

Midwest Bits and Pieces

September 1, 1990

SERVICE AWARD



In the last issue of the Gilmour Magazine, the Gilmour Service program was featured. Since that time, the program has been honored by the governor of the state of Ohio. On April 28, Father John Blazek, CSC, and Brother Robert Kelly, CSC, received the Governor's "Call to Service Award" on behalf of Gilmour Academy. Governor Richard Celeste established this award in 1988 to promote, encourage and recognize senior citizens who volunteer in Ohio's schools, and high school students who volunteer to assist senior citizens in their communities. Celeste said, "Call to Service has helped build bridges between the generations by creating opportunities for young people to serve the elderly, to share their knowledge and wisdom with Ohio's youth." Twelve successful projects from throughout Ohio were recognized during the ceremony.

Gilmour students in grades 7 through 12, reflecting the school's philosophy, are required to participate in community service as a requirement for graduation. Programs involve assisting the elderly, the hungry and the needy.

FRIENDSHIP CENTER

The July edition of Today's Senior, a monthly publication by the Sarasota Herald-Tribune for Senior Friendship Centers, Inc., announced the building of a new Senior Friendship Center in Venice, Florida. The original center is located in Sarasota.

The new center, expected to be completed in February, is a 26,000 sq. ft. complex which will include the Kathleen K. Catlin Friendship Center, a transportation facility and the Pat Buster Health Service. The latter will be a free standing building and will be a fully equipped medical facility recognized by Medicare and Medicaid. It will be staffed by retired licensed physicians, assisted by a team of volunteer nurses, medical secretaries and technicians.

In accepting the gift for the Pat Butler Health Service Facility, Brother William Geenen said, "With the increasing health problems of older people, the Health Service becomes an essential component of Senior Friendship Centers services to the elderly. Without this service, significant numbers of older people would be denied necessary health care." Brother William founded Senior Friendship Centers 17 years ago in Sarasota. It has been serving residents of South County for the past 15 years.

A DECLARATION OF APPRECIATION



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To

The Brothers of Holy Cross

From

The 1940 Class

Central Catholic High School

Fort Wayne, Indiana

Upon the occasion of this reunion today in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of our graduation on June 7th, 1940, we the undersigned, for ourselves as well as for our classmates who are deceased or were unable to attend, do solemnly declare and proudly proclaim our heartfelt gratitude and our deepest appreciation to all the teachers and staff at Central Catholic High School who through their selfless dedication and devotion bestowed upon us our most treasured Catholic education.

In a special way we thank the Brothers of Holy Cross who for many of us were our teachers in our freshman through our junior years, as well as being the benefactors of our fathers, our brothers, our uncles and other relatives.

We recognize in particular the brothers pictured below who taught us at Central Catholic High School.

Bro. Leon, CSC; Bro. Giles, CSC; Bro. Owen, CSC; Bro. Albert, CSC; Bro. Remigius, CSC; Bro. Justin, CSC; Bro. Stephen, CSC; Bro. Quentin, CSC; Bro. Francis, CSC; Bro. Mel, CSC; Bro. Paulus, CSC; Bro. Edgar, CSC.

We present this declaration on this memorable occasion to our beloved Brother Giles who by his actions and deeds exemplifies for us the typical Brother of Holy Cross. We therefore beseech him to act as its custodian. We are hopeful that it will be displayed in a conspicuous place at Notre Dame, Indiana where it may be a constant reminder to all the Brothers of the Holy Cross of our warmest esteem for them.

July 7th, 1990.

June 15, 1990
Province Gathering: "Forging Our Vision"
Holy Cross Brothers' Center
Notre Dame, Indiana

Summary Remarks
Brother John Paige, CSC

The task I have been given, to summarize and/or pull together our experience here, might better be called "Mission Impossible".

Our presider called us to prayer with the familiar formula and petition: may the Grace and Peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each of us." Let us be reminded and believe that what we ask is indeed given: peace and grace, fellowship fostered by the Holy Spirit and our own mutual acceptance of each other, and the unconditional love of God our Father.

We are breaking the Word of our God-given experience here. God-given experiences have a pattern about them that we human beings begin to recognize, and from which we learn. The most important experience-patterns we hold sacred, keep preserved as our SCRIPTURE, because they are mirrored again and again in our lives.

