

MIDWEST – MIDWEEK

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

January 4, 2012

Eulogy for Brother Thomas More (Edward) Beere, C.S.C. December 27, 2011

On behalf of the Brothers in the Midwest Province, we welcome all of you to the Mass of Resurrection in honor of our Brother Thomas More (Edward) Beere. We are especially grateful that members of his family have come from Racine, Wisconsin [in this challenging weather] to see their brother, brother-in-law, uncle, great uncle, cousin or dear friend.

Since Brother Tom spent 55 years working in Bangladesh, many community members did not get to know him well, until he returned to take up residence these last 8 years at Columba Hall. I've only known him these past 4 years from our work together in the Archives. And the staff here at Dujarie House only knew him for about a week.

When collecting experiences about his life, I was surprised to find that our lives paralleled each other in many ways:

— *for one*: Brother Theophane Schmitt played a significant role in both of our lives. He was the Vocation recruiter who invited Tom to visit Watertown after Tom interviewed him for the high school newspaper. He might owe his vocation as brother to Theophane, but Tom later wrote that maybe it was the blueberry pie ala mode that Brother Polycarp served him when he visited Watertown. Brother Theophane came to Ghana when I was working there and calmed our anxious fears that we might be expelled from the country during Kwame Nkrumah's regime. Theophane studied the situation and urged the construction of a student dormitory and a juniorate to begin recruiting Ghanaian Holy Cross Brothers since he concluded that Holy Cross was not going to leave Ghana.

– *in another similar example*: Brother Tom and I both went to the missions the year after we graduated from Notre Dame. Tom went to Bangladesh in 1948 and I went to Ghana in 1961.

– *and lastly*: Both Brother Tom and I enjoy hobbies in making things with our hands. He made rosaries, even while in Bangladesh and I make God's eyes or Oyo

de Dios. [by the way, I hope you collected a rosary from the basket which were made by Brother Tom. When he makes them, they must be donated and not sold.]

When I came to Columba Hall I was impressed at Brother Thomas' calm demeanor and reverence. When he entered our Chapel, he would fold his hands and nod to the tabernacle, instead of genuflecting or bowing. This gesture is a sign of formal greeting in Bangladesh and India. When entering Christian homes or villages, Brothers would bow and say in Bengali, "*Jesu tay pronom*" which means, "Greetings in the name of Jesus."

I interviewed Brothers who lived and worked with Brother Tom in Bangladesh, I've also received 14 e-mails from Bengali Brothers in Bangladesh recounting their memories of Brother Tom.

Brother Tom was known widely for his outstanding organizational skills in the six schools where he taught and administered. He excelled in organizing schedules, hiring teachers and being available to the students. He was a quiet and unassuming leader, extremely efficient and always approachable. One of his students wrote to say he was "tremendously patient, very kind and always considerate, he made us much better human beings. He was our Guru in teaching English and edited the writings for many students."

Brother Tom loved sports and often led the physical exercise programs at the schools, playing basketball with the students and acting as referee for soccer and cricket matches. One Bengali Brother wrote that Brother Tom was the "the person who brought basketball to Bangladesh." Students admired his generosity, boundless energy and his concern and care for them to succeed in life. Besides teaching and being the headmaster at six different schools in Bangladesh, he also served as the Assistant District Superior under Brother Fulgence and was a member of the District Council for many years.

Brother Binoy is now the Provincial Superior, and wrote yesterday to say: Brother Thomas was a "committed, dedicated and prayerful religious Brother, he was the role-model for everybody. He never wasted his time and was always doing something. I did not see him sleeping in the afternoon but often was reading books or making rosaries. He served as our Novice Master for the Brothers in the second novitiate at Bandura and was the Director of the juniorate in Nagori. He also was one of the most generous donors to the St. Joseph Province."

Tom returned to the United States in 2003 to take up residence at Columba Hall. He did not lose his enthusiasm to keep busy. The obituary in your program

recounts his marvelous computer organizational skills where he has helped both the priests' Indiana Province Archives and us in the Midwest Province Archives. A person who greatly admired his generous help is Mrs. Jackie Dougherty who worked in the priests' archives for many years. She was VERY thankful that Brother Tom was able to identify and date countless photographs from Bengal and Bangladesh. He also indexed every issue of *The Bengalese* news magazine. He was truly a dedicated and talented angel who brought order into everything he touched, whether with the Indiana or the Midwest Archives.

One of my duties after a Brother dies, is to organize the belongings in his room. I never knew how organized a person he was. I had given him three flash drives for his work, they were more than 60% filled with Excel programs and folders of photographs and documents he had indexed. I also found a 50-page essay entitled **“Holy Cross Brothers of the United States in Bengal, from 1853 to 2003.”** which I hope to have printed as a monograph by our Holy Cross History Association. Tom was so meticulous that he kept a daily journal starting in the 1950s that has filled three large folders as well as one of the flash drives. He saved me a great deal of work, but now has provided me with much more ... that I will forward to organizing with pleasure.

