

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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July – September 2009

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS (JUBILEES AND FINAL VOWS CELEBRATIONS)

On Saturday, 19th September, the Holy Cross Family gathered at the District Center to celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lady of Sorrows. Conjointly with this was the celebration of four jubilees of District members and one profession final vows. Thus it was deemed appropriate to transfer the usual 15th date of September for this solemnity to the 19th.

Of special significance on this day was that of **Bro. Vincent Ntsiful**, who made his final profession of religious vows. **Fr. Bob Gilmour** was the main celebrant for the occasion, and also celebrated on this day his 40th Anniversary of Ordination and his upcoming 50th Jubilee of Profession next year. **Brother Vincent Gross** was celebrating his Golden Jubilee of Profession; while **Brother Michael Amakyi** and **Bro. Daniel Dardoe** were celebrating their 25th Silver Jubilees of Profession.

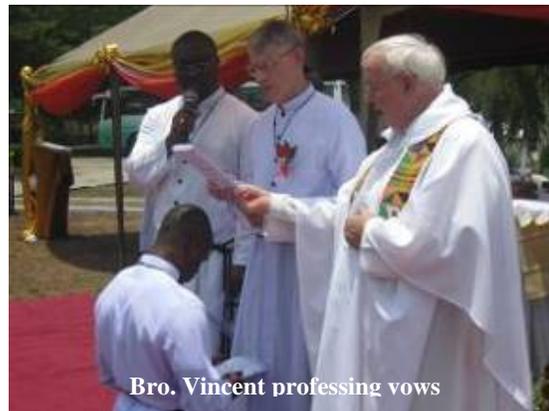


Brothers Dan, Chester, Vincent G, Vincent I, Fr. Bob



Bro. Vincent Ntsiful

The District was privileged to have **Bro. Chester Freel**, the Provincial of the Midwest Province to be present for the occasion, conjoining this with his first official visitation to the District. After the Gospel Reading, he presided over the renewal of vows by the Jubilarians, with the exception of **Bro. Vincent Gross**, who made his renewal for his Golden Jubilee shortly after.



Bro. Vincent professing vows

The District was especially appreciative of the Homily given by **Fr. Donald Hinfy sj**, our Jesuit neighbor and usual celebrant for the Mass in Blessed Andre Chapel throughout the week. His reflection of the commitment one makes by ones profession of Religious vows was truly inspiring.



Offertory procession

Following the homily, the provincial presided once again to call Bro. Vincent forward. Then followed the Litany of Saints (updated version), after which Bro. Vincent made his Final Profession of Vows. He also presented the St. Joseph Medal and wooden cross to Vincent. After the Post Communion Prayer Bro. Vincent proclaimed his Thanksgiving Prayer to God for his goodness throughout his life leading up to this final profession as a Brother of Holy Cross.

All relating to the events of the occasion were held outside

where ample shade was provided by the canopy-covered chairs or trees. This allowed a much more convenient seating with full view for the some 500 persons attending the occasion, as well as room around the large portable altar of 15 concelebrants, lavish Offertory procession, and the well-wishing to each of the Jubilarians and Bro. Vincent, and the spacious area for spontaneous dancing by some District members.



The caterers assisted by younger Holy Cross Brothers did a remarkable job of serving box lunches and drinks to the more than 500 persons at the occasion.

Another glorious day in the history of the District of West Africa—for greater glory to God!.

FOUR YOUNG MEN ENTER HOLY CROSS NOVITIATE

On Sunday, 12th July 2009, the family of Holy Cross - Ghana gathered at the District Centre, Brafoyaw, to welcome four young men into the Blessed Andre Novitiate for the one-year program of formation. These were Holy Cross Pre-Novices: two from Ghana: **Eric Amoah** and **Francis Bogtir**; and two from East Africa: (**David Leonard Onyango Omune** from Kenya and **Linus Nviiri** from Uganda).



