is not just a saint for us in Holy Cross or for the people of Montreal, Bishop Wack said. “St. André is indeed a saint for all time, for all people.

“A wonderful legacy of St. Brother André is his love for every single person, especially the person who was right in front of him. When people came to him in Montreal or wherever he traveled, when they came with a special request, he paid attention to each person in front of him, and he prayed for them and cared for them the best he could,” Bishop Wack said.

“In this day, in this age of so many difficulties and challenges and things that seem beyond our ability to solve and resolve right now, we can take this example of ministering to the person right in front of us, paying attention to each person in our household, in our school, in our workplace, in our community. We can and must bring Christ to others and bring others to Christ,” Bishop Wack said.

“May the life of St. André inspire us to be little signs of God’s miracle in the world in which we live,” Father Mathews said. “Miracles are acts of God’s love and a sign of an active presence of the divine in our ordinary day-to-day lives.”

Annual Report

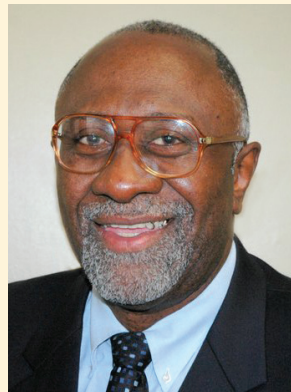
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Brothers experience generous support even through pandemic

BROTHER ROY SMITH, CSC
 DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, MIDWEST PROVINCE

Even amid this COVID-19 pandemic, you, our donors, have continued to support us, your Brothers of Holy Cross. No doubt some of you have experienced financial strains and pressures during this pandemic. Yet many of you still shared your resources with us.

In 'A Donor Bill of Rights' published by several fundraising organizations, point IV reads, "To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given." On selecting where our donors want their gifts to be used, more often than not, the choice marked off is: "wherever the gift is



Brother Roy Smith, CSC

most needed." We accept and appreciate your trust and confidence that we will use your gift in a prudent and thoughtful manner. In other words, we will be good stewards of your gifts and trust in us.

During the year, July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 we had 786 donors give for a total of \$654,150.91.

- ▲ Anchors of Hope Members
We had 9 donors for a total of \$197,925.19
 - ▲ Brother Columba O'Neill Club
We had 15 donors for a total of \$250,960.23
 - ▲ Columba Hall Society
We had 251 donors for a total of \$163,656.34
 - ▲ Cross & Anchors
We had 511 donors for a total of \$41,609.15
- Thank you for continuing to be an important part of our story.

Anchors of Hope Society

These are donors who have included the Brothers in their estate plans.

†Deceased, yet the legacy of these donors continues through their estate gifts.

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Why I give to the brothers

By PATRICK WALKER, M.D.

ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL, SOUTH BEND, IND., CLASS OF 1967

The brothers were and are fully devoted not only to teaching but also to the encouragement of students to reach for their highest purpose, the service of others. They accomplish this not by mere words, but by their example. As life has changed, we who have been the beneficiaries of their gifts need to be more involved in the ongoing support for their mission. This particularly applies to those brothers who have reached an age at which they can no longer serve in public, though they continue to support us all in prayer.

Though there are stories for each of the brothers, I will focus on three.

Brother Daniel Kane worked hard through our/my mischief and rudeness to teach us English literature and literary analytical writing. His work with the glee club (aka glee) was incredible. Having now attended many such performances by our children, it is so apparent just how difficult it was to pull off and pull out of us what he did. And always with a gentle touch and kind correction: "Tenors, please start on top of that note. Now again from measure eight."

Brother Paschal Tomaszewski was truly an icon with his extremely strict approach to Latin grammar and reading. His expectations of us were high, but it was his unique style that brought out the best in us. 'Mr. Walker, on your feet! Recite your vocabulary lesson for the good brother!' Or 'All eyes on me. Sit up straight. Feet on the floor. Hands on your desk. And hips back, alllll the way back!'

Brother Roy Smith came to South Bend in the late 1960s and did his best to teach us the fundamentals of the Catholic religion. His patience, kindness and understanding were much needed to try and get anything into our recalcitrant heads. He maintained his focus on us and our needs while providing an excellent understanding of Catholic theology. But even more than that, his total giving of not only his knowledge but, by example, his life to the undeserving (me among many) was his most lasting legacy.

