

Midwest Bits and Pieces

November 1, 1992

Bro. Gonzaga Retires from Thrift Store and Will Continue Ministry



Brother Gonzaga, at his retirement party August 16th at Blessed Sacrament Church, Harriman, is flanked by Presentation Sisters Sheila Barrett, left, and Francis O'Neill who have taken over the Seton Thrift Store that the Holy Cross Brother founded and operated for 12 years. Bishop Anthony J. O'Connell can be seen in the back ground. (ETC photo by Dan Barile)

By Dan Barile

HARRIMAN—What began in Watertown, Wis., in 1937 drew to a partial close Sunday, August 16 as Brother Gonzaga Day retired as head of the Seton Thrift Store.

But, as assurance of Brother Gonzaga's continued presence in the area, Bishop Anthony J. O'Connell said, "Brother Gonzaga is not retiring from the ministry, and I'm not going to give him permission to retire, we need him too much."

Bishop O'Connell was among the dozens of well-wishers who attended a Mass and luncheon to the Holy Cross Brother's honor at Blessed Sacrament Church in Harriman. The Bishop celebrated the Mass and praised Brother Gonzaga's years of service.

Brother Gonzaga came to East Tennessee in 1980 and opened the Seton Thrift Store. The store, named in honor of St. Elizabeth Anne Seton, opened the same year on October 1. The mission of the store is to serve as an outreach for the Brothers of Holy Cross by helping the residence of Appalachia.

"The key is that we wanted to supply the community with a place where people could shop with dignity." Brother Gonzaga said. "We tried to make it as attractive as possible."

And in the course of accomplishing this task. Brother Gonzaga wore out two large trucks by traveling more than 100,000 miles from Harriman to California to New England and back again to gather goods donated to the store.

"The first truck caught fire on Interstate 80 and burned up," Brother Gonzaga said. "But luckily none of the merchandise was damaged."

But Brother Gonzaga's story doesn't begin or end here. Brother Gonzaga's path took him from Wisconsin to Indiana where he took his first vows and later made his final profession at Notre Dame in 1942

He was sent to West Haven Conn., then back to Watertown. In the mid-1940s, Brother Gonzaga moved to Gates Mills, Ohio, where he was one of two founders of Gilmour Academy for Boys.

In the late 1940s the path turned across the Atlantic to Rome where Brother Gonzaga served as secretary to Holy Cross Father Edward L. Heston, who was the order's procurator general to the Holy See. Part of Brother Gonzaga's duties during this two and a half year assignment was to type the French-to-English two-volume translation of the History of the Brothers of the Holy Cross.

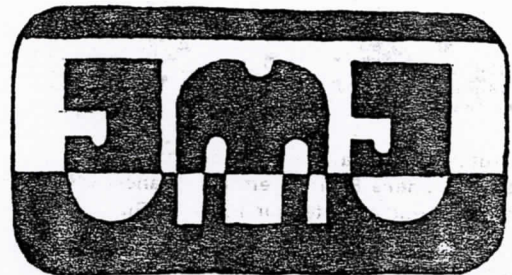
After working at the Vatican, Brother Gonzaga returned to the United States and began a 24-year term as mission procurator.

The path finally turned to East Tennessee and from the founding of the Seton Thrift Store. And it's from here that the rest of the story is now just beginning to unfold as Brother Gonzaga, who will turn 73 this month, contemplates which direction his path will lead.



Brother Richard Johnson tutoring General Science in a Middle School for the deaf one day a week in Efua Affenyi, Ghana.

Richard has also been the source of our graphic art in many of the issues of Bits & Pieces.