I would like to "hang" my thoughts and observations today on the scripture pattern suggested for Friday of the 10th week of Ordinary Time. I do that because it is a good pattern of God's action and a help for me to organize my thoughts. But better yet, I do this because the Universal Church, that is the rest of the world beyond "Notre Dame-Land", is going about their lives and work as usual today on this Friday of the 20th week. Perhaps many have meditated on this scripture, seeking again its timeless meaning in the timely context of this present moment. Our doing the same may connect us to the on-going revelation of the Holy Spirit being poured out today, as God instructs his people through their experience.

I use KG 19:9a, 11-16 as our reference (you remember this story of Elijah on the holy mountain, waiting for God's revelation in MIGHTY WIND, EARTHQUAKE, FIRE, GENTLE BREEZE. These symbols can be a way for me to share my reflection on your articulated experiences and your province survey. (One more permission: if you don't like the way I categorize what we discussed, give me a break! Don't get lost in a critique on the analogy. Thanks!)

God manifests Himself to His people in MIGHTY WINDS, EARTHQUAKES, FIRE, etc. We call that a Theophany. I heard what I might classify as experience resulting from MIGHTY WINDS these days. The vast societal changes that we have experienced over the last thirty years most definitely contribute to our present concerns over greater diversity in ministry and life-style, a felt lack of cohesiveness among us. Do you note, however, that some of the crisis in family life in our society stems from those same sweeping changes? We can wax eloquently about two-income families, mothers working outside the home, latchkey children, single-parent families, but is not that "breakdown" manifested in greater diversity of roles, lack of time for relationship, lack of cohesiveness, too?

And what formula would we prescribe to remedy the family situation? Women back in the house, barefoot and pregnant, knowing their place? Men caught in the stereotype of the stern, absent breadwinner? What economy will allow one-income families, given the cost of a home, rent and car payment levels, and tuition in our schools? Would you tell your own family members or the people we work with in ministry they ought not have two jobs? They probably would like it to be so - but how can they do it and have a family? So too, our quest for simple ways to resolve our diversity or felt lack of cohesiveness: back to the habit, the classroom, the large community house for all; it simply can't be done.

I propose that our own struggles to cope with diversity and felt lack of cohesiveness with each other are struggles that help us identify with the society and the people to whom we minister. As we struggle to cope and resolve such issues, we learn skills that can be shared by others, say in family life. As others cope with diversity and apartness in their family lives, they may teach us some solutions to our dilemmas.

"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. Thus, wherever through its superiors the congregation sends us we go as educators in the faith to those whose lot we share, supporting men and women of grace and goodwill everywhere in their efforts to form communities of the coming kingdom."

(Constitution 2, Article 12)

In other words, our struggles may not be a bad thing; in fact, they may be just what we need to endure and experience to be credible ministers in the world.

I offer a warning here about facile solutions to such complex problems. There is a new-fundamentalism about that would have us quickly tie up the loose pieces of our experiences by a simple reversion to the known and familiar. Fundamentalism seeks quick security. Now in this desire for quick security we are in good company - the disciples of Jesus sought the same. Philip says to Jesus, "Show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus replies (listen to the tone of this discouragement) "...have I been with you this long and still you do not understand? Philip, the one who sees me sees the Father!"

I would suspect that Philip was embarrassed; scripture neglects to fill us in on his feelings. But when I want a simple solution, when I want a clear way made known, when I boldly ask Jesus for the right answer now, I too am embarrassed by that reply.

This leads me to remark that there is a great contemporary need for self discipline in the midst of living with God's Plan. There is a need we have for an asceticism, the mortification of living with the diversity and differing opinions that abound among us.

I suppose our survey confirmed things we knew about ourselves, made statis-

tically clear some of our divergence, and, as was suggested, ought to be the fuel for a great bonfire. But the survey shows, I feel, that at least "I'm not crazy." At least I can look at particular questions and know that a majority of others agree with my values, hopes, or opinions on certain matters. And I can see where others differ, too. How all this will come to resolution (if indeed resolution is needed in the particular case) is a question we seek for with ascetism and self-discipline. God's timing may not include the quick security of a clear answer.

