

MIDWEST – MDWEEK

Brothers of Holy Cross – Midwest Province - P.O. Box 460 – Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-0460

September 7, 2016

Old St. Joseph High School

As of August 5, 2016:



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Columba Hall Celebrates House Jubilations



(Under top picture) Brothers Christopher Dreyer, Julian Przybyla and Joseph Annan celebrate their jubilees of 60-40-40 years as a Holy Cross Brother, at Columba Hall, Notre Dame, IN. Father William Blum presided at Mass. The jubilee meal was prepared by our chef Ricky Landsberg.



Art, Story, Community and Connection

By
Joe McTaggart, csc

There's a story here, and it's about how Columba Hall came into possession of a magnificent, framed drawing of the equally magnificent building that it is.

There is a story, for sure. But behind the story is a great example of serendipity, or happenstance, or coincidence, or one would like to think—the Holy Spirit.

Buildings at Notre Dame have been painted, sketched, and illustrated consistently as any place of beauty would. Those drawings, paintings and images can be seen for sale in multi-forms and examples at the Notre Dame Bookstore. Most significant among them all is the iconic

Golden Dome, recognized by millions around the world in paintings, bookmarks, and trinkets of every kind.

And now our own Columba Hall has received its fair dues.

In the main corridor, in prominent display, and lighted appropriately sits the rendering by Obua Rodgers, a classic, detailed, and beautiful commemoration of all this building and home mean to us and hold in the memory of the Congregation.

The artist (Obie, as he is known) is a certified nurse assistant at Dujarie Infirmary. His story is this. Obie has been drawing since he was a youth. It all came to him naturally. He has had little formal training for his “hobby.” Those who have seen his work though, in its incredible detail and stately presentation, are amazed that his skills are mainly self-taught.

But there is more to the story, further connections to Holy Cross.

Obie went to St. Leo's, our Holy Cross School in Fort Portal, Uganda. This tall, athletic, and talented young man eventually received a soccer scholarship to the States and attended Martin Methodist College in Tennessee. Brother John Flood was his Headmaster at St. Leo's and told him if he ever got to the States to be sure and look up Notre Dame.

Obie wanted to attend Notre Dame before John ever brought up the idea. Soccer too was his dream. Maybe he could even play soccer at Notre Dame though Notre Dame was far away.

As fate or serendipity would have it, his sister, who preceded him to the States, invited him to visit her in Michigan. His eyes lighted up. Michigan is close to Notre Dame. He would see in person his childhood dream—Notre Dame. Obie made it to campus the first chance he could even though he knew he could neither afford the tuition nor make the transition.

But there was another talent in this former college athlete. He loved nursing, so he was encouraged to check out Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame and especially Dujarie Infirmary as Obie was already trained and certified as a nursing assistant and loved that work equally. When he heard of Dujarie and the Brothers' connection, he immediately made his way there.

And here's where the story yields a further Holy Cross connection. A former Director of Nursing at Dujarie, Stacey Johnson, met him at the door and said to him that very day in the midst of touring the facility, "You belong here, Obie."

That's all he needed. Within three weeks Obua Rodgers left Tennessee where he had gotten a scholarship. Getting to Notre Dame was still a goal, so he began his work at Dujarie and quickly became an effective and beloved associate of our health care ministry. Although his soccer skills and desire to play for Notre Dame did not materialize, working at Dujarie and being reconnected with the Brothers of Holy Cross were just fine for this nurse-assistant, soccer-playing, artist in his newly adopted country.

Time passes. Those he serves at Dujarie love his work, his caring, his sensitive manner, and disposition. Notre Dame and its beauty still entice him. As he tours campus in his free time, the artist in him comes to the fore again. Buildings and pastoral settings attract him. He spies Columba Hall. For his own interest Obua Rodgers takes many pictures of campus buildings but is especially drawn to Columba Hall because, as he would later say, "It was there, beautiful, not

encumbered by anything else, no trees blocking the view, no wires crossing the visual plane, a beauty on the hill.” Snap, click. His cell phone records this view and that, this angle and that. Someday, he says to himself, he would draw this building just because it touched him and he loved drawing beautiful things.

I myself saw a rendering Obie had done of Dujarie and was taken immediately by its beauty and simplicity. That picture hangs directly in front of the nurses’ station along with one of the Dome, in the space at Dujarie immediately behind the receptionist’s desk.

