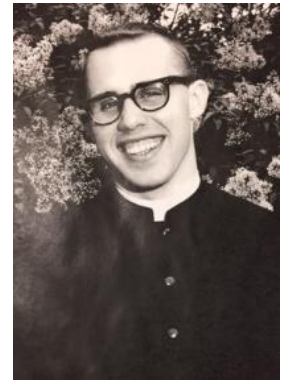


Brother Edward Raymond Foken, C.S.C.
February 15, 1941-January 12, 2021

“The Lord will reply, Truly I tell you,
whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine,
you did for me.” (Mt 25:40)



As a scholastic and living at Dujarié Hall, now Carroll Hall, at the University of Notre Dame, his roommate described him as a “kind, gentle, soft-spoken giant” who enjoyed sports and practical jokes. Having the physique of a pro football player, Brother Ed Foken was a missionary at heart who



credited his vocation to Holy Cross to have come from his uncle, Brother Walter (Vincent de Paul) Foken, and some of his aunts who were nuns. During his 60 years as a brother in the Congregation of Holy Cross, he served as a teacher and an administrator in schools in the States and in Monrovia, Liberia. While teaching at St. Joseph High School for twenty-eight years in South Bend, IN, he began volunteering at Dismas House, a faith-based hostel for men and women released from

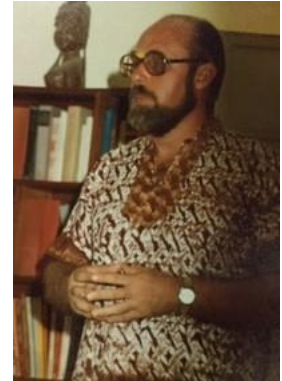
prison, and at the St. Vincent de Paul Society. No matter where he worked or the tasks to be fulfilled, Brother Ed enjoyed all of it. He told many that he learned a lot wherever he served and enjoyed all of his years of active ministry.

After his final profession of vows in 1964 and graduation from the University of Notre Dame with a BA, he was on the faculty at Holy Cross High School in River Grove, IL. During the next four years, he taught five social studies classes each year and was one of the brother bus drivers and the Athletic Director. In 1968 he moved to Monroe Catholic Central High School in Monroe, MI. Through 1971, he again taught social studies and added one or two English classes and was the Dean of Discipline and earned a Master of Science degree from Indiana State University in 1970. Once again, he found the four years filled with great experiences. He particularly enjoyed being the ticket manager for the Athletic Department at football and basketball games as it gave him ample opportunity to interact with many students from both Catholic Central and St. Mary’s Academy.



In 1971 he became a true missionary when he joined the faculty of St. Patrick High School in Monrovia, Liberia. He was on the faculty for one year when he became the principal for the next seven years. Ed loved everything about this African nation from its tropical rain forests, the annual 200 inches of rain, and especially the friendly and appreciative people. He returned to the States for two years in 1979 only to return to Liberia in 1981 as the superintendent of Liberia's 48 Catholic schools receiving the appointment from Bishop Michael Francis.

As principal of St. Patrick High School with a student body of 400 of Liberia's brightest boys and girls, he worked to find the most qualified teachers, raised the operating funds, and had his students admitted to the best colleges in Europe and the United States. St. Patrick's students consistently scored some of the highest grades on the rigorous national examinations. Many of Liberia's finest students left the country due to the first Civil War that ended in 1997 only to have a second war break out in 1999.



For Brother Ed the most difficult task during his principalship at St. Pat's was informing many parents that the school would not be able to admit their children. He wrote to his mother that "I posted the list of who was accepted two weeks before school started and left town." Only one in seven students were accepted to St. Pat's. In the same letter to his mother, he continued: "It is very hard to say 'no' to a mother who sells fish all day, and then pounded on my door at 2:00 AM to plead for her son to be admitted." Ed maintained contact with over 200 Liberians over some 40 years. He and his family helped to sponsor 14 Liberians to come to the States. His brother Vincent housed them and helped to make the transition into college as stress-free as possible.

Brother Ed also assisted a number of orphans at Virginia Catholic Orphanage. He was honored to give four girls away at their weddings and helped them to get to the States. In 1984, he had to leave Liberia permanently because of the civil war. On one day his car was stopped 21 times, and that evening the car was filled with bullet holes.

On his return to the States, he began teaching at St. Joseph High School, South Bend, IN and remained there for the next 28-years, teaching sociology, world history and government. He often reported that his students were very bright and articulate. During the early years, he found the adjustment to stateside teaching tough, yet he loved every year at St. Joe and maintained long relationships with many of the graduates.



In the summer of 1985, he received a Fulbright Scholarship to travel throughout India with a group of 25 other educators during

the months of June through August. He and the others were able to experience many major cities of India as they emerged into the twentieth century and began to prosper. Meeting Mother Teresa and visiting with the Little Sisters of the Poor was the high point of this “memorable dream trip”.



After a 100-day renewal program at Sangre de Cristo in Santa Fe, NM, he began to volunteer at Dismas House in South Bend. The uniqueness of this hostel is that former law offenders live side by side with college students from around South Bend. Ed first began cooking at Dismas House twice a month taking St. Joe students and many brothers with him. Eventually, he was taken onto the Board and assisted the Dismas program for ten years. Toward the end of active ministry, he sorted books for the Vincent de Paul Society.

When Brother Ed moved to Columba Hall, for a while, he was physically able to assist brothers with transport to doctors and some recreational activities. The walls of his room were plastered with many photos of Ed and some of his Liberian students, now citizens of the US and either doctors, nurses, airline pilots or prominent business persons. He had twelve fat photo albums filled with pictures from the early 1950s through the six decades leading to the end of his life. Many pictures were taken of the legendary Foken-family vacations around the United States’ national parks. There are many nephews and one niece each of whom considered Uncle Ed the greatest.

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