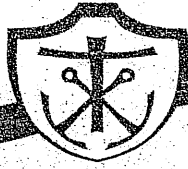


# Brothers



MIDWEST PROVINCE • NOTRE DAME, INDIANA

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## How Are We Brothers to Others?

God calls everyone to a particular vocation by placing a desire in each one's heart. It is through the fabric of everyday life that God speaks. As a brother, I have heard and responded to the call of God to live the beatitudes of the Gospel in a vowed life of direct service and witness to the people of God according to the constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross. And, with God's grace, forever!

This call is not something that is static and that happened to me some years ago. Rather, it continues to impel me to find creative ways to enliven my vocation. Joining with others similarly motivated maximizes my ability to be of service. I am called to put my life, my energy, on the line for the sake of the Reign of God. This call disturbs and disrupts me from "my private agenda" just as the Gospel afflicts the comfortable and comforts the afflicted. For me, brotherhood is a way of life, centered on Jesus as my brother. Service, prayer, community, Eucharist and the demands of the kingdom must have first place in my life as a Brother of Holy Cross. As does

any life style choice, my life in Holy Cross requires a fundamental discipline to speak the daily "yes" that I promised years ago.

Jesus, my brother, was a man of prayer. Prayer was of the essence in Jesus' life and mission. Praying was integral to his whole way of being and acting. Prayer was not something fitted in if time permitted. He was other-oriented, other-focused, Other-centered. His ministry was relational: Jesus was brother! This must be the attitude that I also live as a brother. I must be a man of prayer.

Prayer has to do with being in touch with reality, which is to say, in touch with God who is manifested in everything and everyone around me. God is present here and now. Prayer is that kind of total engagement with reality—God. "To serve him honestly we must pray always and not give up." (C3, 25) To be in a personal relationship with Jesus as brother is to challenge me to see all from that perspective. I cannot live my life on the periphery. I must choose to risk

sharing the whole of my life. Brother is not a title I use, but a way to define the core of who I am called to be. Not to be brother would do violence to my understanding of who I am in relationship to others, to you.

I think it would be unfortunate if we confused the vocation to religious life with the call to be a teacher, a nurse, social worker, or any other ministry or work, because they are not the same. One is a call to direct service, the other is an invitation to a vocational identity.

The call to religious life is a call to a specific way to live the Gospel—a life style choice—a vocation. "We want to live our vows in such a way that our lives will call into question the fascinations of our world: pleasure, wealth and power." (C5, 45) These vows we publicly profess are Other-centered. Chastity, poverty and obedience professed for the sake of the Reign of God are a means to an end—union with Christ.

Conformity and uniformity were once the marks of religious life, but this is no longer the case. Still, holding on to the values that are essential to

our vowed life, we must not only adapt but renew. Over the years since Vatican II, we have made many adaptations to our vowed and community life, but that work is not complete. Not limited by the expectations placed on clerics in the Church, we brothers are a band of men who freely accept a charismatic and prophetic life style and place it at the service of the People of God.

As others take over the services traditionally filled by religious, we brothers have the opportunity to refocus our vision, to look at unmet needs in our global community. Our call to apostolic religious life is a call to serve people as the needs of the time demand. We must be ready to hand over or abandon structures that represent security and embrace challenges that call us to new frontiers and to the margins of society. We must address critical needs that would otherwise remain unmet, maintain fidelity to our charism and mission, and live with spiritual awareness and intensity.

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Our founder, Father Moreau, was very much of this mind. As Holy Cross Brothers, we have always been at the forefront of spreading the Gospel. That's where the consistency comes; because we've always been where the needs are. It's just that now the needs are changing so rapidly. But as Gospel values remain basic, the way the message is preached must be effective for today. The core values of religious life remain at the heart of our vocation as brothers through how we preach and live out our faith story, and this must change to be effective for today. C 8, 118 says, "We must be men with hope to bring."

In Jesus, our brother, we put our faith and our hope. It remains our task, in partnership with you, to face the future and set a pace for a climate of authentic Christian community. "All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with him. There does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:27)

In meeting these new needs we face the reality of lower salaries, fewer wage earners, and an obligation to care for our retired and ill members. I see this as a real challenge and it may cause tension for us as we choose new ministry sites and evaluate the present ones. As an administrator of the province, I find myself asking, "How do we keep our eyes focused both on the needs of ministry, which are central and vital to the mission of Holy Cross, and the maintenance needs of the province?"

The Holy Cross Village project is one concrete way of addressing these needs. This dream of a progressive modern village with a focus on community and faith and with a mix of young and old, women and men, religious, lay and clerics, is designed to become a workable model of Church. We brothers see this development not only as a way to assist with our needs in the present, but as a clear conscious choice to develop a community of hope and vibrancy well into the next century.

Brotherhood will continue to have meaning, and therefore a future, only if it is clearly expressed as being attentive to the quality and importance of genuine relationships as well as to the truly critical issues of our time. I believe as brothers we have a unique gift to offer the Church. We are men with hope to bring, other-oriented, other-focused, Other-centered—brothers to others.

Elsewhere in this issue several brothers have reflected on their call to Holy Cross. In **Their Own Words** tells how they have been educators in the faith and men with hope to bring.

The short sketches of those who are celebrating their jubilees of religious profession this June note some **Markers Along the Way** in their challenges and responses as brothers.

Bernard. It was just a continuation of his life-long experience of ministering and bringing hope to those in need.

A high school teacher in Indianapolis, Chicago, and Watertown, Wisconsin, a missionary for 10 years in India (Bangladesh), a counselor for over 25 years at Father Gibault School for Boys in Terre Haute, Bernard has had an influence on many students, especially those who needed that special attention and concern he was always ready to give them.

