

HOLY CROSS TODAY - GHANA

COMMUNICATING THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN
OF HOLY CROSS IN THE DISTRICT OF WEST AFRICA

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HOLY CROSS IN GHANA GATHERING AT EASTER

On Monday 13 April, the members of the District of West Africa journeyed to Nyame Adom, the Sisters of the Holy Cross Center in Kasoa to share with them the traditional Easter Monday celebration. It was not practicable for the Brothers in Sunyani to make the long journey to the Center in Kasoa, portending a future time when both Sisters and Brothers will have established communities in other remote places to perhaps arrange separate gatherings for this traditional event.

Beginning the occasion in mid-morning all gathered to celebrate the Easter Liturgy in the house conference room, the Sisters' house chapel understandably inadequate for the number present. The younger Ghanaian Brothers evoked the best sounds from the African rhythm instruments and



small portable organ to accompany the grand blend of mellifluous voices of all there present. It was a happy time indeed, when surely everyone present felt something of being a Holy Cross community of Easter People! **Fr. Bob Gilmour** was the celebrant for the occasion, and his reflection on the Readings

and Resurrection Event were surely inspirational and thought-provoking, his usual par for the course, homily.

People disbursed gradually, most taking with them their plastic chairs, to go up to the rooftop patio, where the large, beautifully mahogany-roofed palaver hut provided shelter for both serving area and seating to some extent, several large canopies having been set up to provide remaining space to accommodate all, though cloudy skies nullified the need to provide shaded seating areas.

The Sisters had an adequate hired cooking staff to allow their being able generally to join in the socializing prior



to the lavish dinner. The younger religious, especially, enjoyed playing games along with their sharing each other's presence, background music enhancing the pleasant setting, as well.

This writer took time to walk the some 1/3 km distance to the far end of the campus to more easily



settle the sumptuous meal, to take a picture of the now completed Our Lady of Holy Cross School. At the present time children are enrolled in kindergarten and primary grade 1. The picture shows the sky considerably less cloudy than it became within a very short time.

Returning to the house, it was clearly evident that a devilish storm was on the way. There was a flurry of activity as persons picked up food containers, bottles, dishes, empty bottle crates, etc. The

younger Brothers were beginning to break down the canopy structures, completing the storage of canvass and poles just a few minutes before the rainstorm hit with a fury, sending all scurrying off the rooftop to the sheltered walkways below.

The timing of the rain in the Lord's providential manner could not have played it closer to our winding down the occasion. A few drivers did get clothing dampened a good bit in running to nearby vehicles to move close to the house so that passengers could more conveniently load up for transport back to our respective houses. All things considered, it was another great gathering of our Ghanaian Holy Cross Family!

HOLY CROSS FAMILY MINISTRY AND ROSARY

The Christian Mothers' Association in the Sekondi, Takoradi and Apowa deaneries held a day of recollection at St. John's School chapel in Sekondi. This was organized by the Holy Cross Family Ministry and Rosary.

The theme for the occasion was the Role of Mothers in curbing the prevalence of discipline among youth. In his presentation, **Bro. Pius Maison, CSC** emphasized the role the mother has in the upbringing of the child, first and foremost as role models to emulate. If this is lacking, what words



might be used in correcting them as will be necessary at times will be rather ineffectual. Children have a natural disposition to act as they see the mother doing, not what she is saying.



The mother's underlying relationships with their children should be "LOVE" always, regardless of the situation, the loving concern of the mother for the child being evident even when it is necessary to admonish the child. Indeed, sometimes the child exhibits undesirable behavior as a means to gain attention or to relieve the frustration felt in its sensing a lack of

loving concern for him/her by the parent.

Bro. Pius concluded his reflections by asking the blessing of St. Joseph for the mothers, deemed appropriate on this day coinciding with the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker. **Brothers Aristede Biney** and

Patrick Baah led the general intercessory prayers, also organizing the praying of the Rosary at the school's Our Lady of Fatima Grotto, followed by the Litany of the Blessed Virgin in the school chapel.

The program was concluded with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist by **Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Conduah**, chaplain of St. Augustine's Senior High School in Bogoso.

TWO HOLY CROSS BROTHERS TERMINATING MINISTRY IN GHANA

On Friday 19th June, Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, District members gathered at the District Center on this special feast day of our Congregation with due regard for our Holy Cross priests. We celebrated the Liturgy in Bl. Andre Chapel with deep gratitude to God for the love he has manifest to us through this as denoted in the symbol of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In similar fashion on this special day we offered to God our thankfulness and praise in union with all of our priests in Holy Cross of whom He has so generously blessed our Congregation.