Never realizing it at the time, St. Joseph's High School provided the foundation needed to successfully pursue any vocation. The brothers fully formed the concept that we are all called to a life of service, no matter where our life leads us and no matter the work we take up. Our education embodied the finest ideals of the enlightenment concept of a liberal education, with its emphasis on a way of learning accompanied by broad exposure to the major areas of thought, from philosophy to science, theology to mathematics, English literature to social issues—all in the context of faith, ethics and values.

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“My four years at Memorial High School helped make me the person I am today. What I learned from the Brothers of Holy Cross, not just in the classroom, but by their example, shapes my everyday life. It may sound trite, but I want to make all my teachers proud.”
 —Bill Bussing
 Reitz Memorial, Evansville, Ind.
 Class of 1974

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 Patrick & Josephine Miles
 Patrick & Carolyn Miller
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 Thomas Miller
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 John Minnette
 Marty Minnick
 Timothy Misencik
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 Michael Mooney
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“My donation to the Brothers of Holy Cross was in memory of Clara and Paul Kessler. Clara was my sister, and she spoke highly of Brother Lew Brazil many times. He was such a tremendous help, especially to Clara. His caring and compassion was always given. In talking to Brother Lew, I would like my donation to be used for the Health Care Program at Columba Hall.

—Helen Glushakow

Do we have another saint? Brother Columba's life was special.

By BROTHER PHILIP SMITH, CSC
ARCHIVIST, MIDWEST PROVINCE

In the Congregation of Holy Cross Midwest Province Archives there are four large boxes filled with thousands of letters written to Brother Columba O'Neil from 1912 to 1926.

John O'Neil was born in Mackeesburg, Pa. in 1848 and entered the Congregation of Holy Cross as a brother in 1874.

For the next 42 years he labored in the humble capacity of a cobbler, repairing shoes and fabricating special shoes for people with foot and ankle problems.

Brother Columba had a remarkable devotion to the Blessed Virgin and a great love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Sometime around 1900 he began making Sacred Heart badges and gave them to students when they came to pick up their shoes. He told many of them to pray a novena. "Say five times a day, for nine days (or more, if not cured), offering your prayers through the Immaculate Heart of Mary



Brother Columba O'Neil served the Brothers of Holy Cross as a cobbler at the University of Notre Dame, repairing shoes and fabricating special shoes for people with foot and ankle problems. His devotion to the Blessed Mother and the Sacred Heart of Jesus garnered the friendship of students and residents in South Bend.

and St. Joseph: "Sacred Heart of Jesus cure me! St. Joseph, pray for me to the Sacred Heart."

Cures began to be reported and news of these "miracles" spread throughout South Bend and beyond. Brother Columba died in 1923. Letters continued to pour into the University of Notre Dame posted through the end of 1926. It is estimated that there are more than 10,000 letters in the collection.

Of the nearly 3,000 letters that have been processed, there are scores that thank Brother Columba for cures ranging from chronic headaches to blindness to polio. Brother Columba wrote in a letter to the father of a young girl cured of a "crippled" leg that he had, in a file cabinet in his cobbler shop, 1,400 letters thanking him for cures.

On a two-week stay in Joliet, Illinois, Brother Columba saw over 100 persons a day and reported that there were many cures each day. His superior requested him to return to South Bend, but Brother Columba asked to stay just a while longer because of the many people who begged to speak with him.

Brother Columba died Nov. 20, 1923, from complications related to the Spanish flu in the Community House, now called Columba Hall. Devotion to him during the current pandemic is appropriate.

Brother Isidore Alderton wrote:

"News of his death soon spread to the people of South Bend, and dozens of members of the community, sisters and strangers were lining up to pass before his casket. For the past two days and nights the parlor in the Community House has become a veritable shrine. People brought cards, medals and trinkets to touch his hands and face. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned all became as little children in his presence."

It is no wonder that during his life he was referred to as the Divine Healer and the Miracle Man of Notre Dame.



This statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was Brother Columba's and resided in his shoe shop. It now is in the Congregation's archives at Notre Dame and is believed to be around 120 years old.

St. Brother André continues to influence Holy Cross students

Of all the great leaders of the Catholic Church, and in particular with the Congregation of Holy Cross, a quiet humble brother is someone our schools are asking their students to learn about, emulate and appreciate the life of Brother André.