As Bernard himself says: "In this age of plastics it takes a lot of help to keep an old machine like me running. I am grateful for the many persons who have helped me, but most of all I want to

I invite you to pause and reflect on your own vocation and the personal gifts you bring to your life and work. You know the challenge. How can you best continue to place your own gifts at the service of your sisters and brothers? Your partnership and collaboration in the Gospel's mission of hope are important in our global community.

—Br. Donald Gibbs, CSC



shout, 'Yeah, God!' because He was always there when I needed Him."



Another brother who worked with Br. Bernard many years at Father Gibault School for Boys in Terre Haute, Br. Camillus Kirsch is celebrating his sixtieth anniversary of profession. Camillus says: "Every day at Mass I give thanks to God for my religious vocation. As I recall the members of the community I have lived and worked with,



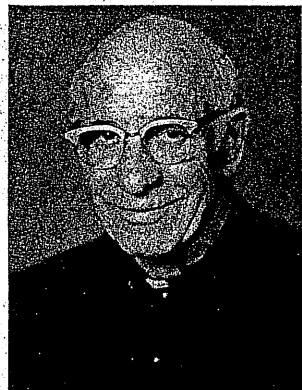
Br. Camillus Kirsch  
60 Years

and think of the scholarly, caring, and devoted religious, I am most grateful to be associated with the Brothers of Holy Cross."

Camillus was one of the first persons in the community to be trained in social work,

## Markers Along the Way...

A man of several careers, Br. Bernard (Bernardine) Mosier, in his seventieth year of profession, contin-



Br. Bernard Mosier

ues to minister and share his life and faith with a group of ex-convicts, alcoholics, and homeless men who themselves are trying to walk the road to recovery and find some stability in their lives. Bernard began this ministry when he was 74 years old, several years after many men retire; he is now nearing his 88th birthday. But influencing lives by sharing community, prayer, and hospitality was not new to

earning an MSW from the University of Chicago in 1943. From 1943 until 1972 he worked almost exclusively at Father Gibault School in various capacities, but for most of the time he was the houseparent for the younger boys, those between the ages of 9 and 12. He consumed himself with parenting these boys and kept in touch with many of the students after they had left the school. His correspondence with many former "boys" is indicative of the influence he had on their lives. His phenomenal memory for names and faces always amazed his students and co-workers.

After leaving Gibault School in 1972, Camillus became a psychiatric social worker at Central State Hospital in Indianapolis. Since retiring from this position in 1985, he continues to serve as a chaplain's assistant and minister at nursing homes in Indianapolis.



"If there is one blessing in my religious life," says Br. Just Paczesny, "it is that each day is a new beginning for me; I do not remember the problems from the day before. Somehow, the students sensed that and they, too, could start anew." High school teacher, assistant principal, principal, hall rector, university administrator, superintendent, vicar for education, superior — these are some of the positions held by Br. Just, who this year celebrates his fiftieth anniversary of religious profession.

A South Bend native, Just was principal at Holy Trinity in Chicago, Reitz Memorial in



Br. Just Paczesny  
50 Years

Evansville, and Marquette High School in Michigan City. At the University of Notre Dame he was, at various times, hall rector at Flanner and Alumni Halls, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Director of Student Services. He also served for five years as Dean of Students at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and two years as director of admissions at Holy Cross College, Notre Dame. He was involved in the diocesan education offices in the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Diocese of Phoenix.

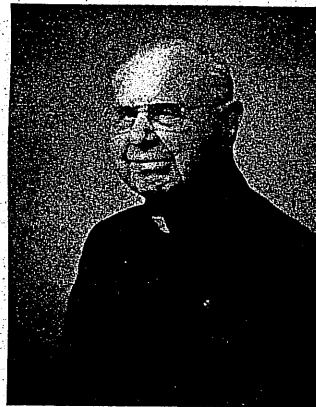
"In the summer of 1942, I met Br. Joseph Walter Olszowka, who introduced me to the Brothers of Holy Cross — because of him, I have spent fifty years with a wonderful and caring group of brothers and priests in the Congregation of Holy Cross."



Br. Flavius Ellison, who is also celebrating 50 years as a Brother of Holy Cross, has lived at Columba Hall on the campus at Notre Dame for almost all of his religious life. A native of Covington, Kentucky, he worked in the Notre Dame Post Office for several years, was the director of Dujarie Press, and wrote

sixteen books on the lives of the saints and other saintly people. He was also the director of Community Stores.

A new ministry in his life began after serving as an intern at St. Coletta's School in Jefferson, Wisconsin. For fourteen years he served as the



Br. Flavius Ellison  
50 Years

director of Corvillia, a group home for mentally challenged children and adults in South Bend. "My motto was always: 'To bring Christ to His people,'" says Br. Flavius. "This was especially true when I taught God's special children and helped them prepare for their First Holy Communion. Many parents thought that their special child would never be able to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion. It was a special privilege of bringing these 'little children' to Him."

For the past twelve years Flavius has been the director of the Association of St. Joseph, a lay association of people who support the life and mission of the Brothers of Holy Cross through their prayer and sacrifice.



## 40-Year Jubilarians

Doing maintenance work and grounds work for the last sixteen years, Br. Julian Przybyla, originally from



Br. Julian Przybyla

Rogers City, Michigan, lives and works at Holy Cross High School in River Grove, Illinois. Julian spent almost 25 years as a cook in various houses in the community before beginning his work in maintenance and grounds work.

Br. James Kinsella grew up in Richmond, Indiana. He has

taught at schools in Cleveland, Indianapolis, River Grove, Evansville, and Clinton, Michigan.