Theophany is sometimes symbolized by EARTHQUAKE in our sacred scripture. We spoke of the "earthquaking" change in the practice of authority in our times. I have my own example to share:

As I came down the north stairway in James Hall yesterday the experience of leaving the scholasticate for my first assignment came flooding back. Twenty-two years ago the practice of authority was a dittoed sheet on that bulletin board. FLUSHING, NY, HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL, Br. John Paige, it read; no discussion, no consultation; even the superior of the scholasticate had no warning until he opened the mail and posted the Eastern Province "obediencies" for January 1 1968. I went, of course, because that's what we did; that's how we expected to receive God's will then, by dittoed sheets.

Times have changed. (When was the last time anyone here used a blue spirit duplicator stencil?) Anyway, dittoes are out, and God's will gets communicated in different media today. Here is a January 1990 scenario of the same - a change of assignment I recently experienced.

As I approached the end of my second 3-year term as superior and novice master (grateful for the canonical limitations on such terms) I asked to go to East Africa to teach. Good discernment, I thought. I had wanted to serve overseas for years, I loved Africa from my brief experience there on a formation visitation, and I had "paid the price" of a community service assignment in novitiate formation - not one of those jobs people wait in line for. Besides, the Superior General is always encouraging Third World service, so needed to support the planning of an indigenous Holy Cross in other continents. Here was an assignment hard to refuse. The Provincial agreed, the Council consented, and I began to plan for the cross-cultural preparations required for such a ministry.

A few months later the Provincial asked to see me. Brief words: The Council and I want you to reconsider our plans. In short, "I have people to send to Africa; I don't have anyone with your background and talent to send to Washington, where there is a great need. Please get back to me in a few weeks on your disposition in this regard." I am now in Washington; Africa is on hold for me.

That experience represents the "earth shaking" changes that surround just the exercise of authority and obedience (essential elements of religious life) in our times. There are many other examples; you each have your own. It seems to me that it takes a mature person, willing to live the vows faithfully - vows personally and publicly made to God - to discern God's will. These days, it's harder, in some ways than the dittoed sheet, but

more adult. So it demands adult interactions and an adult spirituality.

One "earthquake aftermath" becomes obvious, I think, for us all. Without a spirit-led and personally developed spiritual life, we cannot live our religious vocation. This isn't new - my patron John Baptist de la Salle is quoted as remarking, "he was led to places he never would have chosen to be, to do work for which he had no natural inclination." You have surely experienced that (anyone been sent to Evansville to teach French and civics having majored in math?). We all have our "tales of the giants!" But in our days, with unexpected turns in the road, accepting God's "writing straight with crooked lines" is not something for which we blame the Provincial because he sent us there. We must learn to live and love (and cope with at times) the consequences of decisions we have made. This demands an active relationship with our God and often the process of discernment is the fiber that binds us more closely together as brothers and with our God.

This leads me to remind you of the charism of association we share as religious Brothers in the Midwest Province, in Holy Cross, and the Church. Our struggles, our discernment regarding ministry or lifestyle, our future, our leadership, etc. is much of the stuff that binds us together. Such shared experiences can bring us to recognize the value of living in the present, dreaming for the future, letting go and "letting God," enlarging our outlooks, our levels of acceptance. We are bound together not by some office or hierarchical status, but by choices: our vows in Holy Cross, our shared life/ministry, and here, our shared willingness to discern, dream, prepare for the future together. Coping and learning to cope with God's seemingly "incomplete" and even "inefficient" ways can build ties that bind us together even in the midst of our pluriformity.

To sustain movement we need FIRE, another experience of Theophany. By this I mean fire within: that gut excitement or outrage that motivates to action. You know that internal fire (Moreau called it zeal) when you see it. For example, I had no more than said hello to Willie Gates, when he asked me why I wasn't in Africa! What did you feel inside when people shared about matters of integrity? What did you feel when reminded that we Brothers in the Church are most often ignored - our identity and value trivialized? How is our talk about power, option for the poor, social justice related to this?

