

# Brothers



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## 25 Years of People Helping People



*"A Silver Celebration" was held recently to celebrate the 25 years of service of the Senior Friendship Centers. Approximately 2,000 people attended the weekend of activities which included entertainment and storytelling by talented seniors, and a fair featuring the SFC regular activities and services.*

A "wrong turn" in the spring of 1973 turned out to be a fortunate turn for countless Southwest Florida residents who have benefited from that chance event. At that time, Br. William Geenen was the Director of Admissions for Gilmour Academy in Gates Mills, Oh. While on a recruiting trip to Florida, and having visited a friend at Memorial Hospital in Sarasota, Br. Geenen was on his way north when he made the wrong turn at the intersection of US 41 and Florida 301.

As he was referring to his map in a parking lot north of Sarasota, an elderly gentleman came up and engaged him in conversation. The man had recently lost his wife, had some health problems, and just wanted to talk to someone. Br. William was quick to see the extreme loneliness that this man was experiencing. He wanted to do something for him and for what he suspected were countless others like him—far from home, family, and former friends and associates. Returning

to Gates Mills, Br. William prayed over the situation and kept asking himself, "Who is going to do something about the needs of these older people?" The answer came. "I guess I need to be that person."

On September 1, 1973, with the blessing of the provincial superior, Br. Charles Krupp, Br. Geenen arrived in Sarasota with a dream and \$79. It was obvious that money was not going to be the fulfillment of his dream of helping older adults to live with dignity and indepen-

dence. A house belonging to St. Martha's parish was renovated to serve as a drop-in place for the elderly. Molleen Pust, a retired federal executive, expressed an interest in volunteering and began working with Br. William to form a structure for the organization.

Opening day was December 15, 1973. Br. William and Molleen hoped that maybe a few would drop in; 450 signed the guest book that weekend! Growth hasn't stopped. Articles in the local papers inspired

interest in what became known as the Senior Friendship Centers (SFC), a non-sectarian organization. Br. Geenen recalls a lady phoning him and saying, "I'm a Presbyterian. I have two chairs if you want them." Br. Geenen responded that he did not have any "Presbyterian chairs" and the gift would be most welcome. These chairs were followed by Baptist televisions, Methodist kitchen equipment, and Jewish, Lutheran, Episcopalian, and Catholic gifts of all varieties.

Growth was rapid, and by 1978 the house at St. Martha's became too small. Renovated buildings on State Street in downtown Sarasota allowed the continuance of the social and dining programs, but also provided the space to establish medical services and adult day care. The Living Room, a day care center for the frail elderly, opened in 1983 in Luke Wood Park, and in 1988 the Senior Friendship Centers' main complex was also built in this park which is coincidentally at the intersection of US 41 and Florida 301. The Living Room was the first free-standing adult day care center built in the United States.

### 1,400 Volunteers

"People helping people" is the motto and guiding principle of the Senior Friendship Centers. SFCs provide services from 18 locations in Sarasota, Lee, DeSoto, and Collier counties. More than 1,400 volunteers and a paid staff of 200 now do what Br. Geenen and Molleen Pust envisioned 25 years

ago. The volunteers, paid staff, and guests work together, sharing talents, gifts, and professional skills, sowing the seeds of friendship, and harvesting the rewards that come from helping others live with dignity and independence.

### Services

SFCs' services are geared to provide companionship, education, and entertainment in a safe and secure environment which is sensitive to the needs of older persons.

Attractive, well-designed and furnished facilities reflect the Centers' mission of dignity for all people. Classes and speakers, aerobics, support groups, nutrition and health education, literacy tutoring, and afternoons of dancing, playing cards, working on crafts, or just listening to music occupy the many guests who frequent the centers.

A corps of a hundred retired physicians, pharmacists, nurses, and medical secretaries staff four health service clinics. This health service program served as a national model when the SFCs obtained Florida legislation that enabled doctors retired in Florida to be licensed and work as volunteers at the centers. Along the same lines, a dental clinic was opened in 1997. A special wing of The Living Room has adult day care for Alzheimer's patients. The Centers also provide in-home and case management services. SFCs have been recognized nationally by the American Council on Aging for leadership in the AmeriCorps program.



A banner welcomes guests to the silver anniversary celebration of the Senior Friendship Centers.