Br. James Kinsella

He also worked at Silver Lake Farm and is currently on the staff at LeMans Academy in Rolling Prairie.

A graduate of St. Edward High School, Lakewood, Ohio, Br. Thomas Mittendorf has lived almost his entire religious life at Columba Hall



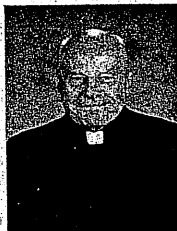
Br. Thomas Mittendorf

at Notre Dame. He worked for ten years as a clerk at the Notre Dame Post Office and for thirteen years in the province business office. Although ill health forced him to discontinue full-time employment, he still continues

to deliver communications to various houses and the provincial business offices.

As Thomas says, "St. Joseph and Brother Andre have always been my models." His good humor, his hearty laugh, and his quiet kindness reflect his imitation of these models.

Br. Walter Duda says: "I thank God daily for choosing me to be his follower. My life in Holy Cross is God's way of showing how much He loves me."



Br. Walter Duda

Walter has spent many years on grounds maintenance in various houses of the community. He now serves on the house staff at Holy Cross High School in River Grove.

A veteran of World War II, in addition to his work in grounds maintenance, Walter also worked at the Notre Dame Post Office and for several years served as a canvasser for subscriptions for the *Ave Maria*, a periodical formerly published by the congregation.

Br. Ronald LaLonde, after graduating from Sweetest Heart of Mary High School and working for a year in Detroit, served in the armed forces during the Korean conflict before joining Holy Cross. He reflects: "My life in Holy Cross has been extremely blessed and happy. From my first teaching days at 'Dear Old Cathedral,'



Br. Ronald LaLonde

to my present semi-retirement at Gabriel Richard High School, Riverview, Michigan, I have had the opportunity to work with hundreds of students, parents, and faculty. I treasure their friendship, support, and concern. If I were to do it again, I would change nothing."

As a teacher, school yearbook moderator, class moderator, or guidance counselor, Ronald taught at Cathedral in Indianapolis, St. Joseph's in South Bend, Catholic Central in Monroe, and at his current assignment, Gabriel Richard. Yearbooks, English classes, dance decorations, National Honor Society inductions, moderating Mothers' Clubs, following school athletic teams, and college guidance have all been a part of his ministry and support of others.

Br. James Bagans says: "After so many years in education, I believe now more than at any time, the need for our mission



Br. James Bagans

to provide youth with a strong moral direction and the basics of a solid education so that they will be able to compete successfully in their chosen vocation."

After serving on the staff at St. Charles Boys Home in Milwaukee, Archbishop Hoban High School in Akron, and Holy Cross High School in River Grove, James joined the counseling staff at St. Edward High School in Lakewood, Ohio, where he has continued

for 28 years. In addition to serving as a counselor, James has operated the school bookstore, been moderator of the Mothers' Club, and helped in grounds maintenance.

A graduate of Catholic Central High School, Monroe, Michigan, James says: "Living with such a diverse group of individuals has provided me with the opportunity to develop many close and valued friendships. The common purpose of the life brings one closer to the members one lives with and also to the God we seek."



Keeping a fleet of cars in good running condition is the way Br. Bernard Platte assists other brothers in their ministries.



Br. Gonzaga Day checks the 55 barrels he has packed with religious and educational items to be shipped to Bishop Mensah in Ghana for various missions there.

"I look to the future with hope and try to live each day with the prayer: 'Lord, help me to remember that nothing is going to happen to me today that You and I together cannot handle.'"

—Br. Bernard Platte

# In Their Own Words

*Educators in the faith and men with hope to bring, these Brothers of Holy Cross reflect on their challenges and responses to God's call:*

**Br. Thomas Sisung:** God has been with me on my pilgrimage, helping me in the ministries of teaching, cooking and volunteering in health care. I owe a great debt of gratitude to my many mentors who guided me along the way. A prayer I use is that of Rheinhold Niebuhr: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." From this prayer I have learned that all of us, whatever our class, race, or creed, are on this pilgrimage together. We all help each other.

**Br. Walter Gluhm:** After I had taught about thirty years, a new challenge in ministry developed for me in the collaborative mission Holy Cross has established in southern Georgia. As pastoral assistant, I minister to all ages in three mission parishes. I also visit the sick, shut-ins, and those in nursing homes. Communion calls are few, since the Catholic population is less than 2% in this area. Talking, listening, and praying with people of all ages is the high point of this ministry. Praying with people of all denominations has meant experiencing a special presence of Christ.

**Br. Thomas Balthazor:** Mike, age 17, said: "I considered driving into a tree. No one would know whether it was an

accident or not." It had just recently been disclosed that Mike had been sexually abusing his five-year-old nephew. He knew he was facing arrest and public embarrassment. He came, ashamed and desperate, to us at the Holy Cross Counseling Group, an agency which specializes in treating sexual assault. He learned from his therapists—Holy Cross Brothers and their fellow social workers—that he could begin to heal himself and his family.

As he progressed through his therapy, he began to plan for a very different life, one free of sexual abuse. This was more than a simple wish, it was a burning desire to be a new person. At Holy Cross Counseling Group Mike had discovered hope. Being part of this ministry gives special meaning to my life as a brother.

**Br. Richard Gilson:** In the nursing profession I am called to take part in the Church's healing mission. In my ministry I give public witness to the saving presence of Christ and to the transcendent spiritual beliefs concerning life, suffering and death. Nurses are motivated by respect for those they serve.