This generous and gracious gentleman has been an inspiration to countless people through his years of service and example in both Bangladesh and the U.S.

I recall a couple of sayings: *“Imitation is the highest form of flattery”* and *“Example is the best teacher.”* I'd like to suggest that we pause for a few moments and I urge you to recall any memory or virtue of Brother Thomas' life that you admire.... then try to incorporate it into your own personal life as a tribute to him.

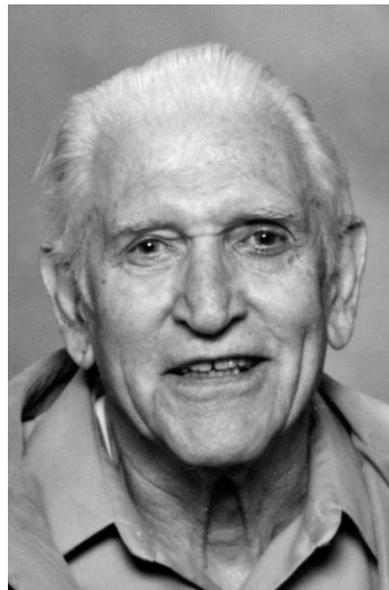
Thank you, Brother Thomas, for the work you have done and the example you've given to your family, to your fellow Brothers, and especially to all the people you've served by your generous work. Amen.

Brother Lawrence Stewart

Brother Thomas More (Edward) Beere, C.S.C.

July 28, 1924 – December 22, 2011

Brother Thomas More Beere, C.S.C., age 87, died on December 22, 2011 at Dujarie House, in Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame, IN. He was born in Racine, Wisconsin on July 28, 1924, the son of Frank and Elizabeth (Giannoni) Beere. He attended St. Edward's Elementary School and St. Catherine's High School in Racine and graduated in 1942. It was Brother Theophane Schmitt's visit and vocation talk at his high school that convinced Brother Thomas to join Holy Cross. He entered the Juniorate in Watertown, Wisconsin in September, received the habit on January 15, 1943 and made his first profession of vows as a Brother of Holy Cross on February 14, 1944. He began his studies at the University of Notre Dame, earned a Bachelor's degree, and graduated *magna cum laude*, in 1947.



Brother Thomas' first assignment was to teach at Vincentian Institute in Albany, NY for a year and in 1948, he became one of the first Brothers following World War II, to be assigned to the missions in East Pakistan, now known as Bangladesh. He taught at Holy Cross High School in Bandura for a year and then he joined the faculty to teach at St. Gregory's High School in Dhaka. Brother Thomas spent a total of 55 years of generous and dedicated service in Bangladesh primarily in the roles of teacher, administrator (headmaster or assistant), superior, and director of formation houses for the Bangladeshi Holy Cross Brothers. When he celebrated his 25th Anniversary of Profession, Brother Thomas remarked, that he could never have foreseen the variety of work and living conditions that awaited him in Bangladesh. He said, "I can only hope and trust in our Lord that I may spend many more years in the mission field." His hope was assured since he continued his work for an additional 30 years.

Brother Thomas was a brilliant scholar, an excellent administrator, and a proficient and caring teacher. As a missionary for Holy Cross he gave witness as a Catholic religious in a nearly all Muslim and Hindu population. Brother Thomas, by his quiet, efficient, good-humored presence, helped assure the effectiveness of Holy Cross ministries in Bangladesh. His many assignments helped animate and guide the work of the schools where he served and especially as the director of the Bangladeshi postulants in the Holy Cross Juniorate at Nagari. Brother Thomas devoted his life to another people, another culture. His aim was to challenge students and others to find their own strengths and talents in order to serve others.

Brother Thomas left Bangladesh in 2003 to take up residence at Columba Hall at Notre Dame. He used his admirable computer organizational skills to volunteer in the Indiana Province Archives Center for 3 years. He used his talents with Microsoft Excel to compile and organize a plethora of documents, photos, and materials into an easy-to-locate computer filing system. He continued that remarkable computer talent for the past 5 years with organizational work in the Midwest Province Archives. He took pride in organizing all the Bengal mission data (names of missionaries, schools, photographs, articles in *The Bengalese* magazine) into an easy-to-find data format. A tedious but valuable job that he did for the Holy Cross History Association was to digitize every page of more 275 presentations given at the Annual History Conferences. That digitizing job involved placing more than 6000 pages, one at a time, onto his Epson Scanner. He enjoyed the data entry work but was so fast and efficient that it was a challenge to keep him supplied.

Brother Thomas was a talented basketball player and quite an athlete. He walked and bicycled to maintain remarkable fitness in Bangladesh. He enjoyed his strolls around the lakes at Notre Dame and the campus, until neuropathy in his feet slowed his stride such that he no longer could walk to work at the Province Center (so his computer and scanner were moved to his Columba Hall room). He kept in touch with world events listening to the BBC and reading the newspapers from India and Bangladesh at computer sites. Each evening he enjoyed his glass of beer and articles from a host of magazines available in the recreation room.