SESQUICENTENNIAL OF HOLY CROSS EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

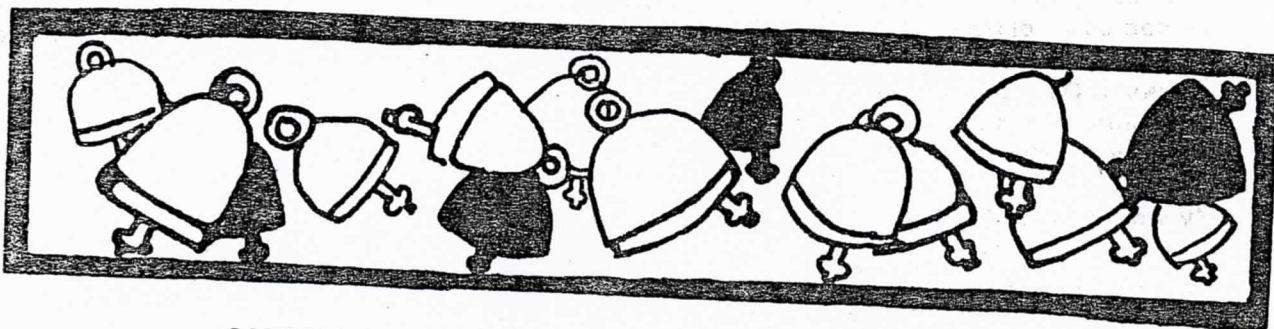
Members of the Midwest province joined CSC personnel for the Conference observing the Sesquicentennial of Holy Cross Education in the U.S. Besides the CSC religious from throughout the country, lay people involved in the educational apostolate of the community were also participants.

Hundreds were present at Notre Dame for the weekend workshop from September 18 - 20. This was probably the first time that participants in a CSC conference included such a large scope both in geographic representation and those who are presently serving as administrators and board members. They were treated to top-notch speakers and reactors as well as communal social activities. Understanding our use of soiree through a direct experience was just one way the group joined in the schedule. Liturgies were held each day, with the final one, the Eucharistic Liturgy at St. Joseph Chapel in the Brothers' Center. Father Claude Grou was celebrant for that Sunday liturgy.

Province participation reflected the overall registration. School presidents and principals, along with Board presidents and members as well as other representatives were included. This was true as well of the other Brothers' provinces and CSC institutions in the country. Beyond the secondary school representation there was representation from the CSC colleges and universities. Brother John Paige, EB, gave one of the major presentations, "Catholic Education: The Gospel and Culture." Richard Gilman was a respondent to the talk, "Catholic Education: Evangelization and Education for Justice." Bishop John Quinn of San Francisco, gave the closing address, "Future of Catholic Education in the United States: Challenges for Religious Communities." He mentioned his days with Holy Cross at Watertown when he was a candidate and mentioned six brothers who had an influence on him in those days.

The strength of the experience seems to have been the gathering and resulting exchange between the participants. No doubt the lay people who are CSC collaborators in our educational apostolate were moved seeing others in different areas also sharing in a similar commitment. One felt a renewal of spirit among the participants for the difficult task they have accepted. Our educational apostolate should continue to grow because of the sharing which this gathering facilitated.

To make the Sunday liturgy more effective, Joseph Fox, in charge of arrangements, included the Saint Mary's Bell Choir, and three dancers from St. Mary's College. Two trumpets accompanied the singing. Philip Smith was cantor and played an oboe solo as part of the Presentation of the Gifts. The chapel was beautifully decorated and included the banners commissioned for our June celebration and designed by Robvert Leader of the Notre Dame Art Department. The sanctuary wall displayed pictures of Father Moreau and Father Dujarie designed by Harold Ruplinger and fashioned by Chester Rachel.



CATHOLIC ORDERS ARE LOSING TRACK OF IDEALS: STUDY Daniel J. Lehmann

A "significant percentage" of Roman Catholic orders of priests and sisters no longer understand their role in the Church, a study released Tuesday found.

To rebound from nearly three decades of decline, two researchers at De Paul University said the groups must return to the ideals of their founders, care for human needs and preach personal sacrifice among themselves.

"The Future of Religious Orders in the United States," three years in the making, is the first study of issues shared by the 121,000 priests, brothers and sisters in the nation, according to the Rev. David J. Nygren and Sister Miriam D. Ukeritis of the Center for Applied Social Research at De Paul.