I have been involved in the nursing profession for over twenty-five years and have experienced many changes in the profession. Nurses are perpetual students, educators, counselors, and patient advocates. Our hardest calling is to be good listeners, to find

time in our hectic work environments to listen to our patients and their significant others, and to know when to voice our opinions and when to step back to allow others the time they may need to resolve possible life and death decisions.

**Br. Philip Smith:** To educate the heart as well as the mind is the reason I remain a high school teacher and principal. Although I was called and trained to instruct in reading, writing, analytical thinking, and music, these are merely mechanical skills. As I grew as a teacher, I began to realize that skills instruction needed to be taken a step deeper to include the components of humane living. And so I began to teach through the heart as the safest route to the mind.

During the last several years as a classroom teacher, I began to make the transformation into an educator—a healing manifestation of Jesus' love for the members of the school community. My reason to teach is to foster within my students the virtues of temperance, honor, honesty, generosity, sensitivity, self-discipline, and fortitude. It is such educators, I believe, who enable their students to become blessed because they raise their instruction from the mundane world of the mechanical, to the transformative relationship that motivates the young to become virtuous adults.

**Br. Bernard Platte:** As I reflect on my 43 years as a Brother of Holy Cross, whether I was farming to help to feed the novices, helping inner city kids by doing school maintenance and bus driving, servicing and repairing cars and equipment to help others in their ministries, or even burying those who have died in our community, life—with all its ups and downs—has been fulfilling and rewarding for me. As a brother I have also been enabled to be brother, uncle, stand-in grandpa, friend and repairman to my family and friends.

Although work is a big part of my life, it is complemented by daily Mass, communion, common and private prayer and community life. I look to the future with hope and try to live each day with the prayer, "Lord, help me to remember that nothing is going to happen to me today that You and I together cannot handle."

**Br. Gonzaga Day:** Some 57 years ago when I thought about entering Holy Cross, a hope I harbored was that the community would allow me to use my time, my talent, and our resources to bring hope to others, especially in the mission areas assigned to Holy Cross.

I have never been disappointed because so many others have embraced that same hope. Families, friends, schools, community members, provincials and general administrations have all played a part in helping those



# Maintaining Independence and Self-Sufficiency

working in mission areas. My goal was to be an educator in the faith, even though I never actually worked in the mission fields. I never taught in a foreign land, even though it was my privilege to help establish novitiates, seminars, churches, schools, retreat houses and renewal centers in mission fields where Holy Cross missionaries have their apostolates.

**Br. Thomas C. Henning:** The hunger in my inner spirit to know, to love, and to serve the Risen Christ brought me to minister to God's people and preach the Good News with compassion and sensitivity for the dignity and worth of each human person. Through my loving care and support I try to bring hope to those who are homebound, lonely, suffering, and depressed, and fill them with fervent hope in the cross of Jesus. This call has sustained me in Holy Cross.



*Over the past several years, Brothers have been involved in helping the elderly maintain their independence and self-sufficiency by providing coordinated services pertaining to all aspects of senior life—health, nutrition, education, and recreation. The Senior Friendship Centers in Florida, Dujarie House, our own skilled care facility, and the assisted living program at Columba Hall are works you'll read about in future issues of BROTHERS. In this issue we would like to focus on three brothers who work for agencies that provide these services in the Cleveland and Chicago areas.*

Brother Lewis Brazil, a long-time music and theology teacher, actually got into his ministry as an outgrowth of his teaching. He taught in the Christian service program at St. Edward's High School in Lakewood, Ohio, and he and

time, Lew volunteered in the program. With the encouragement of the province, he pursued advanced studies in gerontology at the University of Minnesota and earned a master's degree in social work at Case Western Reserve University. He has been involved in the Benjamin Rose Institute in Cleveland as a mental health social worker for several years.

"My greatest satisfaction comes when the clients I serve, especially those older adults who have limited incomes and supports, begin to take charge of their lives and function at the highest level possible despite their mental and physical deficits. When I can successfully advocate, empower, and link others to community resources, I begin to realize that my problem solving skills and abilities have been utilized properly on

Brothers. Brother Richard Shea became interested while teaching in high school at Holy Cross in River Grove. He saw the increasing needs of aging family members and looked at the projected statistics on the aging of the United States population. His initial interest encouraged him to volunteer as a visitor to homebound elderly through the Proviso Council on Aging in Bellwood, Illinois. From there, he studied at Roosevelt University in Chicago and received a master's degree in gerontology in 1981 and served as Coordinator of Social Services at Berwyn-Cicero for twelve years (1981-1993). In his work at Berwyn-Cicero (which had the largest concentration of low-income elderly in Illinois), Richard helped in providing home-delivered meals, housekeeping, socialization, and transportation to needy elderly people.

After Richard's "retirement" in 1993, he continued serving 20 hours per week through Family Care of Metropolitan Chicago and Leyden Senior Citizens. He visits five elderly, visually impaired persons per week, doing much the same thing he did while working full-time. Now he's using his recently acquired skills in Spanish to help others, too. "Retired?"

Brother James Reddy was working in the office at Holy Cross in River Grove, Illinois when Richard began his studies at Roosevelt. Jim became involved in volunteering during his free time and his



Br. James Reddy and two volunteers at the Berwyn-Cicero (Illinois) senior center.

his students collaborated with the Lakewood Division of Aging to help frail, unsupported elders in the community with yard work and housekeeping. During the summers and during his free

behalf of another human being. This is a satisfying and rewarding feeling," says Lewis.

The Berwyn-Cicero (Illinois) Council on Aging has been the beneficiary of the work of two



Br. Lewis Brazil meets with a client in Cleveland.

interest grew. He, too, pursued the master's work in gerontology at Roosevelt and received the degree in 1985. From there, he worked in the Sister-Visitor Program in Louisville, Kentucky. His work there was not only with the elderly, but with many of the poor of Louisville's west side.