Strength of feeling - FIRE if you will, ZEAL, if you will, can be a sign of deep conviction, of investment, of commitment. Do you feel fire within? God within? James Dujarie founded the Brothers of St. Joseph when he was 53 years old - outraged by the delinquency and illiteracy of the young. Andre Bessette embarked full-time on his charism - healing God's broken - when he was 65 years old (and officially retired from 40 years as a porter); his fire wasn't extinguished by age or infirmity. Pope John XXIII called an Ecumenical Council when he was 78 - fired by a frustration that the Church was missing the modern world. Marie Leonie Paradis was assigned to teach French next door at our Sisters' Academy - until she finally wore down the community authorities, much like the widow of the Gospel, and could live out the fire of her unique charism of service in the Church.

I experience a few fires within, too - excitement at the possibilities envisioned for Holy Cross Educational Ministries by a national collaboration; frustration at recent decisions regarding novitiate formation in the United

States. There have been many fires expressed over these days, too. We need to move on these inspirations. But one warning" don't expect your new Provincial leadership - whomever he, she, or it might be (well, maybe you'll elect a nun, or a committee to govern) to be the sole fire-starter or the fire-extinguisher. Beware of "gurus", or as Kevin Hanley put it, the "perpetually lucid" ones, instantly ready with a solution. Such a one (or ones) probably doesn't exist anyway, and your unreal expectations will only be frustrated further.

As for planning for the future, I would also advise you against waiting until you all land totally on one side or the other of the bar graph median. Given the survey and my experience among you, you will all be on the same side of the graph only where there is but one of you remaining. Embrace your diversity and let your tolerance grow toward further acceptance. Peter and Paul coexisted in the Jerusalem and Antioch churches because they continued the dialog, not because they ironed out all their differences perfectly. You have dialogued; ask God to continue to sustain you in it, and bless your efforts.

Given today's dialog, I hope you would seek to listen and encourage attention to the GENTLE BREEZE Theophany, too. Elijah was taught new and unexpected revelations of God, by attention to the small whispering sound. Today we dreamed together, and in spite of hesitancy and openness to risk and vulnerability, we shared dreams and visions. There is a pattern to this, too, a sacred pattern. Our shared experience, our shared history, our shared dreams are gifts from God. When we reflect on these, ponder these experiences, God can gradually lead us to the meaning of these gifts. Then, we may respond and act on this revelation in faith.

I am fond of a particular quote that motivates such coping with change: "Whether we like it or not, it's our time historically." The challenge God puts before us is to live grace-fully in these present times, in our own situations. In former times we said "Carpe diem" - seize the day! Let us take what we have, recognize it as grace, and choose to live it to the best of our abilities.