The Friendship Center operated at the Sarasota-Bradenton airport serves the traveling public with help, hospitality, and information. Senior Friendship Center volunteers also operate the transportation carts at the airport.

To many of the elderly, the late afternoon "Candlelight Dining" is the highlight of their day, a time to eat a nutritious meal in the company of friends. The SFCs' 38 vans and buses in the transportation program annually provide 221,000 rides to medical appointments, adult day care services, meal sites, and grocery shopping. For those who can't come to the dining rooms, meals are delivered to homes Monday through Friday. The Centers' publication, *Today's Senior* (published in cooperation with the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*) keeps the entire community informed of the schedule of events and menus at the Centers.

### Continuing Involvement

Although Br. Geenen left Sarasota in 1994 to become provincial of the Brothers of Holy Cross, Midwest Province, the work of the Senior Friendship Centers has engaged the attention of several members of the congregation. Today, Br. Charles Krupp serves as Director of Planning and Development, and Br. William (Francisco) Drury volunteers at the Venice Health Service Clinic and at the Friendship Center inside the Sarasota-Bradenton airport. Brothers Raymond Kelly, Douglas Roach, and Robert Woodward are others who have worked there over the years.

### Br. Geenen Receives "Flame" Award

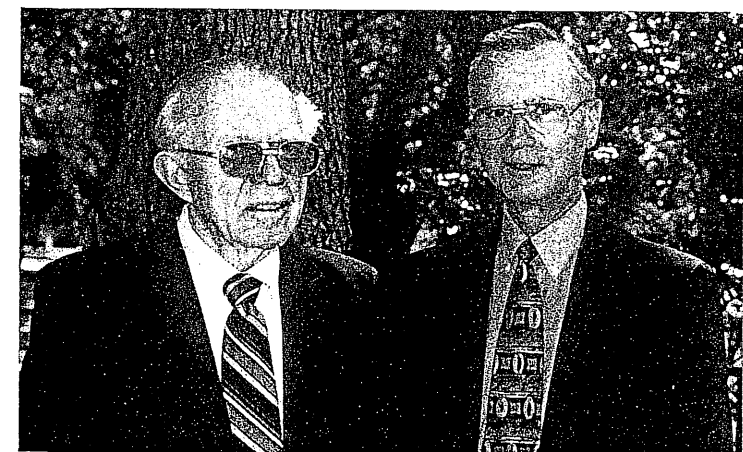
In its 25 years, the Senior Friendship Center's prestigious "Flame Award" has been presented only six times. This award is presented to those who "bring light to the Sarasota community."

Appropriately enough, at the 25th anniversary, the Flame Award was presented to Br. William Geenen. Earlier, in recognition of his work, the city of Sarasota named the street in front of the Friendship Center as Brother Geenen Way. In 1993, the Sarasota-Bradenton Airport Authority named and dedicated the Br. William Geenen Friendship Center at the airport.

The "wrong turn" made by a pragmatic visionary in 1973 became the cornerstone for a work which has eased the loneliness, anxiety, and health concerns and brought new meaning to the lives of thousands of people in Florida.

—Br. Charles Gregg, CSC

*Br. Geenen arrived in Sarasota with a dream and \$70. It was obvious that money was not going to be the fulfillment of his dream of helping older adults to live with dignity and independence.*



Brothers (l. to r.) Frank Drury and Charles Krupp currently minister at the Senior Friendship Centers' programs in Sarasota and Venice, Fla.

# Boysville of Michigan 50th Anniversary

# Fr. Hugh Cleary Elected Superior General

1998 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Boysville of Michigan on property formerly owned and operated as a trade school by Henry Ford in the little farming village of Macon, six miles east of Clinton and twenty miles southwest of Ann Arbor.

In early summer 1948, Edward Cardinal Mooney of Detroit, at the urging of the Michigan Knights of Columbus, begged the Brothers of Holy Cross to undertake a boarding program for "boys with a problem"—not problem boys—under the philosophy that "It is better to build a boy than to mend a man." Most of the boys were from single-parent homes.

Br. Ephrem O'Dwyer, provincial, agreed. Immediately that September a small contingent of brothers began a residential high school program mostly in war surplus structures on the muddy, undeveloped Ford grounds. Br. Patrick Cain was named first director.