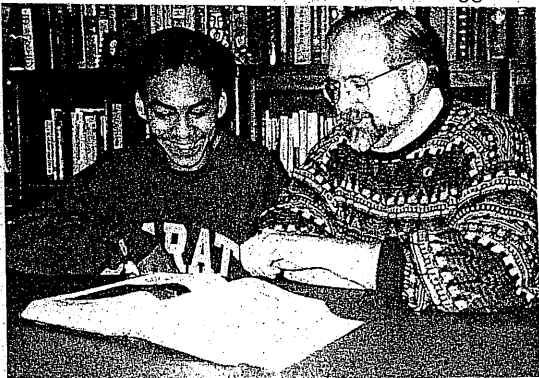
After that the community called on Jim to serve as superior of Columba Hall on the Notre Dame campus for a three-year period. His work at Columba Hall often focused on the needs and lives of many of the older Holy Cross Brothers who make their home there. From there, it was on to Berwyn-Cicero where he worked with Richard for several years. His job there is assisting the elderly to remain independent. He says he is inspired by the wonderful spirit of make-do with many limitations that his clients embody.

In Matthew, Chapter 25, those being judged are surprised by Jesus' words. Jesus responded that as long as one came to the aid of the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, or the lonely, it was done also to Him.

The constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross amplify this: "As disciples of Jesus we stand side by side with all people. Like them we are burdened by the same struggles and beset by the same weaknesses; like them we are made new by the same Lord's love; like them we hope for a world where justice and love prevail."

Brothers Lewis Brazil, Richard Shea, and James Reddy are spreading the Kingdom of God by first realizing their own humanity and inspiring others to "One Hope."

-Br. Charles Gregg, CSC



## News at a Glance



The award was presented during the month of May in Washington, D.C.

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A second resident of Dujarie House has celebrated his 100th birthday! Br. Jacob Eppley, a member of the South-West Province, was 100 on May 30. Br. Lewis Leimeister celebrated his 100th birthday on November 28.

Br. Jacob, formerly a professional cellist, taught and administered in many schools throughout the United States.

Br. Philip Smith, president and principal of Holy Trinity High School in Chicago has announced the annual *One Hope (Spes Unica)* award, "conferred annually by Holy Trinity on the person whose dedication to education represents the hope of tomorrow to the students of today."

The Honorable Richard M. Daley, mayor of Chicago, was the 1996 recipient of the award at a dinner sponsored by the Holy Trinity governing board, administration, and faculty on April 25. The award dinner benefitted the Holy Trinity Financial Aid Fund.

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On June 22 the seventieth, sixtieth, fiftieth, and fortieth anniversaries of profession of vows for ten members of the province will be celebrated at Notre Dame with a liturgy at Sacred Heart Basilica and a dinner following at one of the university dining halls. Elsewhere in this issue are biographical sketches of the jubilarians.

Br. James Spooner, president of St. Edward High School in Lakewood, Ohio, recently announced that the school had been among the 50 private schools nationwide and the only one in Ohio to have been selected by the U.S. Department of Education as a *Blue Ribbon School* for the period 1994-1996.

Preparations are underway for the triennial provincial chapter meeting of the Midwest Province in 1997. Br. Donald Gibbs, assistant provincial, is the liaison between the provincial council and a committee appointed by Br. William Geenen, provincial, to plan the chapter. Br. David Martin is the chairman of the committee.

The 1997 chapter is expected to be a time for prayerful reflection and discernment on the overall life and mission of the province. The group will review what has occurred over the past three years and provide directions for the provincial administration and the membership to pursue over the next three years.

A preparatory chapter meeting will be held for province members on June 21, 1996, at the Brothers Center. Between then and the following June, regional meetings among the participants will be held to complete preparation for the chapter.

# Blessed Brother Andre: Miracle Worker of Mount Royal

Mountains tower over and make us realize our own insignificance. Some people climb to the top to conquer the mountain. We even use figurative speech about "moving mountains." The story of Brother Andre Bessette is a story about a man and a mountain. Brother Andre was a small, sickly, uneducated man. The mountain was Mount Royal, which towered over the city of Montreal.

Now known throughout the world as Blessed Brother Andre, Alfred Bessette was born on August 9, 1845, in a tiny village near Montreal. The next day he was baptized because he was so weak at birth that his parents feared he would die before the time planned for his baptism. He grew up in a large French Canadian family of ten children. Life in the family was loving, simple, frugal. He learned his prayers, said the rosary, attended Mass, and developed a strong devotion to St. Joseph.

When Alfred was only nine, his father, a lumberman, was crushed to death by a falling tree. Just three years later, Alfred's mother died of tuberculosis. Shortly after the mother's death, the family was dispersed. Young and frail, Alfred, only twelve years of age, lived with relatives for a while but then had to find work and try to learn a trade. He had very little education. In addition, his poor health always interfered with his conscientious efforts to find a trade. He tried to make a living

as an unskilled worker traveling from job to job in one village after another. He tried to work as an apprentice baker, tinsmith, blacksmith, shoemaker, and coachman. After thirteen years of wandering from job to job, Alfred left for the United States to find work in the textile mills. For the next four years he labored in this occupation despite the fact of his very poor health. "Despite my weak condition, I did not let anyone get ahead of me as far as work was concerned." In the year 1867 Alfred came back to Canada.

On the strong recommendation of his parish priest, in 1870 Alfred presented himself as a candidate for the brothers in the novitiate of the Congregation of Holy Cross in Montreal. The Holy Cross congregation was devoted to the teaching



profession and so Alfred's lack of education and poor health made religious superiors question whether he should be approved to make vows. He

could barely write his name, but he knew how to pray and wanted to spend his entire life in prayer and in the service of the Church.