The 816 orders working in the United States run thousands of institutions, mostly in health, education and human services. Those are now threatened by the "startling finding" of "role confusion or conflict [which] is very high both for men and women," said Nygren, a Vincentian priest and professor of organizational psychology at De Paul.

Changes brought on by the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to '65, reinforced the role of the laity but did not clarify the purpose of religious orders in church life, he said.

At the same time, the report "confirms that the impulse to generosity among some religious is being eclipsed by self-preoccupation, psychological decompensation, stark individualism and a lessening of the willingness to sacrifice.

That also eroded respect for authority, particularly the Vatican and U.S. bishops, said Nygren. And today's "free agent" priests, brothers and sisters are less committed to serving the poor or living together than past religious were, which he said "dissipate the creative energy" of the groups.

There was little difference between men and women in most of the findings, said Ukeritis, a sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet and a clinical psychologist.

Both have experienced difficulty in attracting new members, she said, because "if you don't know what you're about, you don't know what you're inviting [prospective members] to."

Religious orders with a focused mission typically exact a higher cost among members with respect to belonging and commitment. Religious orders that define clearly the boundaries and expectations of their members and distinguish them from other members of the church will be revitalized.

A summary of the findings is available upon request, said Nygren. Eventually, the data will be published in book form.

On Oct. 3, he and Ukeritis hosted a teleconference on their findings for leaders of the orders.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH; RICHARD KEARNEY

My decision to join Catholic Charities' staff over seven years ago has turned out to be a wise one. Charities and Catholic Counseling Service have fostered my creativity and encouraged me to take initiative in making good use of my talents and skills. My twenty-five years as a member of a religious community have been most rewarding and my work here has only increased that sense of well-being.

Five years ago, I became the first CSC counselor to work in a school on an all day basis. Last year we had counselors in sixteen schools in the diocese. It has been very satisfying to me to have played a central role in the growth of this program of service to our children and families. Placing interns in Oakland inner city schools is a new component of the schools program. Supervising these interns has been very enriching for me. It's an experience of generativity - passing on skills to the next generation.

My work with HIV+/Aids clients is close to my heart. I have lost friends to AIDS. For over four years I have co-facilitated a support group for HIV+ persons. I also co-facilitate a grief group for HIV+ persons. I also facilitate a grief group for care givers. This year Rita submitted a grant for federal funds so that we could provide counseling services for those affected by HIV, including partners and family members. Being part of the HIV treatment team is rewarding, another example of Charities responding to a crisis which is devastating so much of our community.

The Church needs to have a presence and visibility which is clearly aware of the suffering in peoples' lives and responds with compassion and love rather than judgement. I identify strongly with Catholic Charities because it is a social justice-oriented organization. I have, for years been a person committed to social justice. Being part of Catholic Charities has helped me to feel supported, less alone, in this struggle.

(Richard is Coordinador, School Counseling Program, Catholic Counseling Service)

BROTHER RICHARD GILMAN INSTALLED AS PRESIDENT HOLY CROSS COLLEGE

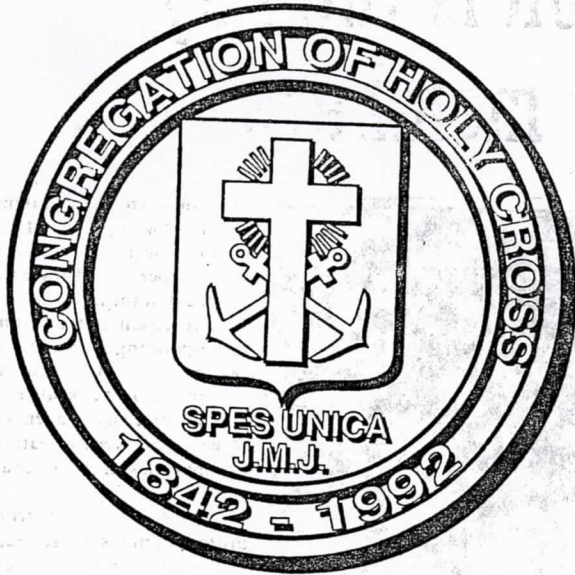
The inauguration of Brother Richard Gilman as president of Holy Cross College took place on Friday, September 24 at a ceremony held in St. Joseph Chapel in the Brothers' Center. The academic procession which opened the ceremony included the faculty and staff of the college, as well as dignitaries representing most of the Indiana colleges. Richard is the third president to serve at the College during its 27 year history.