The program and facilities grew rapidly under successor directors Brs. Hilarion Brezik and John Lavelle, and an enrollment of 185 Catholic boys from the entire state was being served effectively until the mid-sixties when director Br. Philip Armstrong was faced with the dilemma of rising costs intersecting with increasingly limited resources from the sponsoring Knights. Br. Philip's immediate successors, Brs. Robert Hormann and Edward Overstreet, negotiated with the Archdiocese of Detroit, the Knights, and the State of Michigan for a necessary but fundamental change of purpose at Boysville. As a result, a new era of broader service began in which the school and residential programs were tailored to the needs of youth dealing with emotional and behavioral instability, and the focus began to be placed on the whole family under the

motto, "Where families begin again."

Expansion beyond the Macon campus (into group homes throughout the state and across the border into Ohio) took place under the vigorous leadership of Br. Francis Boylan, director now for more than a quarter of a century. By the early 1990's Boysville had gained the reputation of being the most effective residential youth program in the state.

As Boysville celebrates its 50th birthday, it can look back with pride to its unceasing dedication to the needs of youth and its creative, vigorous response through the establishment of appropriate and effective programs. The many Brothers of Holy Cross who served there over the years, along with those who still do, have truly been "men with hope to bring." They have contributed significantly to the permanency and efficiency of these valuable services that have proved so beneficial to the youth of Michigan, for whom the brothers have been and remain brothers indeed.

—Br. Philip Armstrong, CSC



Fr. Hugh Cleary, CSC, newly elected superior general of the Congregation of Holy Cross, is introduced to Pope John Paul II at an audience attended by the general chapter delegates.

In July, Holy Cross delegates from all over the world met in Rome for a general chapter, the legislative body of the Congregation. One responsibility of the general chapter was to elect a new superior general. On July 17 the delegates elected Fr. Hugh Cleary to a six-year term as superior general to replace Fr. Claude Grou.

Fr. Cleary, a native New Yorker, is a graduate of the brothers' Holy Cross High School in Flushing, N.Y. He has a master's degree in counseling psychology from Loyola in Chicago, and a master's and

doctorate in formative spirituality from Duquesne in Pittsburgh. He has experience in pastoral ministry, retreat work, spiritual direction, and religious formation work. At the time of his election, Fr. Cleary was the provincial of the Eastern Province of Priests and Brothers. He had previously served as the director of novices for the United States and Canadian provinces of priests and brothers.

In his first visit to Notre Dame after his election, Fr. Cleary was honored at a Schubert Villa reception jointly sponsored by the Congregation's Indiana and Midwest Provinces. It was an opportunity for Fr. Cleary to meet brothers and priests in the area, renew acquaintances, and receive best wishes on his new position of leadership within the Congregation.

Fr. Cleary and his general assistants, Br. John Gleason, Fr. Robert Morin, Br. Donald Blauvelt, and Fr. Arulraj Gali, will live in Rome at the Holy Cross Generalate, the administrative center for the Congregation's 1,700 priests and brothers serving in 14 countries and 40 dioceses throughout the world.

## Hoban Wins Blue Ribbon

Archbishop Hoban High School, Akron, Ohio, recently received the prestigious Blue Ribbon rating from the U.S. Department of Education. Only 14 high schools in Ohio were so designated this year.

The award recognizes schools for excellence in the following areas: student focus and support; school organization and culture; challenging standards and curriculum; active teaching and learning; leadership and educational vitality; school, family, and community partnerships; and indicators of

success. Hoban's English and math programs and the student newspaper, *The Visor*, were used to demonstrate how the school's mission and goals are put into action.

The Blue Ribbon Award came after a review by 100 educators and an onsite visit by a judging panel. In November, President Br. Kenneth Haders and Principal Mary Anne Beiting attended an award ceremony in Washington, DC, at which all of the schools receiving the award this year were honored.

At the beginning of the school year Bishop Anthony M. Pilla, Bishop of Cleveland, visited the school and congratulated the Hoban students, faculty, administration, trustees and parents for the Blue Ribbon award. At a celebratory Mass he commented: "That's quite an achievement...and a very prestigious honor."

Principal Mary Anne Beiting said: "This national award affirms the work that has been done by many as we live out the Holy Cross mission at Hoban, educating both

# A Journey in Blessing and Hope: A Vocation Minister's Personal Reflections

*"The footsteps of those men who called us to walk in their company left deep prints, as of men carrying heavy burdens. But they did not trudge; they strode. For they had the hope."*

*(Constitutions 8:22)*

I travel a lot. Such is my lot as I coordinate vocation ministry and facilitate the Holy Cross Associates for the Midwest Province of the Congregation of Holy Cross. My travels are mostly on asphalt, tar, and gravel around the Midwest, but I also get an occasional glimpse of the Atlantic, Pacific, Great Lakes, gulfs, and bays from sky and shore.