It was deemed appropriate with all conveniently assembled to pay special tribute to **Brothers William Gates** and **Joachim Ratan Gomes**, who will be shortly terminating their respective ministries in Ghana. This farewell party following the celebration of the Liturgy was held on the rooftop of the District Center House.

Bro. William arrived in Ghana a few months after the opening of St. John's School in Sekondi to entitle him as one of the pioneers for the beginning of the Holy Cross mission in Ghana. After some 13 years at St. John's School he was assigned to teach at Amissano Minor Seminary for 9 years, then to St. Augustine's College for 11 years, before going back to present ministry as director in the beginning formation program for those aspiring to become Brothers of Holy Cross. He taught religion courses at each place throughout some almost 50 years. He will now take residence in



Columba Hall making himself available in whatever way the doors may open to him.

Bro. Joachim arrived from the Bangladesh Province on 21st April, 2005 to take over as teacher in the Electrical Shop at Skills Training Center in Takoradi. In the past few years, Joachim joined the small community staffing the Home of Hope becoming Director of the program there for the highly needy young men, who are enrolled in the Skills program. He was very supportive to his fellow community, endearing himself to the students as well in his concern for others, all with a rarely broken cheerfulness and upbeat personality. He will truly be missed by all as he leaves in early July to return to his Bangladesh Province.



What can be added regarding both of these two dedicated Brothers except express our sincere thanks along with our prayers for God's abundance of blessings in their future ministries.

UPDATE: PEACE AND JUSTICE

Recently **Fr. Joseph Aggrey**, diocesan priest and chaplain at Ankaful Prison requested some assistance from the District Ministry to the Poor (DMP) in his work with the prisoners. The prison is some 10 km outside Cape Coast, which currently houses about 750 inmates serving temporary or lifelong sentences within a very broad spectrum for respective crimes. He had heard of our providing wheelchairs to a number of paraplegics as purchased at lower cost through the Ghana Handicap Organization. He had an immediate need for one wheelchair for a non-ambulatory prisoner, which the DMP now has purchased. He also stated his need for one another wheelchair to accommodate prisoners who are temporarily incapacitated.

Actually over the past few years some several dozen wheelchairs, along with a few regular- and handheld-crutches, have been given to those in need. DMP funds have come through the generosity of members of several parishes as solicited in the hometown of the editor of this publication, also from the latter's relatives and friends.

Fr. Joseph stated that in general there is a lack of simple medications in the prison clinic. The DMP thus gave Joseph a modest supply of a recently developed excellent anti-malarial drug, along with a large quantity of paracetamol (~ tylenol). These will continue to be given for the benefit of the inmates on a monthly basis insofar as possible.

The DMP provides a modest sum each month to some 65 persons for food, which seems only a small help to smooth the rough edge of their marginalized existence, but nonetheless much appreciated. Most every day, Sundays included, others come seeking help for medicinal reasons. For medicinal help the person must bring a valid prescription form from the hospital/clinic doctor to thwart false claims!

The current Ghana National Health Insurance program is woefully inadequate to provide any except simpler kinds of medical remedies for given afflictions. Most all types of surgery are excluded, and any illnesses that require sophisticated/exotic medicine must be covered by assistance from family, relatives, friends and our own DMP. Hopefully when the planned pumping of oil in Ghana's off-shore wells gets underway in 2010 the projected huge revenues from this will provide a viable Medicare program for the general public along with many other social needs of the many marginalized or truly poor Ghanaians.

In a recent statement to the press, **Rev. Patrick M. Amos**, Director of the Dialogue and Advocacy for Good Governance Office of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, has called on the government to ensure that foreign companies do not do oil business in secrecy, rather than the present policy that seems more prevalent. Fr. Amos emphasized that equitable distribution of wealth is not only an ethical mandate, but necessary for a stable and sustainable world. Clearly, the Holy Cross Justice & Peace Commission in the District must explore ways and means of helping attain this ethical mandate for equitable distribution of wealth for the common good, and not the privileged benefits to the few once the doors open to provide the financial resources to accomplish this.

Mission Statement: *We are apostolic religious who manifest the vision and heritage of the Congregation of Holy Cross in West Africa. We live, Work and pray together as hopeful signs of the kingdom. We continue the mission of Christ. As educators in the faith, we also work to create a more just and human society.*

ARCHBISHOP HOBAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS VISIT HOLY CROSS IN GHANA

On Thursday evening 4th June 2009, 17 grads and seniors Class '09 and '10, respectively, accompanied by 4 staff members arrived in Ghana. This was the first time students of Hoban had come to Ghana. One of their interests was to visit the Skills Vocational Training Center for which they had made a significant financial contribution from a fund-raising venture stateside. During their stay of 10 days in Ghana the Hobanites also visited all of our Holy Cross residences in Ghana, including a visit to Our Lady of Holy Cross School in Kasoa of the Holy Cross Sisters. The two photos are of some of the students interrelating with the small children at the school. These photos only in a very small way reflect the full impact of joyful experience shared by both children and the visitors.