Finally Alfred was accepted into the community and given the name of Brother Andre. He was assigned the responsibility of porter at Notre Dame College, a school for boys established on the western slope of Mount Royal in Montreal. Later in life he used to say, "When I entered the community, my superiors showed me the door, and I remained there for forty years without leaving." Other tasks were also assigned to Brother Andre, delivering messages, washing floors, cleaning windows—all work that would be considered most menial in today's society.

Within a very short time Brother Andre began to invite the sick and those with problems to pray with him. He always insisted that they pray to St. Joseph and many reported that their prayers were being answered and their health was restored. Word spread and more and more people came to see him and pray with him. For the next twenty-five years Brother Andre received all who came to see him, regardless of the time of day or night. He would receive those who came to him in his tiny office at the college or in the tramway station across the street from the college. Andre would caution that the healings were never his work. He was only a tool in the hands of the Lord, a poor instrument of St. Joseph.

Finally, when the college was able to acquire the land on the slope of Mount Royal, Andre convinced his superiors that this would be a place to construct a small oratory to St. Joseph. For years Andre had hoped to establish some type of shrine to St. Joseph on this great mountain overlooking the city of Montreal. This oratory would be a place where Andre could pray with the sick and troubled who came to see him.

The first chapel was built on the mountain in 1904. Soon it became too small, and this same chapel was enlarged in 1908 and again in 1910. Finally, a professional architect drew plans for a basilica. In 1917 a new crypt church was built which was to hold one thousand people. Delays caused by world wars and economic depressions stalled the completion of the basilica and the superiors thought it might be best to abandon the entire project. When his superiors had doubts that the work should be completed, Andre reminded them: "It's not my work; it's St. Joseph's." In 1936 the exterior was completed; the entire Oratory was not completed until 1967. Today, over two million people come each year to pray at this great basilica in honor of St. Joseph and receive physical and spiritual healing.

Brother Andre did not live to see the Oratory completed. He died on January 3, 1937, at the venerable age of 92. Over a million mourners paid their final tribute to their friend. Patiently standing in lines that stretched down the icy mountainside, they waited in



# A Prisoner of War Remembers

the sleet and snow of Montreal's cold winter. There were many reports of both physical cures and healed spirits during these days. Many were convinced that Brother Andre was a saint. All through his life his only desire was to be the servant of St. Joseph and of all those who prayed to him.

Father Thomas Barrosse, former superior general of the Congregation of Holy Cross, wrote: "Brother Andre was a man of the people, a man who knew poverty and suffering, a man whose natural gifts, though real, were limited and who knew failure and severe limitations..." During his long life Brother Andre practiced the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. He lived in poverty, mortification, and suffering. He was unselfish in listening and aiding his brothers and sisters who asked for help and healing of body and spirit. In 1978, His Holiness Pope Paul VI declared Brother Andre "Venerable," in other words, an outstanding model of Christian virtues; in 1982, Pope John Paul II beatified Brother Andre. Now called Blessed Brother Andre, his feast is celebrated on January 6.

By dint of heroic effort, this humble Holy Cross religious, with the help of St. Joseph, and complete trust in God's providence, was truly able to move mountains.

—Br. Robert Kelly, CSC



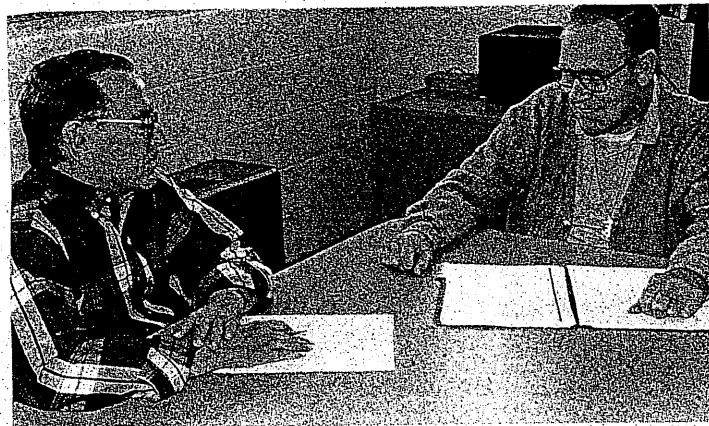
*In November 1941, Brother Rex Hennel set sail from San Francisco for India to serve as a missionary. There were six United States Holy Cross brothers, sisters, and priests in his group, and they stopped off at the Philippines on their journey. Rex was twenty-two years old at the time, and had just completed his studies at Notre Dame.*

*While waiting in the Philippines in early December to continue the trip, the tragic, surprising and brutal bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese took place. War was declared with Japan and the Japanese proceeded to invade and capture the Philippines. Suddenly these innocent missionaries of peace were engulfed in the onslaught of the life destructive bombs and missiles of war. Rex, along with two thousand others, was imprisoned for more than three years. They were finally rescued by American soldiers and returned home in 1945.*

*Rex never got to India as a missionary, but he did serve in West Africa on two different assignments, in the 50's and the 70's. He also served as a school administrator in various schools and as assistant provincial. He presently lives at the Brothers Center and works at the provincial office at Notre Dame. He recently celebrated his 58th anniversary of profession of vows.*

*Several weeks ago I had the distinct privilege of interviewing Rex about his imprisonment. His account is both appalling and inspiring.*

—Br. James Moroney, CSC



Br. Rex Hennel (r) recounts his experiences as a prisoner of war to interviewer, Br. James Moroney (l).