My ministry is to coordinate the efforts of my brothers as we extend an invitation to others to share in our mission and ministry as Holy Cross Brothers or as Holy Cross Associates of the Midwest Province. I am charged to articulate the oft-misunderstood—and oft-ignored—vocation of brothers in the Church. I am challenged and privileged to accompany others in their journeys through the process of vocation discernment. My ministry takes me to college campuses and church basements; high school classrooms and living rooms; retreat centers and local eateries;

fashionable suburbs and forsaken slums; hotel grand ballrooms and hovels; around the block and coast to coast; other countries and even to other continents.

And so it is that I go forth daily, with—and on behalf of—my brothers: to "extend an invitation for our fellow Christians to fulfill their vocation" (C1:7); to "those whose lot we share, supporting men and women of grace and good will everywhere in their efforts to form communities of the coming kingdom" (C2:12); to present and promote the call and mission of Holy Cross among the People of God—the Church—engaged in the terrible and wonderful new-millennial maze, rife and ripe with contradictions, confusion, and promise.

To be sure, I encounter the contradiction and confusion of our times wherever I go. I come face to face daily with the "vocation crisis" so highly publicized and real. I hear and read about the doubts

and fears for the future of religious communities. I am asked specifically about the dwindling numbers seeking a life in Holy Cross. Yet, in the current state of perceived crisis and confusion, I also see promise and blessing. Where some may proclaim we are in a state of chaos and on the brink of doom, I maintain that we live in a graced and blessed moment of creativity. We have good reason to emphasize that the Brothers of Holy Cross are indeed "men with hope to bring." The hope I hold for Holy Cross, first and foremost, rests in Jesus Christ. It is a hope that springs from a profound sense of God's blessing so alive and visible wherever one finds a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross. It is a hope that grows ever stronger as I visit communities and ministries of brothers and associates. It is a hope born of my own personal experience of Holy Cross as I go forth in ministry. Wherever my ministry takes me, almost invariably at day's end I am not checking into a Day's Inn. Rather, I am welcomed home as a brother in the homes of brothers, associates, and friends of Holy Cross; I am nourished at their tables (dinner and eucharistic); I am refreshed by sharing prayer, conversation and laughter; I am

energized by the palpable sense of our common mission in the midst of their diverse ministries and life styles; I am renewed with hope as I witness their abiding hope in our Lord and brother, Jesus, the Christ.

My hope is also fostered by the men, if fewer in number, who are in the process of discerning whether they have vocations as Brothers of Holy Cross. It is also fostered by the growing number of men and women who are committing themselves to Holy Cross as associate members. Their stories of faith and hope in the future of Holy Cross inspire my own faith and hope.

What does the future hold for the Brothers of Holy Cross? I don't know. In a sense, I'm happy I don't know. I do know, however, that God is not finished with the Congregation of Holy Cross just yet. We in Holy Cross have a mission in the Church as men and women with hope to bring. Holy Cross is growing in Africa, India, Bangladesh, South America, and Mexico. Indeed, we have every reason to be hopeful that God will continue to work through Holy Cross into the next millennium.

—Br. John Tryon, CSC

*Province Vocation and Associates Director*

# Holy Cross Village Planning Continues

Planning and construction of the Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame continues at a steady pace. A 26-unit apartment building will be completed by the end of January. This will contain 21 two-bedroom apartments and 5 one-bedroom apartments. As soon as occupancy is permitted, several brothers who were displaced when Basil Hall became a Holy Cross College residence hall plan to move into the building, along with brothers currently living in the South Bend-Mishawaka area, or other brothers interested in relocating to the Holy Cross Village.

## Entranceway and Infrastructure

A new entrance boulevard from US 933 (formerly US 31/33) will be begun in early spring of 1999. The new entrance, including a security gatehouse, will appropriately identify the different entities—Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame, Holy Cross College, and the Brothers of Holy Cross. Infrastructure for the East Village, the tract of land facing US 933 between the provincial office building and St. Mary's College, will also be developed in early spring. This infrastructure will provide roads, utilities, a large pond, and walking paths for the

single-family units, duplexes, and quadplexes to be built in this area.

