

Brothers

Newsletter of the Midwest Province
of the Brothers of Holy Cross
Third Quarter, 2003



Africa—The Future Is Now!

An extraordinary reality, not well known in the United States, is the fact that the Catholic Church in Africa is one of the most vibrant and exciting



Br. Raymond Papenfuss, C.S.C.
Mission Promoter

segments of the Church today. There are over 160 million Catholics in Africa. The seminaries are full and there are numerous vocations to the religious life. In 1957, when Ghana gained its independence, there were six dioceses—all with expatriate bishops. Today there are twenty dioceses—all with Ghanaian bishops. This growth is duplicated throughout Africa. Africa is simply the

fastest growing segment of the Catholic Church today. And Holy Cross is part of this growth!

This issue of “Brothers” is dedicated to the work of the Midwest Province of Brothers in West Africa. We want to share with you our lives and the works we are involved with for the people of Africa. Especially, we want to share with you the fact that most of the work is now being accomplished by African Holy Cross religious. Our African District is developing rapidly and soon will become a Holy Cross province.

There has been considerable political turmoil in much of Africa. Ghana, however has a history of political stability and there was a peaceful change in government through democratic elections two years ago.

Some “futurists” say that by the year 2025 over 60% of all Catholics will be in Africa and South America.

It is difficult to say if this will actually happen, but the reality is that the growth of the church in Africa is a blessing for which we should thank God for. I encourage you to read this issue to discover the work that Holy Cross is doing to help in this missionary effort of our church.

Br. Raymond Papenfuss

“Africa is simply the fastest growing segment of the Catholic Church today. And Holy Cross is part of this growth!”



Blessed Brother Andre Chapel

The Spirit Is There

Holy Cross Struggles for Stability in West Africa

If you like to fish, you know how exhilarating it is when you hook a good-sized specimen and must play it cautiously toward shore or boat, allowing tension in the rod and line to help rather than hinder your efforts. At one moment you are in control; the next, the fish seems to have seized the initiative. Excitement is balanced by fear – the fear of losing the fish and looking foolish. Patience and perseverance are non-negotiables in your struggle.

In the small but vibrant District of West Africa, a unit of the Midwest Province of Holy Cross Brothers, the role of District Superior requires all the characteristics of the successful fisherman.

To give us an authentic flavor of the tension at work and the complexity of its components, let us allow Br. Michael Amakyi, District Superior, to speak to us in his own words. Here indeed the master fisherman is seen playing out line at one moment, reeling it in – quickly or slowing – at another, always assuming that in the end the fish will be his. Slightly edited for American readers, but permitting typically West African expression to remain, the following is an e-mail message sent at the end of July from Br. Michael to Br. Philip Armstrong at Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame. In this brief letter five events or circumstances of vital importance are alluded to, all of which demand the personal attention of the District Superior. Four novices have completed their canonical year of training and have pronounced their vows as professed brothers in Holy Cross; Brother Philip Smith, the president of our school near

downtown Chicago spent several weeks in Ghana helping instill principles of good teaching and management in schools; preparations are being made to host Holy Cross College (Notre Dame) students once again during their exposure and service program; a brother who spent



42 years in Ghana and returned to the U.S. for health reasons has just arrived back in Ghana; and the constant battle to enroll young brothers in the country's higher education system continues. More than these five situations, the spirit underlying their importance in the growth of the district comes through. Here is what Br. Michael wrote:

The days have been moving very fast for some of us. There is always something for us to do. I guess I have to be grateful to God for good health to be able to go through all the programmes successfully.

After the four novices made their first profession of vows, I charged Br. Tom Dillman with the responsibility of sending the update to the C.S.C. listserver because

I had a lot to deal with. I hope you received the news. As always, the celebration was colourful and many people attended. Br. Phil Smith, visiting from the States, added his bit to it. He played the oboe and the brothers sang the "Servant Song." The place was electrified.

The tempo has now gone down.

The workshop organized by Phil Smith went well. He gave the workshops to the staff at St. John's, St. Augustine's, Ghana National, and then to our younger brothers. Half way through the workshops was the first profession, so you can imagine how busy we were. Phil was good. The teachers enjoyed the presentations. They are hoping he returns to do a follow up.

The next thing on the agenda is the visit of the Holy Cross College students. That is two weeks from now. I can get some rest before they arrive, but then the groundwork will have to be done.

Br. William Gates has arrived safely. I picked him up from the airport and he was in high spirits. It is good for him to be back. Hopefully, his presence at the Centre will add some life there. The younger brothers stayed up late to await his

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arrival. They gave him a rousing welcome. Those guys can be loud if they choose to be, and last night, they did just that.