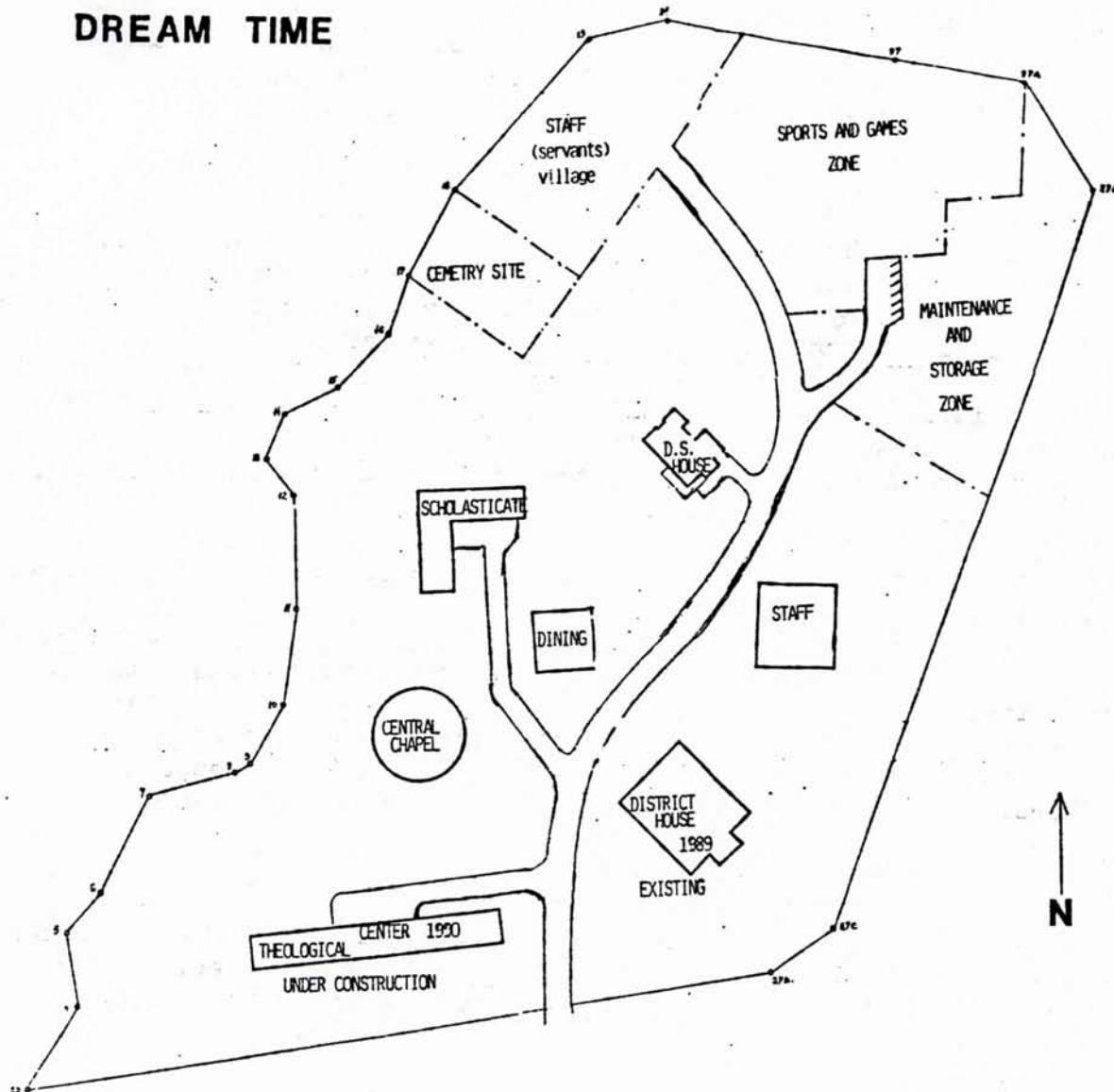
Our scripture model ends with the query, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Is God addressing the same question to us? I believe you have the way, the knowledge within you for the future, for it has been given. Will you patiently ponder, reflect, search for meaning, calling on the Lord and His enlightening spirit for guidance? I believe that is just what we are about to do as we continue to our liturgy of the Eucharist. May God feed us, enlighten us, love us, grant us peace now, and as we live out our future actively in faith.

Amen.

RERUM NOVARUM

Sr. Mary Lou Barba, MCDP, executive chair for the Diocese of Austin steering committee for the observance of the centennial of Rerum Novarum, announced recently that Brother Bruce Lescher has been named to the steering committee. This committee will coordinate the various diocesan activities for this year's celebration of Rerum Novarum. May 15, 1991 will be the 100th anniversary of the issuance of the papal encyclical.

DREAM TIME



Brother Joseph Annan has sent a revised set of plans for the Theological Center and a Dream Plan with Brother Frederick McGlynn. The Jesuits and the OLA (Our Lady of Africa) Sisters have built scholasticates to the south of our plot. The Archbishop has two plots on which he plans to build. This would complete the development of this foundation of Christianity in Cape Coast.

Brother Raymond Papenfuss has been informed that construction is underway on the theological center. The district center has been completed and is now occupied by Brother Joseph Annan and Brother Vincent Gross. Brother Vincent will oversee the construction of the new theological center.

Our thanks to Brothers Joseph Annan, Raymond, Frederick and Vincent for their efforts in extending Holy Cross in Ghana and giving it a more permanent home on the African soil.

HOMILY FOR JUBILEES: Brother Bruce Lescher, CSC

In a few moments we will witness our brothers renewing the vows that they made years ago: twenty-five, forty, fifty, or even sixty years. When we witness this recommitment, we cannot help but be drawn into the drama of the scene. We cease being mere spectators and become participants. When we see our brothers stand before us and repeat their solemn promises to God, we are invited to think about the promises that we have made. We remember the commitments that we ourselves have spoken. If you are a member of Holy Cross, perhaps your mind flashes back to that day you made your first profession. If you have taken the vows of marriage, perhaps you marvel at how that covenant of love has shaped your life just as poverty, celibacy, and obedience have shaped the lives of these men. If you have chosen a single life-style, you are invited to reflect on how your commitment affects your relationship to God and to others. No matter who we are, we are invited today to enter into this ritual.