**Q:** Rex, what was life like as a prisoner? What was your daily routine?

There were sufficient barracks to house some two thousand men, women, and children enclosed by a barbed-wire fence with armed guards always stationed at each gate. In our barracks for men there were sixteen cubicles, each containing four beds. We did our own cooking on a wood-burning stove and were each assigned work daily. There was only one light bulb in our entire barracks.

We started each day with Mass followed by breakfast and line-up count of prisoners by the guards. Daily life was frugal and uneventful. We simply painfully waited to be freed and the agonizing months turned into years. I kept busy teaching youngsters basketball, teaching the boys to serve Mass, tutoring, and cutting fire wood for our stove.

**Q:** Admittedly, to be held prisoner is an atrocity in itself. Did you observe any inhumane treatment of prisoners? One time a prisoner was shot to death by a guard and left lying

over a day before being removed. The guards were always present and in and out of the barracks which made the situation always tense and fearful.

**Q:** Did being a religious brother make any difference in the way you were treated?

Yes, it did. The Japanese wanted the cooperation and support of the Filipinos who were 80% Catholic and who had a great respect for religious and priests. Consequently, we were allowed to have a chapel for some fifty priests to say Mass and where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved for worship. This was a tremendous blessing.

**Q:** Were the Japanese soldiers anti-religious or anti-Christian?

They did worship their emperor, but they didn't seem to be anti-religious. For the most part, they seemed to be humane in their treatment. One guard shared with me a picture of his family and said he dearly missed them and he wanted me to know this. I assured him that I knew how he felt.

**Q: What were your most depressing experiences?**  
 The two things that hurt the most were lack of letters and the hunger. There was never any sign nor hope of release and this greatly depressed many of us. During the three years I received only one letter from my mother through the help of the Red Cross. Secondly, there was the persistent agony of constant hunger. We were always hungry, malnourished, and weak as a result. We eventually got down to two meals a day. The menu consisted only of rice and very little of that. There were five to six deaths a day from starvation.

ecstatic and overwhelmed with joy. We were being freed at last. All the Japanese soldiers were killed, and the barracks set on fire after we vacated the camp.

**Q: And what did you learn most from the experience?**  
 I learned plenty about myself: my strengths and my weaknesses. I learned, too, there are good and bad people everywhere, even among prisoners. Some are very greedy; others, selfless to the end, thinking only of others — parents sacrificing what little food they had for their children, which finally resulted in their own death from starvation.

Although some prisoners felt angry and bitter, I never did. Today I rarely think of the internment. Ministry to others must go on despite a hurtful past.

**Q: Any final impressions, Rex?**  
 When I got back to Evansville, my dad and sisters met me at the station. Mother was not there because of her poor health. My internment had hurt her deeply and at one time she thought I had died. When I saw her for the first time after my release, I realized the suffering she had undergone during these years and the cruelty and futility of war came home to me with all its force.

**Q: And what gave you the most comfort and hope?**  
 My faith and my religion. Despite the unbearable suffering, I spent the happiest Christmas of my life in prison. Sitting quietly before the Blessed Sacrament with the whole of my possessions on me—a pair of shorts and a pair of wooden sandals—I fully realized I had all that I needed, all that was really necessary. This day was the Lord's birthday and everything else was incidental. I was filled with peace and joy.

**Q: When were you rescued and what was it like to be finally freed?**

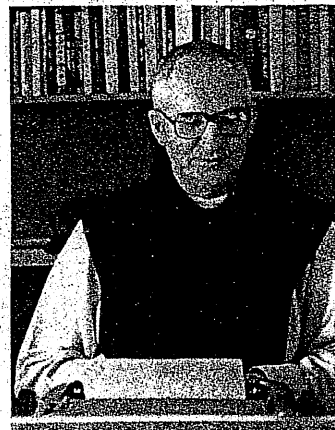
We were rescued by American soldiers in February of 1945. From out of the skies we could hear and see the planes and the bombs exploding outside of camp and men jumping to the ground in parachutes. We were

## Touched by Holy Cross

### The Holy Cross/Trappist Connection

"There is a great debt I owe a great debt to the Holy Cross, especially those who were in your midst. If it were not for those years, I would never have made the transition to Gethsemani." So writes Brother Patrick Hart, OCSO, Trappist monk, editor, author, and former secretary to the spiritual writer Thomas Merton. Patrick was a Brother of Holy Cross from 1947 until his becoming a Trappist in 1951.

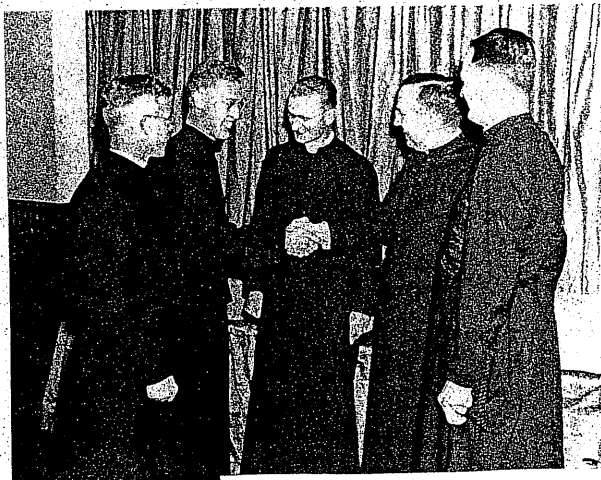
Of his Holy Cross years, Patrick says, "The brothers I encountered made a deep and lasting impression, especially Brothers Bonaventure Foley and Elmo Bransby, the superiors at Dujarie Hall, Notre Dame, during those formative years. Then there was Brother Gerontius McCarthy, principal and superior at Catholic Central High School, Monroe, Michigan, my first and only assignment as a teacher in the Brothers. Each of them in his own way was supportive of my desire for a more contemplative lifestyle.