## Village Survey

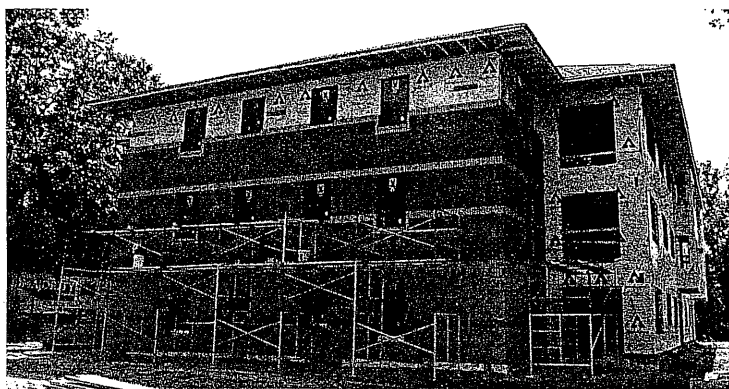
During the summer a copy of the Mission Statement and a survey were sent to a large sampling of people who receive this newsletter. The survey asked for responses and opinions about living arrangements and amenities which would be desirable if the recipient were to move to an intergenerational community such as the Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame. Over 650 responses were received. The responses came from the following age groups: 18% below 50; 9% over 80; and the other 73% were almost evenly divided between the 50's, 60's, and 70's age groups. Of the respondents, 13% had a high school education, 31% had college degrees, and 56% had graduate degrees.

Survey responses regarding living unit arrangements and campus amenities have served as a valuable resource in planning future units to be built, whether these are single family units, duplexes, quadplexes, or apartments. Input on campus amenities such as a chapel, walking

areas, and social and community spaces has also been incorporated in planning of the new entrance and the infrastructure. St. Joseph's Chapel, physically and spiritually the center for the entire campus, will be the focal point when one turns into the new entrance drive onto the campus.

## Information Center

Frank Macknick, a consultant with experience in planning and establishing residential communities, is coordinating the new Information Center for the Holy Cross Village, which opened in early October in one of the newly constructed cottages in the East Village. He, or Br. James Newberry, a counselor for prospective residents, can be contacted at (219) 251-3250 for more information, to arrange a visit, receive a videotape or brochure, or to discuss projected timelines for completion of the various components of Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame. The Information Center can also be contacted by e-mail at: [Holy.Cross.Village@hcc-nd.edu](mailto:Holy.Cross.Village@hcc-nd.edu). *(Note the periods between "Holy" and "Cross" and between "Cross" and "Village.")*



Building continues in the Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame. The new apartment building is planned for completion in early 1999.

## Br. Martinus Bombardier (1921 - 1998)

Br. Martinus (Leonard) Bombardier, 77, died on October 23rd at Columba Hall, on the campus at Notre Dame. A native of Jamestown, Kan., Br. Martinus was a professed brother for 55 years. He was a pressman at the Ave Maria Press for 38 years. In addition to other duties, he had the major responsibility of printing the Ave Maria magazine during many of those years.

Br. Martinus lived at Columba Hall for 54 years, moving there in 1944. During that time he witnessed many changes at that house, within the community, in the Church, and in the world. He served as assistant superior to no less than five superiors.

As Br. James Newberry, a former superior noted in Br. Martinus' eulogy, "Br. Martinus exemplified what religious life meant to his peers...Further reasons for his choice as an assistant were his gifts of hospitality, wisdom, and common sense...He was always a solid sounding board upon whom I could rely, one tempered by his compassionate awareness of what was going on in the house."

In addition to his career at the Ave Maria Press, Martinus had another whole career as a free lance photographer. In the mid-fifties, he started becoming more serious about his hobby of photography. After

various workshops, much practice, and many hours in the darkroom, he became a professional photographer and specialized in weddings, christenings, receptions, formal and informal portraits, and Notre Dame scenes.

A congenial and amiable man, his "Come on in" attitude and quick offer to be of assistance to his brothers, his fellow workers, or his clients and professional colleagues were hallmarks that endeared him to all. His cordial reception and offering of beverages and freshly popped popcorn to house members and guests at Columba Hall every evening prompted one visitor to name him "Mr. Hospitality."