We are still struggling to get the brothers admission into University of Cape Coast. Robert, Kenneth and Paul have received their admission letters. I am working on Ebenezer's. Vincent and Nicholas are sure to get a place after the completion of the remedial course organized by the science faculty. Can you put a face to these guys? If you answer no, then it is time for you to return to Ghana. The running around and chasing people alone can drain your energy. I do this running around hoping that these guys will see that we are killing ourselves to get them formed for the mission of Holy Cross.

I hope this mail finds you well. Continue to keep us in your prayers as we do the same for you.

– Mike

Br. Michael is not the only one in the district who “runs around hoping that these guys will see we are killing ourselves to get them formed for the

mission of Holy Cross.” That is the urgent need motivating the expenditure of energy required to root Holy Cross in West Africa through the firm establishment of the religious life in the person of Holy Cross Brothers and eventually the addition of priests. The Holy Cross Sisters already are present and have a parallel program of recruitment and formation in place, collaborating closely with the brothers and the district's Holy Cross chaplain and long-time missionary priest. Here, too, patience and perseverance are non-negotiables.

It is this spirit of apostolic enthusiasm and sacrificial availability that characterizes the district and assures the Midwest Province and the wider membership of the Congregation of Holy Cross of a brilliant future in West Africa for the community's increasingly effective prophetic presence.

Brother Philip Armstrong, C.S.C.

“The running around and chasing people alone can drain your energy. I do this running around hoping that these guys will see that we are killing ourselves to get them formed for the mission of Holy Cross.”

*- Brother Michael Amakyi
District Superior*

An African's Perspective



Brother John Badu Affum, C.S.C., age 25, Ghanaian Student
St. Mary's University, San Antonio

“Mother” is supreme among African cultures. The African proverb: *A child cannot pay for its mother's breast milk* underlines this principal value of mothers in African cultures. It indicates that we owe our mothers

respect and honor, but it also implies that we owe any organization or individual that behaves like a mother this same respect. Because of this reality we bow to the Holy Cross men and women who left Notre Dame for Ghana to share with us, work with us and love us.

We have been taught that the Church is missionary by its very nature. This fact inspired Holy Cross religious to come to Ghana in 1957. Their goal in establishing our community there is to form African men and women religious so that we in turn can help the Church of Africa solve our own problems. We hope one day to send out our own missionaries to other African countries and to

develop a spirituality that is uniquely African, one that eventually we can share with the entire Congregation of Holy Cross.

I believe that if the Church is to flourish in Ghana it will be because of the impetus and strength of our missionary effort. We, the youth of Holy Cross, must be prepared to continue the work started by our senior Brothers. Every Christian is to become a little Christ; this was the ideal held up to us by the Brothers who first came to Ghana. This is the model Holy Cross must present to “the rest of Africa. “Mother” is indeed supreme. We are grateful to our mother Holy Cross and to our benefactors.

Honoring Our Heroes: “Keepers of the Fire” in God’s Mission

Twenty years ago I said yes to the Lord through the Congregation of Holy Cross in a religious profession as a brother. Little did I know that the “yes” I said on July 26, 1983, was in response to an invitation to a mission which is far beyond Holy Cross and even the Church; it was a mission which finds its origin in God. God’s care for human need was the occasion for the birth of the Congregation of Holy Cross in Le Mans, France, in 1837; it was the same need that brought Holy Cross to the United States in 1841, the same need that brought the Congregation to Ghana in 1957.

The good foundation that the Brothers laid made Holy Cross the first international religious congregation in Ghana to entrust the responsibility of its administration to the indigenous members in 1979. Every parent takes pride in seeing his/her child grow into responsible adulthood. And I believe every child honors his/her parents by what he/she becomes in life. It is a sense of gratitude that the District of West Africa will indeed honor its mother

province the Midwest Province, by growing into responsible adulthood – by becoming a province, by 2010. This is our dream!



Brother Paul Mensah, C.S.C., Age 43
Student–Master’s Degree in Spirituality
CTU, Chicago

Growing up in Africa is a big challenge. It takes a village to raise a child. To sustain the mission of God through Holy Cross in West Africa will also take a village, a community. The Midwest Province set the fire of God’s mission in Ghana. We must keep that fire going! Many people in the United States have become part of our extended village through their support. Our goal is to bring this dream to fulfillment and firmly establish Holy Cross in West Africa to complete the work God has given us.

On Being A Brother

Brotherhood began with Jesus. It seems to me His first mission was to be a brother to all that He met. Just as siblings can relate to each other more freely than with their parents, the people I



Brother John Kwesi Asiedu, C.S.C., Age 25
Ghanaian Student
St. Mary’s University, San Antonio

come into contact with feel very much at home with me.

It is exciting to be a young Brother of Holy Cross. At college, students are free to talk to me as just another student, but the sense of who I am is a constant reminder to them. This gives me the opportunity to share my gifts with them. There is an African proverb which says that the tree gives shade regardless who you are; so too, the Holy Cross Brother welcomes and relates to everyone as brother.