The program included a welcome by Brother Thomas Moser, Provincial of the Midwest Province and Arthur Decio, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Holy Cross College. An opening invocation was given by Auxiliary Bishop of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese, the Most Reverend John Sheets. Greetings were given by Joseph Kernan Mayor of South Bend; Reverend Edward Malloy, President, University of Notre Dame; and school representatives, John Raymer, representing the faculty; Michael Stewart, representing the students; and John Bawcum, representing the alumni.

Brother Charles Smith, provincial councilor, read from the CSC Constitution on Mission prior to the formal inauguration. The call was given by Brother Thomas Moser and the presentation of the medallion by Mr. Arthur Decio.

After his acceptance, Brother Richard gave his inaugural address in which he reviewed the beginnings of the college including the initial purpose of the school. He thanked Brother Raphael Wilson for his two year term as interim leader at the school. Those present were challenged to view the future with him and he asked their help to continue the original mission as well as support the growth vision he presented.

The large number present, besides school personnel, included Richard's parents, his sister and other relatives. Also, a large number of those present were friends from Akron, Ohio, where Richard had served as principal/president at Archbishop Hoban High School.



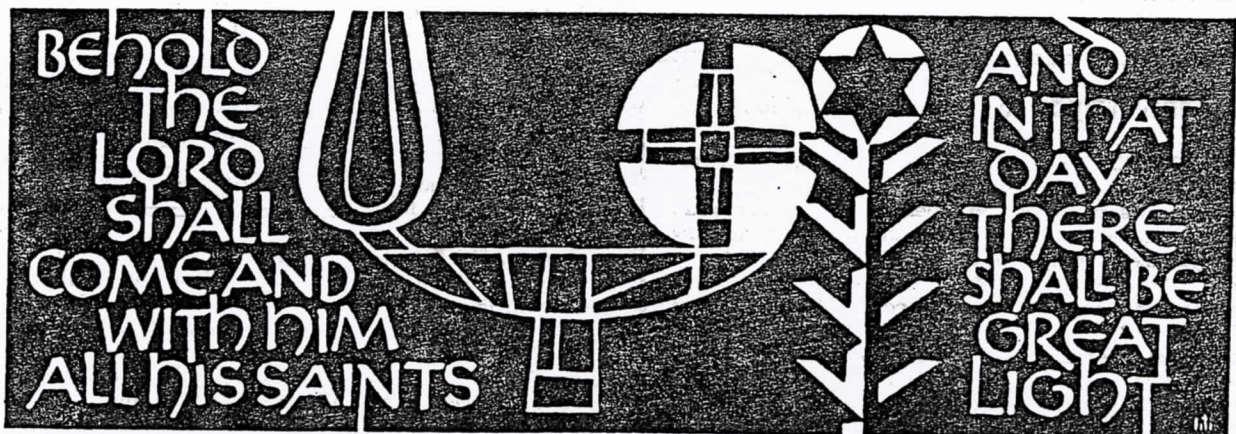
COMMMORATIVE PLAQUE FOR SESQUICENTENNIAL

Contitution I; Article 7: "Our commitment is an invitation for our fellow Christians amd sojourners to fulfill their vocation, and for ourselves it is a concrete way of working with them for a spread of the gospel and with all for the development for a more just and human society."