Several years ago he was advised to give up his coverage of weddings and those events which required him to move and set up heavy lights and equipment. He did, however, continue to chronicle community events and do portraits. He served as photographer for many congregational meetings and events, and contributed to several Holy Cross publications. He was a regular contributor to this publication, **Brothers**, and some of his photos are in this issue. His affable attitude and his excellent photographs will be missed.

# Post-novitiate House Opens in Akron

Early August saw the establishment of a new Midwest Province post-novitiate house of formation in Akron, Oh. Named Bonaventure House, in memory of Br. Bonaventure Foley, the house is the former St. Hilary rectory.

The provincial council approved the setting up of the program after Br. Kenneth Haders, president of Archbishop Hoban High School in Akron, proposed the project. Br. Daniel Mallon, professed two years and formerly studying at the University of Portland, joins Br. Edward Fox, who made his first profession of vows at the novitiate in Cascade, Col., on July 25, as the first temporarily professed religious to participate in the program. Br. Kenneth is the director; he is assisted by Br. James Caley, who is a counselor at Hoban.

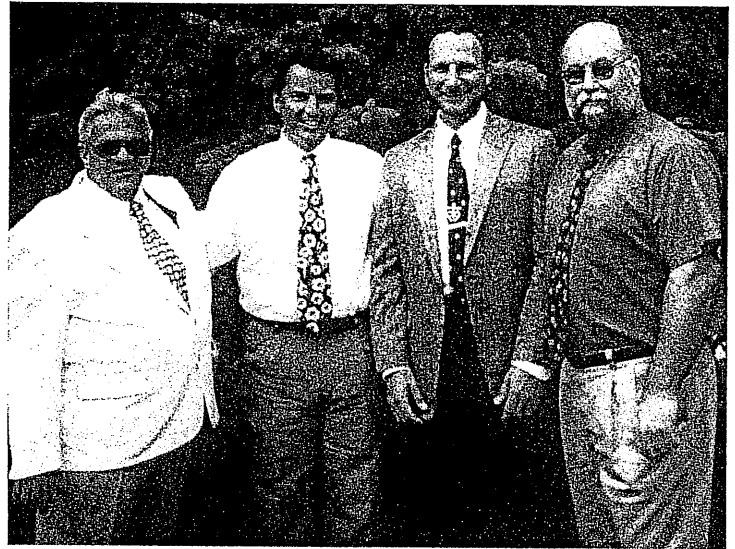
Br. Dan is studying at the University of Akron and is pursuing a degree in social work. Br. Ed is at Walsh University, in Canton, Oh., continuing general studies which he had begun at St. Edward's University in Austin, Tex., before beginning his novitiate year. He hopes to continue the youth work in which he was engaged before joining Holy Cross.

The focus of the post-novitiate program for the temporarily professed is the continuation of their academic studies, but it is also meant to further their understanding of the vows they have taken, give exposure to elements of Holy Cross community life and apostolic service, and to familiarize them with the history and traditions of the congregation, all leading to their permanent incorporation as professed religious in Holy Cross.

The wider presence of Holy Cross in the area will offer the younger professed religious an opportunity to be exposed to and

actively participate in the ministerial and community life of the Midwest Province.

—Br. Philip Armstrong, CSC



Br. Ed Fox (second from right) made his first profession of vows as a Brother of Holy Cross and now lives in Bonaventure House, in Akron, Oh. Shown with him on his profession day are other province members who attended the ceremony: (l. to r.) Brs. Thomas Moser, Joseph Barry, and Robert Livernois.

## Holy Cross College Extends Residency Program

Holy Cross College began its residency program in James Hall during the '97-'98 school year. With the opening of the '98-'99 school year, the residency program was extended to Basil Hall, and both halls are now completely filled with resident students. Some students who wanted on-campus housing could not be accommodated.

At the beginning of the fall semester there were 127 students, five resident assistants, a hall director and an assistant director for a total of 134 living in the halls formerly used for brothers' residence and the CCFM renewal program.

The Mission Statement of Holy Cross College states that although "... intellectual development is the first reason for existence, the

College actively pursues the social, physical, spiritual, and moral development of its students...

The College emphasizes Christian philosophy in living by actively encouraging members of the community to explore a personal understanding of their relationship to self, others and God."