It is worth noting that Hoban High School is another one of our Holy Cross related schools in the US that have gained the renown of being a “blue ribbon school”. All of the some 220 graduates this year will be attending a university/college. The enrollment in the school is rather evenly divided between young ladies and men. And among the students of the interdenominational Hoban family some 80% are Catholic, of which most were present for the day’s Liturgy, appreciating the African music provided by voice and African rhythm instruments.



Farewell Party of some half of those

After exposure to a wide variety of activities in their 10-day



immersion into the Ghanaian cultural patterns of life, their program was concluded with a fitting party on the District House rooftop patio Saturday evening 13th June 2009. The Holy Cross Family in Ghana gathered with the Hoban High students and staff for a farewell dinner prior to their departure from Ghana the next day. They left early on Sunday morning to spend much of the day sightseeing in Accra before heading to the

Kotoko Air Terminal for the late night flight to the US via London. A truly memorable occasion for them and for us in Holy Cross, who had the pleasure of hosting this delightful group of visitors.

—Photos: top, Sr. Esther Entsiwah; lower right Fr. Bob Gilmour

HOLY CROSS COLLEGE STUDENTS IN GHANA

As a student who has only left the country once for a study abroad trip, I can honestly say that I had no clue what to expect during the two and a half weeks we were going to be in Ghana. I had visions in my head of seeing lions and zebras roaming freely, but I was wrong about these images once we got there.

The morning after we arrived, all hesitation and anxiety was wiped away because of the kindness and sincere hospitality we were shown by the brothers. Our meals were always ready, all necessities we needed in our rooms were provided, and they would drop anything they were doing to drive us into town or to one of our many destinations. They did so much as to even alter their meal plan for two weeks to make us feel more at home. They really did anything and everything to make us feel comfortable.

At least one of them was always present at our reflection times to talk about our questions and concerns regarding this country we were immersed in and so curious to learn about. I know that all of the students got more than they thought they were going to come back with. Not only did we come back with African souvenirs, we came back with friendships.



HCC students, faculty and a few Brothers

Some may wonder how you can create such strong bonds with other after less than three weeks,

but we definitely found a way to make that possible with the brothers. We were with them almost every minute of our waking day. We became extremely close with the Holy Cross brothers and they taught us a great deal. My friend and I even cried at the Accra airport when we had to say our goodbyes. I know we will continue to grow with the relationships we created and we will never forget the Holy Cross brothers. I can only hope that one day we will meet again. —Olivia LaFortune

GHANA AGAIN: An unforeseen circumstance brought me back to Ghana this summer as the faculty advisor for a group of Holy Cross College students. Our return trip this May had a sense of familiarity for me, a sense of a homecoming, as I visited all these places again; yet this time through the experience of a new group—19 students! I had accompanied a group last August, taking in the hospitality of the Brothers of Holy Cross, the beauty of the Cape Coast area, the urban trek to Kumasi and memorable canopy (suspension bridge) walk above the rainforest at the Kakum National Park. I remember the amazing stories behind the slave castles at Elmina and Cape Coast, filling in an important and overlooked part of the United State’s shared history with Ghana. Brother Ken Goode worked his magic and finessed an impromptu tour of the grand soccer stadium in Kumasi for our group.



Suspension bridge ahead? Not to worry!

We traveled to the fishing village of Moree and the nearby village of Brafoyaw. Some of the Holy Cross students spent time in the classrooms at St. Matthew’s School in Moree while another group walked down to Brafoyaw and taught English, Mathematics and Social Studies at its local school. A third group of students had the privilege of spending at Cape Deaf, a school for hearing impaired students. There is little doubt that the Holy Cross students learned more from these experiences, extending themselves into new and exciting situations. Whether it was communicating through sign language, singing with kindergarteners or mapping out sentences in English, the joy on the faces of the children matched their enthusiasm for learning. A life lesson that has found its way



Doin’ what comes natur’ly!

written on the hearts of our students.



Looks OK—what do they call it?

