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January 1, 1996

To: Members of the Midwest Province  
From: Br. William Geenen, Provincial *WAG*  
Re: Enclosed General Visit Report

General Visit Report

The report of the superior general on the official visit made in October to the Midwest Province arrived while I was in Ghana visiting our brothers there over Christmas. Without further delay I want to make the report available to you.

The topics reflect the conversations held with you during the time of the visit by Fr. Claude Grou and three of his assistants. I believe the report can be of value to all of us as material for personal reflection and for discussion in local chapters and in gatherings of regional or support groups.

I wish to express my gratitude as well as that of the provincial council and all members of the province to Fr. Grou, Fr. D'Souza, Br. Patrick and Br. Joel for conducting the visit so energetically and for helping us to gain a perspective on our lives in the Midwest Province not otherwise available to us.

Visit to Ghana

I profited immensely from my first opportunity to visit with our men in the District of W. Africa. Hearing accounts of our life and work there had given me a great respect for what our presence in Ghana means. Being on the scene, however, and witnessing first hand what an impact our religious have made there over the years and continue to make was a rewarding experience. I will have more to say about my visit in the next issue of **BROTHERS**, as will Br. Donald Gibbs, who, at my request, visited our province members in Bangladesh in November and familiarized himself with the widespread and effective Holy Cross presence to the Church in Bangladesh. With Br. Thomas Dillman in the U.S. on leave at this time, I made no attempt to visit Liberia.

The New Year

In early December I sent you a Christmas card reminding us, as does the masthead of our publication, that we, like Jesus, are brothers to others. Part of the message on the card stated that Christmas reminds us of Jesus's commitment to be a brother to us and so encourages us to renew our own sense of commitment as religious to be brothers to those with whom we live and minister.

We can profit not only from the liturgical seasons to remind ourselves of directions our lives need to take, but from the calendar year and secular celebrations as well. So, as the new year 1996 begins, I invite each of you to renew your commitment to be truly brothers to others and to formulate or revive whatever reasonable and workable resolutions help you to be effective witnesses to others of God's love present in the world.

Various News Items

Please remember in your prayers the father of **Br. William Mewes**, Dwane, who passed away on December 28. The funeral was held in Carbondale, Illinois, on December 30.

**Br. Joseph Chvala** arrived at Dujarie House a few weeks ago and has begun an intensive program of physical and occupational therapy to overcome the effects of the stroke suffered recently. His determination and cheerful enthusiasm are sure signs that the surprising progress he has made so far will be even more noticeable in the near future.

On January 4 **Br. Jerome Schwabe** will arrive at Dujarie House from California to continue his recuperation following serious surgery for cancer and to undergo treatment. **Br. James Linscott**, who spent several weeks in California assisting Jerome, will return at that time to Columba Hall.

**Br. Timothy Hickey** (SW), a resident at Dujarie House, died on December 27 after suffering a stroke while visiting relatives in Indianapolis for Christmas. Timothy was buried in the Holy Cross Brothers Center cemetery next to his brother, **Br. Fernand Hickey**, on December 30 after funeral services in the Center chapel.

Remember in your prayers **Br. James Rottenbacher**, who is experiencing some health problems and will be undergoing further medical testing early this month.

Also keep in your prayers **Br. Edward Dailey's** brother, Joe, who is battling cancer in Houston, Texas; **Br. Paul Kelly's** brother, who is seriously ill; and **Sr. Catherine O'Brien, C.S.C.**, superior general of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, St. Mary's, who is undergoing chemotherapy to combat cancer.

**Fr. John VanWolvlear, C.S.C.**, died suddenly a few days before Christmas. Fr. Van, widely known in the South Bend/Notre Dame parochial and educational environment, regularly attended funerals, jubilees and other celebrations at the Brothers Center.

**Br. Joseph Berg** continues to progress rapidly in his recuperation from the partial paralysis caused by a surfside accident on Labor Day. Joe is back with the community in Forestville and expects to be back at work with Catholic Charities early in January.

Your help is solicited to make sure the provincial office learns of items of news involving or concerning you that would be of interest to everyone and could be included in brief notices to the membership every month or so. Please contact **Br. Donald Gibbs** (219-239-8301) or **Br. Philip Armstrong** (219-239-8335) by phone, fax (219-289-0487), or letter regarding such news items.