The full complement of on-campus resident students has added

a new spirit and enthusiasm to the college environment. In addition to the 5:00 PM Sunday Mass, weekday Masses have been initiated for students and faculty. The supportive programs and activities being organized in the halls give the students the opportunity to test their Christian values and add depth to the academic, social, and spiritual dimensions of their lives.

—Br. Anthony Dadzie, CSC

## Br. Paschal Tomaszewski (1921-1998)

Br. Paschal (Vincent) Tomaszewski, 77, died on July 30, 1998, after a long illness. He had been a resident of Dujarie House, the skilled care facility, for several years.

A native of Gary, Ind., Br. Paschal was a teacher of English and Latin for over 45 years. He had

taught at Holy Trinity High School in Chicago, Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, and Catholic Central High School in Monroe, Mich., before going to the newly constructed St. Joseph's High School in South Bend in 1954. He served at

St. Joseph's until 1990, when deteriorating health forced him to resign. During his time at St. Joseph's, he taught English to more than a generation of students. His long association with the school made him, in later years, a valuable

resource and knowledgeable contact person in the school's alumni office.

After his retirement he lived at the Brothers Center and then at Columba Hall until health problems necessitated his moving to Dujarie House.

# Br. Jerome Meyer Named Alumnus of the Year

Br. Jerome Meyer recently received the Alumnus of the Year Award from St. Edward High School in Lakewood, Oh. During his 25-year stint at St. Edward, Br. Jerome served at various times as math teacher, dean of men, attendance officer, and bus driver for the athletic teams. He is a 1957 graduate of the school. Since 1997 Br. Jerome has been rector at Knott Hall, a residence for 250 men at the University of Notre Dame.

A letter from Professor Patricia O'Hara, Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, praised Br. Jerome's contributions to residence life: "As rector, he counsels, consoles and accompanies students in their life of faith, as well as prepares them to face the future beyond Notre Dame. Br. Jerome serves as educator, advisor, minister and—every once in a while—as disciplinarian, a skill that he honed while Dean of Men at St.

Edward. Br. Jerome quickly adjusted to his new ministry at Notre Dame, helping the men of Knott to build new traditions and foster a sense of community in the hall."

In her letter to the St. Edward community, delivered by Fr. Bill Seetch, CSC, another St. Edward graduate and a Notre Dame rector, O'Hara goes on to say: "You are justifiably proud to claim Br. Jerome as one of your most distinguished graduates. For 40 years he has

given faithful witness to his vows as a brother in the Congregation of Holy Cross. We share our pride in now claiming him as part of the Notre Dame family. Please know of our prayers for the continued success of St. Edward in the mission of Holy Cross education to which we are all committed."

## Molleen Pust

### Touched by Holy Cross



Molleen Pust, first volunteer at Senior Friendship Centers

Twenty-five years ago Molleen Pust retired from her job as a high-level Washington, DC civilian employee and moved to Sarasota, Florida, to enjoy life in the relatively affluent retirement community on the gulf coast. She arrived to find that two weeks previously a certain Holy Cross Brother named Geenen had taken up residence at a parish rectory and, virtually penniless, was hard at work organizing

resources and personnel to provide volunteer services for the elderly, something curiously lacking in a sector of the country by nature geared to attract them.

Molleen was raised a Catholic, but did not have access to parochial education. Her association with church activities, including volunteer work, was primarily as a lay person working with other laity. In Sarasota, she immediately set out to accommodate her continuing desire to serve others.

She heard of Br. Geenen's intention to set up a center at which lonely seniors could be welcomed and provided for during the day. She arrived when the program was in its initial stage, little more than an empty house and garage, never expecting that the vision proposed would so consume her time and energy. She became, as she says, "hooked on" this vision and intense determination at once. Without intending it, Molleen had leaped into full-time involvement that has ever since been challenging, exhausting, but always most rewarding. Early on, as she sat with a couple of other volunteers and Br. William in a meeting to choose a name for the project at hand, she realized the extent of his dream and was captivated by how far beyond any of

theirs it stretched. He insisted that "Senior Friendship Center" be pluralized as a sign that whatever arose in Sarasota was to be the prototype of services meant to extend to other communities.

Molleen soon learned Br. William possessed not only the vision but the practical capacity to realize the vision. His discipline and determined perseverance despite setbacks and brushoffs were contagious. Where she tended to hold back, he exuded confidence.

Besides Br. Geenen, the elderly were themselves attractions to Molleen's voluntarism. She had worked with young people and active adults, but her experience of older persons was minimal.