St. Brother André catapulted into the hearts and minds of students at Holy Cross schools when he was canonized a saint in 2010. Each school continues to acknowledge St. André in various ways bringing the life of this saint to life.

The Brother André Heart of Holy Cross award is presented to an *Archbishop Hoban High School* senior who has taken the Holy Cross mission to heart and follows the example of St. André. The recipient welcomes all and shows care and concern for the whole Hoban community. All who encounter the award winner recognize the hospitality of Christ. Hoban also has a second-class relic displayed outside Holy Cross Chapel.

The St. Brother André Bessette award is given each semester to two members of each of the four classes at *Cathedral High School*. Awardees are exemplary members of the Cathedral family who exhibit consistent effort, a positive attitude, generous service to others, involvement in student activities and Christian values.

Gilmour Academy has named its service program the St. Brother André Service program. The guidelines distributed to students includes a short biography about St. André.

Holy Trinity students learn about St. Brother André in religion classes as well as from artwork around the school. Schoolwide daily prayers often invoke St. André's intercession and he is quoted regularly in the school president's "Holy Cross quote of the day," emailed to the Holy Trinity community every weekday.

The St. André Scholar Program was founded to support *Notre*

Dame College Prep students who need additional resources to meet their full academic potential. The program provides one-to-one and small group instruction in learning strategies and study skills. Scholars also have use of the resource technology available in the St. André Learning Resource Center. The André staff decides on accommodations, which may include extended time on tests,

"The door to heaven is the heart of Jesus. The key to this door is prayer and love."

—St. Brother André Bessette

use of a recording device or one-to-one academic support among others.

"The St. André Scholar program is an academic support program designed

to support young men on the path toward lifelong, independent learning. St. André lived a life of unwavering faith despite facing many hardships from a young age. He is an excellent role model for our students who face their own academic challenges," said Scott Dutton, director of campus ministry.

The monthly food pantry at *St. Edward High School* is called the St. Brother André's Place in recognition of his model of Holy Cross hospitality. The pantry serves nearly 250 families and individuals from Lakewood and the far West Side of Cleveland with emergency supplies of groceries.

St. Ed's also has a St. André's Scholar program for students with moderate cognitive disabilities who would like to attend St. Ed's.

The St. Brother André Bessette, CSC Award is presented to the senior who goes above and beyond in living the Holy Cross charism of hospitality during his four years at St. Ed's.

In addition to the six Holy Cross Schools in the United States, the Holy Cross Brothers have established *St. Brother André Senior High School* in Ghana.

For more information on the

Brothers of Holy Cross

visit our website at:

www.brothersofholycross.com

The Brothers newsletter is a publication of the Development Office of the Midwest Province. For questions regarding the newsletter, address changes or other matters related to the development office please contact:

*Brother Roy Smith, CSC, Director of Development,
P.O. Box 460, Notre Dame, IN 46556-0460
(574) 631-2928 or rsmith@brothersofholycross.com*

Please remember our deceased brothers in your prayers

**Brother Thomas Charles Henning, CSC
at the age of 85
died August 29, 2020**

52 years of vowed religious life

**Brother Wilbert (Clarence) Leveling, CSC
at the age of 103
died November 8, 2020**

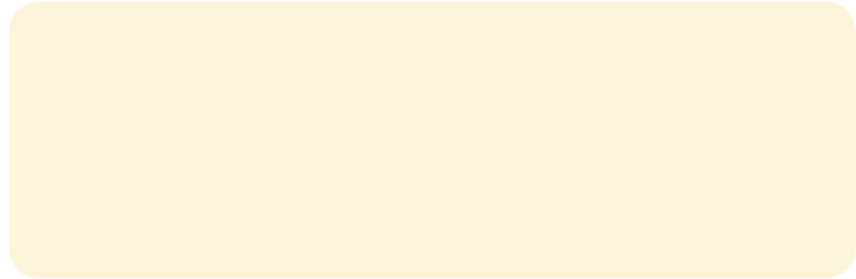
80 years of vowed religious life



BROTHERS OF HOLY CROSS

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St. Joseph Oratory stands atop Mount Royal in Montreal, Quebec. It was the vision of St. Brother André Bessette to make the Oratory a place of prayer to St. Joseph, the patron saint of the Brothers of Holy Cross.

We celebrate the 10th anniversary of the canonization of St. Brother André, the first named saint of the Congregation to be recognized by the Catholic Church.