There are others too, great renderings of Village scenes and its buildings at Andre Place and Holy Cross College. I hadn’t noticed them before, but I sure did now. And then I thought, wouldn’t it be great if we had a painting like that of our own beloved Columba Hall masterfully done and prominently displayed on the first floor of Columba? I thought no more of it, but the idea stayed with me and kept haunting me.

The plot thickens. A former student of Cathedral had previously sent a contribution to the Brothers in response to his own memories and gratitude for the Brothers and his days as a student at Cathedral High School. Tory Puntarelli, who sent the donation, his older brother Tim, and their father Salvatore had all attended Cathedral. I knew all three and taught Tim as a freshman and junior. This was a small recognition of their gratitude for the Holy Cross connection, but it set me thinking. When I asked, Tory said, “However our small family contribution could help the Brothers would be fine with me.” Hmmm? A stipend and a request!

Maybe the circle could be completed, and another Holy Cross story could be told illustrating a gentle, touching, and remarkably connected story line no one saw in the making until it played itself out in the Spirit’s own good time. And maybe Columba Hall, home of so much history of the larger Congregation but mainly of the Brothers, this place of renown in the lives of so many over so many years, home to stories of the Brothers’ lives, their work, and their collective ministry—community history gracefully lived and warmly remembered—maybe that could be expressed in a piece of art, a thing of beauty, an exquisitely rendered drawing of this iconic building itself done by a young and talented man from a land far away, who himself was taught and touched by the world-wide ministry of Holy Cross. And even more mysteriously, maybe he would complete the dream he had of drawing it himself before anyone else knew or anyone else requested that he do such a painting. Maybe Columba Hall itself could be honored with one of Obie’s drawings?

It happened. It came together. The story, the artist, the subject matter, the benefactor, the community, the warmth and connection any good piece of art will produce.

Columba Hall, dear to so many, symbol and honored place of the Province and the Society of Brothers especially, community house, forever hospitable, always open and inviting, a place, a home, an historical setting for much of our own collective and individual histories—it is now put to canvas in its own display and rendering. It will draw visitors' eyes and residents' gazing as well, stirring up further stories most likely known only to the hearts and memories of its viewers.

Come, see it sometime.



Holy Cross College Awarded Federal Grants to Expand Prison Education

NOTRE DAME, IN (August 11, 2016) – Holy Cross College is proud to announce that it has been selected as one of 67 educational institutions in the country to participate in the U.S. Department of Education’s Second Chance Pell Program. The Second Chance Pell Program permits incarcerated students to be eligible for federal student aid while enrolled in a college degree program.



Holy Cross College directs two prison education programs, one for men at Westville Correctional Facility in Westville, IN, and one for women at the Indiana Women’s Prison (IWP) in Indianapolis, IN. The classes offered at Westville are taught by professors from Holy Cross College and the University of Notre Dame, and the degrees are conferred by Holy Cross College. Courses at IWP are offered by a variety of faculty from institutions in the Indianapolis area.

“Providing educational opportunities to individuals who would not normally have the opportunity to pursue a college-level education strongly aligns with the mission of Holy Cross College and our duty as a Catholic institution,” says Vice President for Strategic Initiatives Brother Jesus Alonso, C.S.C.

Holy Cross already offers both free associate’s and bachelor’s degrees in liberal studies for select inmates at Westville, but as a direct result of the Second Chance Pell Program, enrollment will more than double. At IWP, the grants will help expand programming, hire a site coordinator, and offer degree programs. Holy Cross hopes to enroll almost 100 men and women in college classes at IWP and Westville this academic year.

“It takes about \$10,000 to run one course. That includes providing supplies and books for students and also providing salaries for our faculty,” says Br. Alonso. “These grants will allow us to reach more men and women who deserve a second chance at a college education.”

Modeled after Bard College’s Prison Initiative (BPI), the Holy Cross program hopes to experience similar success. According to Alesha Seroczynski, director of college operations for the prison initiative, “Only 3% of any inmates educated by



Bard have returned to prison, and only 1% of all BPI graduates recidivate. Even better, BPI alumni are thriving citizens in their communities. Many of their graduates have pursued advanced studies in fields such as public health; one alumnus recently completed his master's degree at Yale Divinity School. By any standard those are spectacular results—and something we hope to emulate.”