St. John’s School Sekondi, Western Region



Students leaving Sunday Mass at St. John’s School

The Brothers arrived at S. John’s on December 2, 1957. Brothers Rex Hennel, Eduardo Michalik and Donald Allen were the first Holy Cross Religious to return to Africa since our men left Algeria in the 1800’s. St. John’s celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2002. This school remains one of the main apostolic works of the Brothers in Ghana. The Brothers were originally invited to administer this school and the community continues to honor this first commitment. After a hiatus of several years, the administration was returned to a Holy Cross Brother. The new Headmaster, Brother Joseph Annan, along with other brothers, works hard to make St. John’s a premier educational institution in Ghana. The school has an enviable reputation.

The Brothers also work at St. Augustine’s in Cape Coast. At one time we administered St. Patrick’s in Monrovia, Liberia. The Liberian war closed the school. The Brothers have also, at various times, worked at the major and minor seminaries in Cape Coast and at St. Augustine’s Teacher Training College. The brothers also do some teaching at primary schools in Ghana.

Formation—The Future of Holy Cross

On July 12, 2003, four young Ghanaians made their first profession as Holy Cross Brothers at the Brother Andre Novitiate, Brafuyaw. This was a time of great joy, not only for Holy Cross but for the entire Christian community. One of the priorities of the District over the past few years has been the recruitment and formation of African Holy Cross Brothers. The goal is to eventually become an African Province of Holy Cross. There are four formation houses in Ghana. St. Joseph's Hall, Sekondi, is the house of initial formation. These men may still be completing their high school work but are interested in seriously considering



Offertory Procession at Profession Mass



Brother Matthew congratulates Brother Kenneth at Profession Ceremony

a life as a Holy Cross Brother. Moreau House at Butumagyebu is a one-year pre-novitiate program. After completing their year at Moreau House the young men go to Brother Andre Novitiate at Brafuyaw to complete their novitiate year and take first vows. They then move to Dujarie House, also at Brafuyaw, to continue their university studies.

There are currently sixteen Ghanaian Holy Cross Brothers in

temporary vows. Eight of these are studying at Cape Coast University in Ghana; three are studying at universities in the United States; the rest are either teaching or taking courses in technical schools. There are over 20 young men in the various pre-profession stages of formation. The novice master, Brother Bertrand Nee Wayoe, and his assistant, Brother Anthony Dadzie, are both Ghanaians.

In December, 2002, Brother Kenneth Kunditani made his perpetual profession as a Holy Cross Brother. This event brought joy to the Christian community and cause for a celebration.



Holy Cross Community in Ghana

Continuing Formation Center Brafuyaw, Central Region

The Continuing Formation Center was opened in 1990. This large facility is at the Holy Cross District Center, Brafuyaw. This three-story, 220-foot long building serves many purposes. Primarily it serves as a training center for African Brothers and Sisters pursuing post-novitiate theology and spirituality. For nine months the facility is used for this program. This program attracts religious from all of Africa and creates a fine “ripple” effect. What is taught here has an effect throughout the continent.

There are a variety of other programs also at this center. There are leadership training programs for young people from throughout Ghana; bookkeeping courses for priests and leaders of Catholic institutions in Ghana; and *Come and See* programs for those interested in the religious life.

This center is at the Brothers’ Administrative Center and provides an apostolic outreach that covers not only Africa but reaches out to Notre Dame, Indiana. Every year groups of

students from Holy Cross College spend a couple of weeks at the center in an “immersion” experience – living the life of our African Holy Cross community.



Holy Cross Basic Skills Program

Anaji, Western Region

The problem: Large numbers of young men unable, for a variety of reasons, to continue a regular high school course.

A solution: A basic skills training program to provide skills which would enable these young men to earn a dignified living and to contribute to the general development of their country.

In 1982, the Brothers of Holy Cross began a new project in Ghana directed at helping young men at risk of becoming street people to become wage earners for their families. The site for this school is Anaji in the Western Region. The school teaches masonry, carpentry, auto mechanics, small engine repair and plumbing.

The course lasts three years, at the end of which all students take government exams to get certification in their chosen field.

One of the most exciting aspects of this project is that the students, with their teachers, built all of the school buildings. This includes a very large workshop, a classroom building and an office block. Most of the students are on scholarship because they cannot afford to pay the tuition fees of \$50 a year. There are about 150 students in the school, but that number will soon rise to around 250.

Because of the success of this school, young men are coming from other regions in Ghana. The Brothers are drawing up plans for a small hostel

(dormitory) to house the out-of-townners. The students will build this building.



Brother Daniel Dardoe (center) and students



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