This is the quote incorporated on the plaque which has been presented to CSC educational institutions during this sesquicentennial year celebrating the presence of Holy Cross in the United States. The plaque includes each of the sides of the medallion designed for this observance. On one side of the medallion is the log chapel and golden dome of Notre Dame in the background with impressions of the six brothers and Father Sorin in the foreground with their names encircling the border. On the reverse side is the seal of the Congregation.

The medallion and plaque are the result of the work of Brothers Paul Kelly, Robert Lavelle and James Spooner, administrators of the three CSC schools in the Cleveland diocese. They expect to incorporate this medallion in other significant awards during the 150th anniversary.

The plaque presentations were made at the closing of the Liturgy at the Holy Cross Brothers Center which concluded the CSC educational conference at Notre Dame.



Personal invitation is the key to finding new members

Declining numbers, however, mean religious orders must devise new strategies for encouraging contacts

BY BILL DODDS

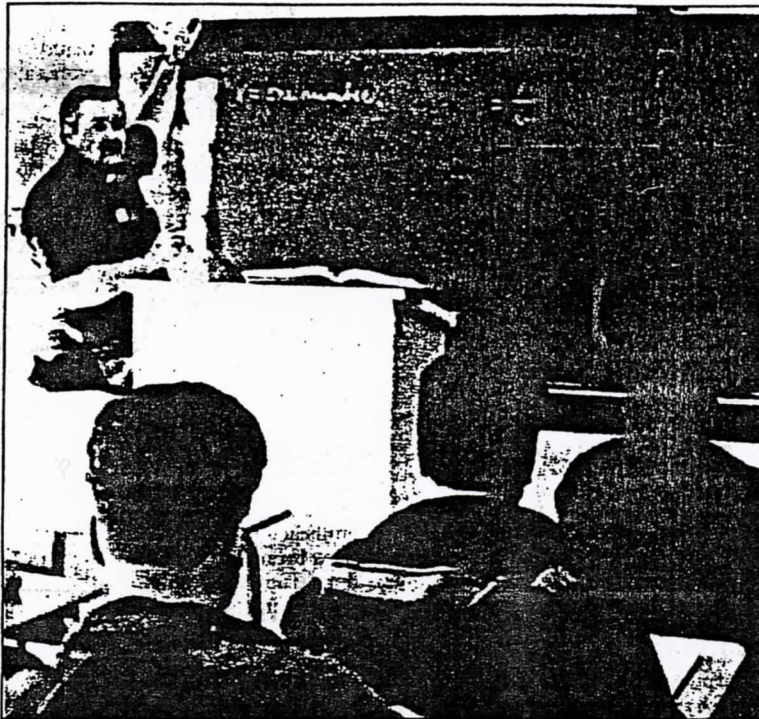
As the high-tech, fast-paced 20th century comes to an end, Catholic brothers in the United States are reminding themselves that a basic, simple key to fostering vocations has not changed since the time of Christ. In fact, it is the one Jesus used to recruit His apostles.

A recent study of U.S. teaching brothers conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) has found that personal contact with a religious brother and being invited to join a province or congregation are important factors in attracting vocations.

It also revealed that there is high morale among the brothers, and that their professional colleagues and students think highly of them.

The Teaching Brothers Focus Group of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men commissioned the study because of the low number of vocations to the teaching ministry — not just in one or two orders or provinces, but across the country, said Brother Paul Hennessy, provincial of the Eastern U.S. Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers and president of the conference.

Virtually all communities of teaching brothers took part. Questionnaires were given to brothers, their professional colleagues, male students who were high-school juniors or seniors or undergraduates where the brothers teach, men considering formation or in formation, and those who entered religious life but left



Teaching brothers report an astoundingly high percentage of satisfaction with their ministry and their vocation

PHOTO BY BILL DODDS

before final vows.

"We were interested in deducing the causes for the low number of vocations," Brother Hennessy said, "and we were surprised at the results. We thought there might be more societal factors, but that wasn't true. There was some thought that young men were staying away from the teaching profession or that their families would not be supportive."