We were happy to have as main celebrant for the Eucharistic Celebration, **Fr. James Phalan CSC**, Director of the International Holy Cross Family Rosary and Ministries. In his homily Fr. Phalan focused on the relevancy of devotion to Mary for the novices, who shared so intimately in the life of Jesus, her Son. Especially, at the foot of the Cross she experienced a deep sorrow in union with Jesus, yet not without Hope. She had surely attained an understanding of the Cross in its relation to the salvation of

mankind, just as our founder, Bl. Basil Moreau, did later in adopting as the motto of his Holy Cross community: *O Crux Ave, Spes Unica!* Implicitly, from the remarks of Fr. Phalan, we conclude that our patroness, *Mater Dolorosa*, can rightfully be claimed as, *Mater Spei*, Mother of Hope!

Shortly after the Entrance Procession and welcoming remarks by **Bro. John Affum**, Assistant District Superior, the religious habits were blessed. These were given, respectively to each novice by **Bro. Daniel Dardoe**, District Superior, after which they donned these and returned to begin the Eucharistic Celebration. After the Post Communion Prayer, there was the blessing of Bibles, Office Books and the Constitutions, which were then



Members of the District with Fr. Phalan and novices

given to the novices, respectively, by Bro. Daniel. The novices were then presented to **Bro. Nee Wayoe**, Director of Novices, and his assistant, **Bro. Anthony Dadzie**, entrusting the novices into their care for this year of novitiate formation.

Actually there are now 4 novices from the District of West Africa, two of these: **Jones Antusi Agyemang** and **Francis Afelety** arrived in Kenya on Saturday, 30 May for a 2-months orientation before entering the novitiate in Uganda to share the year with the District of East Africa novices. In addition to this, **Brothers Nicholas Arthur and Augustus Mensah** of our District of West Africa are now with Holy Cross in Kenya pursuing theological studies. Continuing efforts will be taken to explore ways of increasing such beneficial collaboration between our two Districts in Holy Cross

Concluding this occasion **Brothers George Awuni, Aristide Biney and Pius Maison** renewed their temporary religious vows.

SOMETHING SPECIAL THIS TIME AROUND

The District members held their annual retreat from Sunday to Friday 16th - 21st August at the District Center. We were privileged to have **Bro. Joel Gillianza, CSC** as the Retreat Director, whose conferences reflected his extensive knowledge of Our Lady of Sorrows.



Each conference was related in one way or other to the Seven Sorrows of our Lady, superbly enriched with a detailed description of the many factors comprising the existential setting in which our Lady was confronted in the unfolding fulfillment of Simeon's prophecy, "And sorrow like a sharp sword will break your heart ." Joel alluded to the "blank check" which Mary gave to God in the uttering of her *Fiat* to Gabriel at the Annunciation, each of the sorrows providing Mary with another "entry" on it, with the last being at the burial of the body of Jesus in the tomb.

Much appreciated were the edited copies of each conference, which had been developed much more fully in the actual presentations to us. The edited copies, in fact were of sufficient content to suggest one could benefit by collating all together as a "booklet" to be reflected upon with value at some future time.

Such times as the annual retreat where the members of all our houses in the District come together are most enjoyably shared, whether in the Liturgy, at meals, or for moments of sharing otherwise that seemingly embellished, not decreased the benefit of the retreat. It is always uplifting to join with so many of our members on such occasions in the praying and singing together the Liturgical Hours as well as the celebration of the Eucharist, as compared to our usual local situations where only a handful or even only "two or three are gathered together"—albeit sufficient as the Lord has stated, for our common prayer.

Again, the Retreat time was enhanced as always by the rich homilies **Fr. Bob Gilmour, CSC** presented at each of the Eucharistic celebrations during this time.

The theme of the retreat was of further significance in view of the paternal Feast of our Lady of Sorrows was celebrated only a few weeks later, surely with increased awareness in the implications of this title of Mary, whom we acclaim as our Holy Cross Family patroness.

In the week previous to the retreat, Joel gave talks to the temporarily professed and novices for the last few days of a two-week workshop. One of these was that in which he presented significant contributions to the Church by some of our Superiors General over the past several decades, including the Vatican Council. Comments by those present indicated that all very much appreciated this insight



into the notable contributions in Church affairs over the years by certain members in our Congregation.

