

MIDWEST PROVINCE NEWS ITEMS

May 1998

On Sunday evening and Monday, April 26-27, a gathering of the Midwest Province general chapter delegates was held at Schubert Villa, Notre Dame. The meeting was called by **Br. William Geenen**, provincial, and was intended to give the delegates and alternates an opportunity to review items suggested for the provisional agenda of the chapter that begins July 5 in Rome at the generalate of the De La Salle Christian Brothers on Via Aurelia. Present at the meeting were **Brs. William Geenen, Donald Gibbs, Kenneth Haders, Thomas Maddix, Joseph Fox, John Tryon** and **Raymond Papenfuss** (alternate). **Brs. Michael Amakyi** and **Richard Gilman** were unable to attend, as was alternate **Br. Donald Stabrowski**. The delegates also discussed other matters connected with the chapter, such as the election of a superior general and assistants general.

Br. Robert Fillmore called attention to an article appearing in the Fall 1997 edition of *Flashpoint*, a magazine geared toward teenage interests, entitled, "Diffusing Our Differences," which uses Bob's class at Holy Trinity High School as an example of how multiracial classroom settings can be arenas for learning life values that encourage seeing differences as positive building blocks for creating deeper relationships.

In his column, editor **Tom Toussaint** says, "Our thanks to Holy Cross Brother Bob Fillmore and his social justice class who so graciously gave of their time and ideas as we put this package together. We couldn't have done it without you!"

Bob also directed the faculty retreat for Archbishop Quigley Seminary in late March.

Br. John Tryon, vocation promoter, alerted the *News Items* to several interesting pieces of information.

Br. Joseph McTaggart's article, "Like Fish: Not Knowing We Are in the Water," originally published in *Brothers to Others: Our Way of Being*, was republished in the 1998 issue of *Vision* under the title, "What's So Special About Brothers?"

The internet address for the vocation web page for the Midwest Province is

<http://www.hcc-nd.edu/mwp/>

Prayers are requested for the complete recuperation of **Br. Richard Armstrong** in Phoenix, who underwent throat surgery at the end of April.

William Munyon has been accepted into the candidacy program for the fall. Bill applied a few years ago and was approved, but delayed entry to do further studies.

Beginning in mid-April **Mr. Frank J. Macknick** of ELDeR Care, Marketing Consultants, Inc., LaGrange, Indiana, was hired part time as an information consultant for The Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame with specific tasks centered around the preparation, with **Br. John May**, Director of Planning, of an interest survey to be sent to nearly 6000 individuals on the BROTHERS mailing list, and sometime during the summer of an initial brochure with basic information on The Village for interested inquirers.

Who's on first? The confusion so humorously portrayed by Abbot and Costello has been replicated in a less laughable but still good natured way as various individuals and administrative components at the Holy Cross Brothers Center have accomplished moves in the recent past.

Br. William Geenen, provincial, now has his office and quarters in the new bungalow immediately adjacent to Dujarie House on the east. **Br. Philip Armstrong**, Br. William's secretary, has his office in one of the rooms in the same bungalow. In the adjacent bungalow is **Br. Joseph Fox**, regional director of the brothers on the Center grounds, who has both quarters and office there. **Br. Donald Gibbs**, assistant provincial, has moved his quarters to the guest room of the provincial office bungalow and has retained his office in the provincial residence wing until the completion of the three bungalows just north of the provincial house, at which time he will occupy the center bungalow for both office and quarters. These bungalows are expected to be completed before the end of May. At that time, **Br. John May**, Director of Planning, and **Br. Philip Armstrong** will move their quarters into the bungalow nearest U.S. 31/33, and **Mr. Frank Macknick**, information consultant for The Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame, will have his office in the bungalow nearest the access road that will serve as a model open to the public, and will house office space for those who assist Frank.

All other former residents of Basil Hall have by this time been relocated in Columba Hall, the provincial residential wing (now known as the Faculty House) or Schubert Villa. At Columba Hall are former Basil residents **Brs. Alexius Adam, Richard Gilson, Pedro Haering, James Kumba, Isaac Jogues Motz, Bernard Platte and James Roth (E)**. At the Faculty House are **Brs. Tony Dadzie (temporarily), Robert Dierker, Charles Drevon, Raymond Dufresne, Edward Foken, Raymond Harrington, James Leik and Harold Ruplinger**. At Schubert Villa are **Brs. Philip Armstrong and John May**. The province business office remains as and where it has always been. Many of the moves into bungalows and provincial residence are temporary and will be readjusted when the apartment building under construction just south of Schubert Villa is completed around the end of the calendar year.