In the summer of 2010, Holy Cross College and the Ghanaian Brothers of Holy Cross will celebrate ten years of the college’s visits to Ghana. The program entitled, “Through the Eyes of Faith” has enriched the experience of our students offering them a glimpse of the dedication and the hospitality of the Brothers. The brothers have yet to grow tired of greeting us each year with the words, “Welcome to Ghana; you are most welcomed here.” And we have not grown tired of hearing it! *Maydasi* (Sincere Thanks) to our dear Ghanaian friends! *Nyame Adome* (By the Grace of God), we will meet again soon!

—Dianne Reardon

WHERE THERE’S A WILL THERE’S A WAY

During school years 2007-8 **Bro. Anthony(Tony) Koomson, CSC** ministered as part-time teacher at St. Augustine’s Practice Junior High School. Each day he met the sordid sight of a school house badly in need of painting.

Before seniors would leave in April this year, Tony, who enjoyed some degree of popularity with that



class, suggested that it would be quite fitting for them to undertake some project as a parting gift to the school, namely repainting outside walls of the building. The seniors readily agreed to both project and cost. Each senior would give 10 pesewa (~ 10 cents), or more each day, hopefully to attain the goal within the 2 remaining months of the school year. Students' generosity attaining sufficient funds a few weeks before the seniors finished their final exams.

Tony had the paint and brushes all ready for the some 20 students of the class of 60, who arrived early in the morning after the completion of all their exams, to begin the task at hand. The school had its new look within the two days it

took the students to finish the task.. Unfortunately no funds were left after covering the cost of the project to celebrate the accomplishment with an appropriate party. But all without reservation had a great sense of joy as their eyes fixed on the school's transformed appearance.

NEWS BITS

● On Saturday, 30 May, 2009 the District held a Day of Recollection at the Center in Brafoyaw for all its members. Members arrived on Friday evening, and were accommodated in the newly renovated Holy Cross Formation Center.

The director was **Brother David Kwaw, OFM**, who is a regular retreat director at the Franciscan Monastery near Cape Coast. The theme of the occasion was Self-interest and Commitment to Religious Life. Bro. David frequently drew on his own personal experiences as a Franciscan brother to embellish the solid principles covering his one-hour morning and afternoon sessions. His insight was greatly appreciated by all.

Following the afternoon session participants met with David for clarification on this or that given point by Bro. David and sharing reflections on the various matters relating to the day's theme. It was indeed fitting that this day preceded Sunday's Feast of Pentecost. To conclude the occasion, Fr. Bob Gilmour celebrated the Vigil Mass of Pentecost embellished by joyous singing and drumming—and emphatic (!) incensing at appropriate points in the Liturgy.

District members stayed over until Sunday afternoon so as to attend a District Meeting Sunday morning.

● On 17 May, a Day of Recollection for the Bishop Essuah Complex Schools in the Takoradi area was organized by the Holy Cross Family Ministry. It proved to be a very grace-filled day for both students and faculty members, the total number more than a thousand participating. The program began with songs of praise and worship. This introductory phase set the mood for spontaneous prayers, which were led by **Br. Pius Maison**. **Br. Aristide Biney** then shared the Word God with them, developing the scriptural text as to the Christian's role to become a "light in the World" and "salt of the earth". The Assistant Head teacher concluded the program on a note of thanks to the Holy Cross Ministry for a most inspiring and otherwise beneficial day. (Submitted by Br. Aristide Biney)

● The Districts of East and West Africa will again collaborate in respective novitiate programs beginning in August. Two of Ghana's four pre-novices, **Jones Antusi Agyemang** and **Francis Afelety** arrived in Kenya on Saturday, 30 May for a 2-months orientation or inculturation program prior to beginning the novitiate in Fort Portal, Uganda with the East District novices. In July two pre-novice seminarians, **Mr. Linus Nvuri** and **Leonard David** will be coming for a month orientation/inculturation

program prior to joining our other two District of West Africa pre-novices for the beginning here at Bl. Andre novitiate.

● **Brothers Daniel Dardoe, District Superior** and **Paul Bukari** were delegates from the District for the Midwest Province Chapter in June. Also present from the District of West Africa were Brothers **Michael Amakyi** and **Paul Mensah**. Paul Mensah kept all of us in Ghana informed via email of daily proceedings at the Chapter.

● **Bro. David Kpobi** is preparing a Drama Series on the Holy Rosary for which the actors will be non-professional locally selected participants. It will be a Holy Cross Media Ministry Production that will appear on a newly established Holy Cross Family Ministry website. David has just completed several large banners to be suspended above three major roads in Cape Coast advertising the series, which will be called “GENERATIONS” (Magnificat: “All *generations* shall call me blessed.”), stating the time and place of auditions in July for anyone who would be interested in being in the program.

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