But in fact, he noted, the study revealed that the most important factor is that "young men are saying they haven't been invited to consider being a brother."

At the same time, the numbers show a majority of brothers — some 64 percent — *did* receive just that type of invitation, including Brother Hennessy.

"I was in high school and was very friendly with the brothers who taught me," he said. For several weeks, different careers were being presented — one per week — and when it was the week explaining the brotherhood, "a brother said to me, 'I hope you're paying special attention to this,'" he said.

That type of "invitation to consider religious life" is very powerful, agreed Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister Eleace King, the CARA research associate who conducted the study.

Although the study was limited to teaching brothers only, Sister King said she felt safe in saying, "I think if you went around to all religious groups and asked, 'Were you invited?' the majority would feel they were."

"But," she cautioned, "that's just my opinion."

An opinion, though, that is backed up by her own experience. "I was a freshman in college, and a sister said to me, 'I think you should be a sister,'" Sister King recounted. "I entered 18 months later. Twenty-five years later, here I am. I don't know if I would have made that step as a young person if someone hadn't said, 'I think you would make a good sister. Think about it.'"

But the CARA study reveals that the

invitation is not being extended very often today. Only 17 percent of the students they had been offered that invitation, and only 41 percent of the brothers had extended it in the last year.

One reason for the decline might be the corresponding decline in direct contact between brother and student. While 50 percent of the brothers said they contact with male students daily to twice a week, only 33 percent said they contact three times a week, a nearly equal percentage are with students once a week or more all.

As the number of brothers declines, Brother Hennessy explained, there are fewer in the classrooms and more in administrative positions. The same holds true for priests and sisters, Sister King said.

Direct contact

Because of that lack of daily contact with men and women who might consider a vocation to religious life, more of the men now is being placed on vocations directly rather than on community members, Sister King said. But talks on vocations and advertising campaigns cannot replace direct contact on a frequent basis — and an element of personal invitation.

Brother Hennessy pointed out that the mean age for those entering religious life now is 27 or 28. People aren't making their minds up until later. "It is another factor that needs to be considered when designing effective recruitment.

So what will the brothers do with the data they have gathered?

According to Brother Dom Erhmantraut, executive director for the LaSalle Christian Brothers in the United States and English-speaking Canada, the groups that participated in the study

are going beyond the provincial and the provincial council to the membership level.

Members need to know that teaching brothers report an astoundingly high percentage of satisfaction with their ministry and their vocation, he added. The study said 80 percent are proud to be teaching brothers. Eighty-six percent would still become brothers if they could do it all again.

And the brothers' students and professional colleagues also give them high marks. Among the students, 80 percent said they personally know a brother and of those 80 percent said they have one as a friend. Brothers' colleagues describe them as "hardworking," "approachable" and "generous." Seventy-three percent said they would be happy if their son became a brother.

"We hope to give more visibility to the faithful ministry of our teaching brothers," Brother Erhmantraut said. "We have to share this information." □

Dodds freelances from Mountlake Terrace, Wash.

Survey encouraging for teaching brothers

THE CENTER FOR APPLIED Research in the Apostolate, located at Georgetown University in Washington, recently completed a comprehensive study of U.S. teaching brothers. Among the study's findings:

- 97 percent are proud to be religious brothers.
- 80 percent rarely or never think about leaving religious life.
- 67 percent said the lack of vocations does not lower their morale.
- 58 percent said they get high affirmation and encouragement from those to whom they minister. 33 percent said it is average. 7 percent said it is low.

The students surveyed gave these responses when asked whether they thought about becoming a brother:

- 66 percent said they never considered it.
- 18 percent said the idea crossed their mind, but they never seriously thought about it.
- 10 percent said they had thought seriously about it and had decided against it.
- 4 percent said they had thought about it, but had not reached a decision.
- 1 percent said the idea appeals to them and that they want to pursue it further.

Twenty-nine percent of students said they would be more interested and 5 percent said they would be less interested in becoming a brother if brothers could marry. — **Bill Dodds**