When these brothers renew their vows, what is it that invites us to become participants? I suggest we are drawn in because of a strange and wonderful and creative tension in the very center of our lives. On the one hand God's call to us, God's action in our lives, remains shrouded in mystery. On the other hand, this mysterious and transcendent call becomes embodied, incarnated, enfleshed, in very specific, unique, and, yes, maybe even annoying, human beings. And so in this ritual we come face to face with who we really are: people who embody some aspect of God's mystery in concrete and specific ways.

On the one hand, today we are surrounded by mystery. The religious life itself constitutes a mysterious sign. We wonder: Why would anyone choose to live the vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience? These vows, after all, seem to run counter to deep human desires for material security, sexual love, and human freedom. Furthermore, why is this person rather than that one called to this life-style? Or why have these men persevered while others in their novitiate classes have made other choices? We are indeed surrounded by mystery.

Yet, when we think of it, each of us encounters similar mysteries in our lives. Does any one of us completely understand the really significant decisions we have made? Why did you marry the person that you did? Or why did you become a lawyer rather than a sales clerk or a homemaker rather than a teacher? The working of God's designs in our lives remains forever beyond our grasp.

But our story doesn't end there. If we were left with nothing but a mystery which constantly eluded our grasp, we would soon enough become bored. There would be nothing to touch us in our day-to-day lives, where we really live. But amazingly God's unfathomable mystery gets enfleshed in the people we know. It isn't the religious life in the abstract that speaks to us, it's Brother Clarence LaMere or Brother John Benesh. It isn't the idea of marriage that calls to us but rather a couple whom we know and who have perhaps struggled and agonized to remain faithful to each other and to raise a family. Mystery invites us precisely because it is embodied in people. It is fitting indeed that today we celebrate the embodiment of God's mysterious

and loving call in these our jubilarians.

And because each of us enfleshes God's mystery in a specific way, we know that we can never exhaust the meaning of our commitments, never fully comprehend their depths. All the brothers who ever lived have still not emptied out the meaning of celibacy. And all the married couples who have ever lived have not exhausted the meaning of marriage. Instead, we go deeper and deeper into the mystery of these commitments. We ponder more and more how they shape our lives. That is why when we repeat the words of the vows that we first made, the words don't mean the same thing. When we say them ten or twenty-five or fifty years later they have taken on a new and deeper significance. We understand more clearly what we are saying, even though we know we still have not reached the end of our journey.

One last point. We are fortunate to be celebrating today not only the anniversaries of our jubilarians but also the feast of Corpus Christi, the commemoration of Jesus' presence to us in the flesh, in Body and Blood. These two celebrations are intimately linked. With our jubilarians we celebrate the mystery of God's call to the religious life, a mystery become enfleshed in their persons. And with the feast of Corpus Christi we likewise celebrate an even greater mystery: the presence of Jesus, God's son, in Body and Blood. In the Gospel today Jesus says to his astounded audience, "My flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink."

God understands our need to experience mystery in the flesh, and so Jesus comes to us to be the image of the God no one can see. As St. Paul says, "He is the image of the unseen God, and the first-born of all creation." (Col. 1:15) Our faith tells us that this mystery of the incarnation continues among us today under the form of bread and wine.

So now, before this ritual of the renewal of vows, let us be thankful for the ways in which God's mystery has entered the life of each person here. For, as Jesus reminds us with his Body and Blood, we need to be able to touch mystery before it can transform us. Let us be especially thankful for these our brothers, because through their presence and their witness and their touch some of the mystery of God has become real to us, has touched our daily lives. And this faithful witness helps us all to be the people we are called to be.

SISTER OF BROTHER PETER NAULT

Brother Peter Nault wrote to inform us that his sister, Mrs. Phoebe Evans, died on July 7. She had been suffering from cancer for the past year. She is survived by her Husband, John, four brothers -- William, Lloyd, James, and Peter, and two sisters -- Bernice Barbriere and Henrietta Nardi. Peter writes, "I would certainly appreciate your prayers and the remembrance of the Community in the next newsletter for the repose of my sister's soul."