Br. Donald Johnroe reports that on Sunday, January 4, a statue of Blessed Br. Andre was blessed by **Fr. Jack Birkmeyer, C.S.C.**, at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with several Holy Cross men and women present. The statue sits in the Blessed Sacrament chapel just off the main body of the church.

Donald was privileged to take a day trip by chartered plane to Cuba for the visit of **Pope John Paul II**. On the plane were **Cardinal Roger Mahoney** of Los Angeles, **Cardinal Maida** of Detroit, **Archbishop Favalora** of Miami and his two auxiliaries. The plane arrived in Cuba at 8:30 a.m. and returned to Florida at 6:30 p.m. Donald terms it a very memorable day.

Br. Richard Gilman, president of Holy Cross College, was present in Miami in the LeMans Room of the Fontainebleau Hilton to receive the Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges 1998 Service-Learning Collaboration Award in the category of *Collaboration with K-12*. **Dr. John Raymer**, Chairman of the Humanities Division at the College, and his wife, **Ann Raymer**, who works with the South Bend Public Library, were present also. Br. Richard explains that "the award is for our participation in the homework tutoring project in collaboration with the South Bend Public Library and the city's Public School

system.”

The letter of notification reads in part, “The readers were very impressed with your nomination. The work you have been doing within the service-learning field is commendable. We hope that through your leadership and that of your faculty and staff, more institutions of higher education will integrate service-learning within their institutions. You also exemplified the importance of collaboration and how through multiple partnerships, we can accomplish social transformation.”

Congratulations to Br. Richard and the faculty, staff and students at Holy Cross College!

Br. Richard Gilman also reports that he has been elected to the Executive Board governing the National Campus Compact Center for Two Year Colleges, headquartered at Maricopa Community College, Phoenix, Arizona. The Center has a dual mission, Br. Richard says: first, it serves as a national advocate for community colleges in service-learning to sustain service-learning as a national movement. And secondly, it serves member organizations and others in the promotion and implementation of community services as a means of improving teaching and learning to the ultimate benefit of students and the communities in which they live. Congratulations to Br. Richard as well for having been given this honor.

A MWProv. Net List notice sent from the provincial office some weeks ago notified Midwest members about information from **Br. William Dygert** in Rhode Island announcing the death of a former Holy Cross Brother, **Rev. William T. Babbitt**, of the Diocese of Taunton, Massachusetts. Though ministering mostly in the East while a brother, William was known by many Midwest province members. Please remember him in your prayers.

To be remembered in prayer also are the mother of **Br. Robert Mosher** of Garland, Texas, and the father of **Br. James Bagans** of Lakewood. Both of the parents died during April.

Br. Frederick McGlynn returned to the U.S. from Ghana on April 28. Last year Fred was in the States for some months being treated for a hearing problem and thought it had been adequately resolved before he went back to Ghana in time for the 40th anniversary celebrations in November and December. Within three to four months, however, the problem recurred and will need further attention. This and other health concerns will keep Fred in the U.S. He is living at Columba Hall.

Fred's departure from Ghana, where he spent 32 years and established an enviable reputation as a mathematics teacher as well as a valued “elder” and counselor to the younger Ghanaian religious and to hundreds of students of St. Augustine's School and St. John's School, was appropriately marked by a special festive ceremony staged by the District of West Africa under the leadership of **Br. Michael Amakyi**, District Superior.

Br. Jerome Kroetsch in Sekondi, Ghana, writes that he and **Br. Daniel Dardoe** are being kept busy with the construction of the new Skills Training Workshop building and a bathroom and change room facility. The pace of construction is slow, as students and staff are involved while at the same time conducting and attending the regular daily school schedule.

A year ago Br. Jerome was elected to a two-year term as chairman of the Western and Central District Branch of the Ghana National Association of Technical Institutes. He was recently part of a three-member team to be interviewed by a local FM radio station as a way of informing the public that many technical and vocational schools are available for youth who may not have other opportunities for education. Most of these schools are designed to help underprivileged youth. The Western/Central branch of the GNATI is composed of 32 member schools, who all recognize the value of young people to society and give priority to their training by providing instruction in a variety of marketable skills at different educational levels so the young people may become active, self-supporting members of their communities.

Br. Daniel will be in the U.S. in late June to participate in a meeting of the Holy Cross Associates. Br. Michael Amakyi and he are forming a group of associates mostly comprised of past students from schools taught by Holy Cross in Ghana.

From March 17 until April 10 Br. Philip Armstrong was in Ghana at the request of Fr. Claude Grou, superior general, to help Br. Joel Ghananza, assistant general, present three workshops for brothers. Br. Philip had been scheduled to attend the 40th anniversary celebrations earlier, but could not because of his aunt's illness and death.