Br. Patrick Hart, OCSO

"So, in all truth, I am enormously indebted to Holy Cross and to so many teachers at Notre Dame. Frank O'Malley, in particular, was for many of his Notre Dame students what Thomas Merton was to become for me and so many other monks at Gethsemani. It was O'Malley's and Merton's contemplative vision of the Gospel that became so much a part of them through their reading of the 'French Prophets' — Bloy, Mauriac, Peguy, Claudel, etc. They were both born teachers, O'Malley even more than Merton, who was a minister of the written word."

Patrick has served as secretary to the Abbot at Gethsemani, on the staff of the Rome Generalate, as a founder of New Clairvaux Abbey in California, and as the last



At a farewell party at Dujarie Scholasticate in October, 1941, Br. Rex (second from left) shakes hands with superior, Br. Dominic Elder. Others in the picture are: (l. to r.) Fr. Charles Mahoney, Br. Adelbert Mrowca, and Br. William Mang.

"Despite the unbearable suffering, I spent the happiest Christmas of my life in prison."

— Br. Rex Hennel

# Person to Person

—A Word from Brother Geenen



Br. William Geenen

This issue of **BROTHERS** examines who brothers in the Midwest Province perceive

themselves to be. They try to incarnate ideals expressed in the constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross, which identify them as "educators in the faith" (C2,12) and "men with hope to bring" (C8,118).

Today's evolving notion of the lay religious life demands that brothers be open and available to the multifaceted forms of service emerging in the Church. These needs call brothers to be visible as witnesses to and instructors in the life of faith common to all Christians, and to show evidence that the hope Jesus has given us through his resurrection is vibrant, compelling, and held out to everyone, however burdened by the apparently overwhelming concerns of this world.

Though never exclusively engaged in education, the brothers in Holy Cross were founded primarily for that purpose. Even auxiliary ministries performed by those who did not teach were seen to be in direct support of those who did. The needs of the times required this apostolic focus and the brothers answered without hesitation.

Today, however, an evolution in Catholic education everywhere has highlighted and confirmed the essential participation of the laity. Brothers are among those thousands of religious educators who have, over the years, brought the laity more fully into administrative and instructional roles in Catholic schools. The brothers have in that sense begun to work themselves out of a job.

As needs change, brothers are in a unique position to respond. Constraints that influence sisters and priests sometimes affect brothers less. Brothers have the capability to adapt and reach out in forms of ministry that no longer require, or may even be inhibited by, numbers of religious. Gradually over the years many brothers have moved from larger institutional apostolates to serve new ministries as individuals or in small groups.

The schools themselves have broadened their philosophy of operation and now concentrate on a far more personal and wholistic approach to ministry, not only to the students, but to the whole educational community of individuals impacted by the institution.

The expansion of educational roles of brothers from within the academic environment is less easily perceived. Growing experience and expertise have enabled brothers to expand



Photo of Br. Patrick Hart (l) and Thomas Merton (r) in 1968 on the morning before Merton left on his fateful Asian journey.

secretary to Thomas Merton. Patrick writes, "When Merton died so suddenly in Bangkok, Thailand, on December 10, 1968, I thought my service as secretary was ended. Little did I know that it was only beginning. For I have been, literally, his secretary for the past twenty-eight years following his death.

"Abbot Flavian asked me to continue to answer the Merton correspondence and act as Gethsemani's representative on Merton affairs, which I have been doing for a quarter of a century. At the same time, the Merton Legacy Trust asked me to edit a number of Merton manuscripts such as *The Literary Essays*, *The Monastic Journey*, and a volume of the Merton letters, *The School of Charity*.

"In 1990, I was appointed general editor of the Merton journals, which are now beginning to be published. There will be seven volumes, two of which have been published. I edited the first, *Run To The Mountain*, and am currently working on the

seventh volume." Patrick's editing of Merton works and writings on Cistercian spirituality now total seventy items.

"You know how much I cherish my friendships with you and John Kuhn, Donald Gibbs, your provincial, William Geenen, and countless others with whom I still correspond. We are still united on a deep level of prayer and dedication to Gospel values instilled into my being during those four years as a Brother of Holy Cross.

"There is no question but Holy Cross touched me at a very impressionable time in my spiritual journey, and though I moved on to a more contemplative setting, I left a big part of my heart there with all of you."

—Br. Francis Englert, CSC



beyond traditional administrative and instructional roles. For example, brothers work as campus ministers, adult education or literacy tutors, diocesan supervisors of schools, college presidents or deans, librarians, computer experts, and school psychologists.

As needs evolve, so does the capability of the brothers to respond. Discerning the needs and marshaling the manpower to engage appropriately and in a timely manner challenge the province today. We count on your help, especially your prayers, in supporting our efforts to be fully relevant in service, to be truly brothers in our time.

—Br. William Geenen, CSC  
Provincial



### *Examples of province members' responses to needs not directly associated with schools:*

- *ministry to the poor in houses of hospitality*
- *preservation of provincial archival materials*
- *substance abuse counseling*
- *sexual abuse counseling*
- *spiritual direction and retreat direction*
- *Catholic Charities administration*
- *direct care of AIDS patients*
- *administrative organization and direct service to the elderly*
- *development work benefitting the missions and internal needs*
- *parish ministry and administration*
- *nursing*
- *public relations and communications*
- *direct service to diocesan administrations*
- *marriage and divorce counseling*
- *clinical pastoral education service in hospitals*
- *legal services*
- *food service direction*