Nationwide, the colleges and universities that have been selected for this program will partner with 141 federal and state penal institutions to enroll around 12,000 incarcerated students in educational and training programs. These institutions will provide federal Pell Grants to qualified students who are incarcerated and are likely to be released within five years of enrolling in coursework.

The Second Chance Pell Program was initiated by the Obama administration as research demonstrates that educating incarcerated men and women significantly reduces an individual's likelihood of recidivism.



A Surprise Visitor

What a surprise!

Having finished our lunch on Friday, August 12, at Columba Hall, **Brother Roy Smith**, whom I had taught as a sophomore at Cathedral High School in Indianapolis, came to our table with, Dr. Ruben Talukder, a Bangladeshi now living in Michigan, who had been taught in Holy Cross Schools in Dhaka. He had fond memories of Brothers: **Lorenzo Powers**, **Ralph Baird**, and especially, **Thomas More Beere**, whom he regarded as a saint, and **Fr. Joseph Peixotto**. He was introduced to **Br Ronald Drahozal**, sitting opposite of him, and told of his work with addicts. Dr. Ruben recalled that there was another Brother Ronald at St. Joseph High School who taught him. Well, I let him know that I was sitting right next to him at the table. He was really astonished, and recalled that I was much younger then and had a small beard. Since he had left Bangladesh forty-five years ago, he was so happy to meet us again, including **Brother Fulgence Dougherty**, who had founded St Joseph's in Mohammedpur.



Brother Fulgence and Dr. Ruben Talukder

He was full of praise for the work of Holy Cross in the schools of Dhaka and beyond, in the villages. Having attended our high schools and then Notre Dame College, he was full of enthusiasm for our contribution to education in Bangladesh, and for the effect it had on his development as a person.

Before leaving he took photos with his phone, and immediately sent them off to his family and friends. Brother James Newberry, took some photos, also.

Such a happy occasion! **Br. Ronald Christenson**



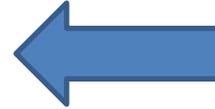
Brother Ronald Christenson, Dr. Ruben Talukder, and Brother Ronald Drahozal

Columba Hall – Almost an Island

(For those who missed the e-mail a few weeks ago, here again is the information on the big rain that was had on August 16.)

Between 7 and 10 inches of rain fell during the night on August 16 to almost create an island surrounding Columba Hall, Notre Dame, Indiana. Below are photos of scenes that you would have seen as you walked around the building.

<http://brothersofholycross.com/columba-hall/>



From Richard Gilman

At Riverside in the Holy Cross Village, Notre Dame, IN, water got behind the retaining wall to the underground parking. The wall collapsed onto the generator, rupturing the main gas line. Fortunately no fire! We were without hot water for 48 hours.



Dear Brothers and Friends of the RBC,

Since our last email, the RBC celebrated its 45th Annual Assembly in Racine, WI. Over 50 Brothers attended our event, and by all measures the assembly was a success.

Br. Stephen Glodek, SM has been elected and affirmed as the incoming President of the RBC, for a term of three years. In addition, Br. David Eubank, MS, and Br. John Skrodinsky, ST, have been elected to our Board of Directors. Their terms are also for three years.

We thank Br. Jack Henn for his work as President over the past three years, and wish him well in his ongoing work with the Glenmary Home Missioners. We are also grateful for the six years of service given by Br. Ed Benson, CR, who has now completed his second term on the Board of Directors.

We honored Br. Thomas Hickey, MM, with our "Pillar of the RBC" Award. Br. Tom has served the RBC in many capacities over the years, including two terms as Executive Secretary and is currently a member of our Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors will meet again in November. Feel free to contact me with any questions, ideas, or suggestions you would like to have presented at that meeting.

In the meantime, please mark your calendars: our 46th Annual Assembly will take place July 17 - 20, 2017, at the Passionist Retreat Center in Sierra Madre, CA. You can access a [PDF announcement here](#).

Fr. Greg Boyle, SJ will be our keynote presenter. We hope to see you there.

Br. Benjamin Babb, SDS
Executive Secretary

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**Cartoon
by
Brother
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CSC**

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