Gradually Molleen came to share the enthusiasm of the SFCs' founder and, because other brothers were beginning to visit Florida to see what Br. William was about, she became more and more familiar with the community to which he belonged. Some among them came to work full time alongside Br. William—Brs. Douglas Roach, Frank Drury, Ray Kelly, Bob Woodward, and Charles Krupp. They brought their rich experience and skills and immersed themselves fully and with dedication into the new ministry. For Molleen, seeing Holy Cross in action was a real contrast to the

impersonal ladder-climbing motivation so endemic to bureaucratic life everywhere, especially where she had been. The brothers made working with older persons seem dignified and essential. Brothers though they were, they were eminently human. The religious life was their career, but not all of it was spent in prayer. There was in these men a genuineness of apostolic purpose. They came to do something. Rather than talk, they acted. Working with the elderly was not a fad, a hobby, or dabbling in throw-away ministries. They committed themselves to the work, and it is good they did, because many serious obstacles intervened along the way that required prophetic courage and perseverance to overcome.

Over time Molleen made trips with Br. William to Notre Dame for various meetings and came to know many of the brothers there, especially at Columba Hall. She recalls feeling accepted as one of them and very much at home. Gradually she found herself genuinely wanting to be influenced by these men, realizing in the environment they influenced she was evolving into a person of renewed purpose with a mission of her own. Br. Geenen exemplified for her the best in all the others, and Molleen

believes only someone like him could have accomplished what he has in Florida and exerted such widespread influence there, especially in altering attitudes toward the elderly. He is accorded high respect throughout the state, but not held unduly in awe, being an ordinary person—one, however, who happens to possess an unbelievable capacity for practical work and a proven capability to garner and organize the resources needed to move significant projects forward.

Molleen's life has been touched by Holy Cross through the person of Br. William and the other brothers she has met and served with in Florida. The individual talents illustrated by those who, with her assistance and that of hundreds of others, made the Senior Friendship Centers a reality over time, represent to her the corporate strength of the community behind them. "I did not intend to get so caught up in my volunteer work," she says, "but in fact I launched out into a second career that has been most rewarding."

Only Br. William and the others know how much that career has meant to the spiritual and material development of the Senior Friendship Centers.

—Br. Philip Armstrong, CSC

## Person To Person

—A Word from Brother Geenen



Br. William Geenen, CSC, Provincial

Through my involvement in the founding of the Senior Friendship Centers, Inc., I have been doubly blessed. While in Florida in 1973 as a recruiter of students for an Ohio school, Gilmour Academy, operated by the brothers, I witnessed and was moved by the many needs of older persons in retirement. I thought of my status as a brother, as someone free to ask the blessing of my superiors to begin to search for a way to respond to those needs, just as other brothers had done before me responding to other needs in other times and places. It was my vowed commitment as a lay religious in Holy Cross that gave me the flexibility to go where others were not free to go and attempt what others were unable to undertake.

In no way do I imply that an organization such as the Friendship Centers is the accomplishment of a

single individual. Far from it. Any apostolic work we religious engage in relies on the support, talent and willingness of many others. We see the impact of what we do riding on the shoulders of men and women who believe in our vision and trust us to see the vision brought to realization.

As a result of our flexibility, we brothers are obligated to be the apostolic risk-takers of today. In so doing, we draw on our community tradition, one that spans more than 150 years, and realize we are approaching ministry no more intently or effectively than our predecessors in Holy Cross did as they sought to meet the needs of society in their day.

As brothers, we have a unique capacity to reach across the various cultural and sectarian lines that we encounter in addressing the needs to which we feel inspired to respond. Our very identity as brothers invites us to the expression of brotherhood in all circumstances—to truly being brothers to others. Out of a stance of total equality with others, we are free to be people helping and caring for other people, inspired as we are

by the prophetic nature of our calling and our vowed commitment to the God whose Oneness reminds us of the inherent dignity of every person of whatever origin or circumstances.

Although limited in numbers as brothers, we feel our efforts are always greatly enhanced and obviously affected by the many who stand shoulder to shoulder in support of us in the ministries we undertake for the welfare of those in need. Because of our colleagues, volunteer or otherwise, we are assured of the continued success of efforts such as the Senior Friendship Centers, and of the freedom to exercise our flexibility in the most effective ways in initiating and developing needed ministries of similar importance.

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