The first gathering was a weekend for all members of the District of West Africa at the request of Br. Michael Amakyi. The topic was the *History and Heritage* of Holy Cross, with special application to West Africa. Br. Joel gave the general background, and Br. Philip particularized the arrival and development of Holy Cross since 1957.

The second set of presentations was held over a period of four days for the pre-novices and candidates at St. Joseph's Hall, Sekondi. During three sessions the four pre-novices were given background talks on Holy Cross history and heritage, then they joined the twelve candidates for another three sessions of broader material on Holy Cross in W. Africa. Emphasis was placed on the contributions of the "brother ancestors" in Holy Cross who brought the community to Ghana and established it through their years of effort there.

The final presentation was a full morning's consideration of the lay religious life and its requirements for brothers in West Africa. The session attracted a core group of brothers from several communities in Ghana who will be planning further gatherings for their wider membership. Br. Joel spoke about the brother as both being a prophet and doing ministry as a prophet. Br. Philip contributed specific suggestions in the form of "Ten Commandments for the Brother as Prophet."

All presentations were gratefully and enthusiastically received by the participants and Br. Michael used several occasions to thank Brs. Joel and Philip for their presence and contributions.

A serious energy crisis hit Ghana in late January, partially as a result of El Nino's curtailing the fall rains that maintain the level of water in Lake Volta, the site of Akosombo Dam, supplier of hydroelectric power to the country. The buildup of silt in the lake, as well as breakdowns in four of the six turbines helping produce electricity, caused the Volta River Authority and the Electricity Corporation of Ghana to initiate severe rationing of electricity throughout the country. Initially set at 24 hours of power, 24 without, the authorities quickly reviewed this scheme, realizing it would be inadequate. Areas without industrial concentration were slated to have 12 hours on, 24 off, and this remained fairly constant during the three and a

half weeks Brs. Joel and Philip were in Ghana. Where business and industry are found in concentration, the rationing moved from 12 on, 24 off to 6 on and 48 off. St. John's School, in one such zone, goes without electricity on an unpredictable schedule closer to 6 on, 60 off.

The short- and long-term consequences and their implications are not hard to imagine. Cooling is nearly impossible in areas where power is on only 6 hours at a time. Sekondi is on the more severe rationing schedule. Cape Coast and Brafoyaw are on the more lenient 12-24 timetable. However, the Electricity Corporation warned that if the level of the lake sank any farther, it might be necessary to shut down the hydroelectric plant altogether by the end of April. The brothers are affected, as is everyone, and the topic preoccupies everyone's mind and conversation, because it clearly affects the boarding programs at St. Augustine's and St. John's, and the manner of shopping for food and storing it. **Srs. Jane Chantal, Esther, and Madeline Therese** in Takoradi noted it has become necessary to shop daily for food—the increasingly common practice of all Ghanaians. In a country where people pride themselves on welcoming guests hospitably with a cold drink, ~~even if only water, there is honest embarrassment in not~~ being able to do so because of no refrigeration. Average temperatures four to six degrees higher than normal are difficult to bear without electricity to power fans, especially at night. Daytime temperatures are in the 90's, with mid-80's at night and the humidity high.

The economic implications are critical; whether they eventually affect the political scene is unclear. Ghana had been at the threshold of an aggressive program of soliciting foreign investment in business and industry and in promoting tourism. The energy crisis puts this program on hold, as few investors can be persuaded that rationed electricity and its uncertain availability in the future would not seriously impact their efforts to set up and conduct business. Tourists are being cautioned not to come until there is a resolution of the problem. **Br. Edward Dailey**, secretary to the general administration in Rome, was planning to visit Ghana at the end of his tour several months from now, but is reconsidering. **Br. Donald Allen**, who was invited by former brother **Jerome Chandler** to go back to Ghana for a visit in June, still plans to be there from late June to about mid-July. It is not a question of whether one can survive in Ghana; it is whether the activities one seeks to engage in can be pursued with the expected ease. Food prices were beginning to escalate a bit, according to **Br. Vincent Gross** at Brafoyaw. So far there are no shortages of particular goods or petrol, but any extension of the drought and its effects could bring about further complications in the food and transportation markets.

The heavy rainy season had begun upcountry and held promise, but experts predict that even under the best of conditions, ~~at least six months will pass before the level of Volta Lake~~ permits the resumption of pumping needed to provide power everywhere. One authority predicted that it will be two years before normal conditions return. The potential impact on business and industry already in place is easy to predict if they are unable to function at all, or only at a greatly reduced capacity.

Prayers are requested that the serious energy situation in Ghana have a quick resolution, and that the brothers, who consider themselves "men with hope to bring" in Ghana, may be able to realize this goal both for themselves and others.