Missionaries who have served overseas were used to shortages and inconveniences that would bother typical Americans. They seemingly are more at ease and show a great deal of patience in their prayerful lifestyles. They influence those around them. Brother Thomas More Beere was that ideal religious man and exemplar for people he served in Bangladesh and those he lived with the past 8 years at Columba Hall.

Visitation will be held on Tuesday, December 27th, at Our Lady of Holy Cross Chapel from 9:00 to 11:00am on the grounds of Holy Cross Village at Notre Dame. The Mass of Resurrection will then follow with interment afterward in St. Joseph's Cemetery of the Village. Kaniewski Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Memorial contributions, in honor of Brother Thomas More (Edward) Beere, C.S.C., to support the mission and ministries of the Brothers may be sent to: Brothers of Holy Cross, Office of Development, P.O. Box 460, Notre Dame, IN 46556.

Brother John Dobrogowski, csc

A Joyful Heart

The first time I met Brother John was a number of years ago on a provincial visit to Notre Dame High School, Sherman Oaks, CA. During my visit two facts were obvious. John really loved being at Sherman Oaks and the entire school community loved him in return. He was having some medical problems and had a difficult time walking. This did not stop him. A school golf cart picked him up in the morning and took him to the school library and then returned him to the Brothers' home later in the day. He spent his entire day interacting with students who visited the library, many coming just to see John. He was a father figure to many and a source of joy. John had two great passions. One was a love for movies and everything surrounding show business. For many years he served as an evaluator for the General Cinema Corporation. They gave him free tickets to various theaters and he would go and make a report concerning the condition of the theater. He was a friend of many of the Hollywood folk and even submitted some of his original puns and jokes to the show "Hee Haw" and had a number accepted. He was proud of this achievement. The second was a love for puns and "one liners" many of which elicited groans from the students and the staff, which did not keep them from coming back for more. He seemed able to see humor in almost every situation. This is a real gift. His superior, Br Bill Nick told me that one night John woke him up after midnight with an attack of kidney stones. They went to the Med Center at one in the morning thinking there should not be a crowd at that time. However, as soon as they arrived one mother after another began to arrive to have their babies. John had to wait, in extreme pain, for two hours. The admitting nurse told him that a kidney stone was not as painful as giving birth so he should just hang on a little longer. Even in this painful situation a joke arose about his own delivery situation. Though not really a laughing matter he wondered out loud why during a time of women's lib he wasn't allowed equal rights. On Halloween he would cover his bald head with an outrageous wig and sit in the school library disrupting the silence with a steady stream of puns to students who would then share them with others. Today on the library wall there is a photo and plaque honoring John for his commitment and service to students and staff.



There is something very special about a person who senses the humorous in life, who can see the joy that infuses all life. We live in a time immersed in all kinds of tragedy and pain in enormous quantities. What enables a person to see beyond this and to find a bit of humor or lightness amidst this gloom? I think we must look at the soul of this man. He dedicated his life to his community, his students, and his relationship with God. And at the center of this dedication was a soul at peace with itself. Deep down within him at that point where man and God connect, he was at one with himself. When a person realizes and accepts that he is loved unconditionally by God and that this is all that one needs to be safe, one is saved, at peace and able to face anything. To some very significant degree I believe that John was there. His humor was a way to express this security to those he met, making their lives a bit easier. In a way his humor was a spiritual reality, a gift given to him by God. And he made good use of it. Chardon says; “You are not a human being having a spiritual experience; you are a spiritual being having a human experience. John’s very human experience was his gift to us and it was, in essence, a spiritual gift. Lighten life; make it more livable, more enjoyable. I am reminded of the great mystic, Julian of Norwich in her book of Showings: God wills that we be ever mighty in faithful trust in well and woe, for he loves us and delights in us...and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well. John, you used the gifts that God gave you very well and brought joy and love to many. *You return to God with your gift intact with the awareness that all is well, all will be well.* Thank you, John, for your life as brother and friend.

Br. Raymond Papenfuss

Christmas at Columba Hall

Christmas Eve began with our oldest house member, **Brother Roland Driscoll**, placing the baby Jesus in the crib. You can see **Fr. William Blum** encouraging Roland to get his picture taken in the web pictures at

<http://www.brothersofholycross.com/Ornaments/Ornaments.htm>.

The following day after the morning Mass we at Columba Hall enjoyed a soirée before dinner. **Brother Joseph Umile** prepared the hors d’oeuvres, very tasty treats before the meal. Head Chef Rick Landsberg had a display of Christmas cookies for us to enjoy after the main meal.



The Midwest District of West Africa
Holy Cross Today - Ghana

Brother Thomas Dillman has published the latest *Holy Cross Today – Ghana* which can be read at:

<http://www.brothersofholycross.com/HCGhana/Publications/DNL14-04OctDec2011.pdf>

Directory Correction

Br. Charles Gregg – Directory Phone correction: 574-855-3283.

Prayer Requests

Please remember in your prayers the repose of the soul of Marvin Freel, the father of Br. Chester. Brothers Chester's mother is also recovering from a fractured hip injury received in a fall Christmas Eve.

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