We take this opportunity to express once again our sincere thanks to Joel for his contribution to making this year's District retreat a most memorable event.

BITS AND PIECES

- From 26th - 29th July the District held a **Come and See** program in which 8 young men participated. The program included: Visits to various communities in the District and interaction with Brothers thereof. **Bro. Vincent Ntsiful** gave a talk on *The Call (to Religious Life)* and **Sr. Alice, FST** gave one on the *Meaning of the Religious Life*. There were 9 young men who participated in the program. Three of these expressed their desire to become a Brother of Holy Cross. The others gave rather favorable comments about the Brothers vocation.
- During the vacation break for students at St. Augustine's College, the school's facilities were used as in previous years for a three-week summer school session for senior high school students from all over Ghana. Some 650 boys and girls participated. The program is designed for both reinforcing Christian values in the lives of the students, as well as to enable them to upgrade their academic achievement in specific areas. Students attended Mass each morning and had afternoon and evening sessions that included a speaker giving reflections on Christian living with accompanying hymns and prayers. Included in the program one day was devoted to religious vocations. Representatives of various religious communities in Ghana were given an opportunity to explain their communal and ministerial work in the Church. Clearly there was a very manifest enthusiasm among the students during these days of the summer school at Augusco!
- For the new school year **Brothers George Awuni, Aristide Biney, Francisco Gillette** and **Pius Maison** enrolled in the Catholic University in Sunyani to begin respective studies leading to future educational ministries. There are now 7 members residing in the Brothers House in Sunyani, making it the largest in the District. **Brother Kenneth Goode** is Director of the House; **Brothers Raymond Frimpong** and **Stephen Aidoo** are continuing studies there.
- **Brother Patrick Baah** has returned from the international meeting of Directors of Holy Cross Family Ministries Programs around the world, which took place in Lima, Peru in early September.
- **Brother Paul Mensah** attended the meeting for the Congregational Finance Commission at Notre Dame, Indiana in mid-September.

- The District members happily welcomed our newly elected Provincial, **Bro. Chester Freel** of the Midwest Province, who arrived on September 17th for his official visitation. This was the first time that Bro. Chester had been to any place on this vast continent, so there was much for him to see on his various travels within Ghana, as well as to meet with each of the District members and to convey his thoughts to us of matters relating both to our District and the Province. He was with us until September's ending, carrying away with him no small store of memories from this visit. Along with our previously expressed gratitude to him during his visit, we extend a sincere welcome for his sooner return for whatever occasion(s) in the future.



THE BLANK CHECK

With her *Fiat* to the angel at the Annunciation, Mary gave an unending “Yes” to God. We honor her as Our Lady of Sorrows, recalling the Seven Significant events directly shared in the life of Jesus as times of deep sorrow, throughout which she ever remained faithful to that first *fiat*. The poem’s reflection uses the analogy of a *blank check* to God with entries marking these events.

**Upon hearing Simeon’s prophecy, Mary pondered what it all would mean—
A sword would pierce her son’s heart, her own, too. But apprehension not withstanding,
She holds Jesus in her arms to safely keep, and proclaims her *fiat* once again.**

**Too soon would be the journey to Egypt, in fear of danger from Herod’s sword,
And while it could not reach to strike her Son, Mary felt the sharp pangs of his intent.
Trusting in God, yet with troubling concern, her second entry on the check was made.**

**In Jerusalem some ten years later, Jesus strayed to see the great city’s sights,
And found his way to his Father’s House, while his anxious parent’s searched unaware.
His excuse so puzzling for them to hear—left scars of their anguish to remain.**

**Jesus surely confided in His mother—Mary thus perceived the approaching night,
Perhaps less scandalized, then, at the scene, to see her Son so disfigured and shamed.
But vicariously sharing in His pain, her forlornness of soul was without bounds.**

**The finality of death was assured, when the sword pierced the heart of her Son—
She remained at the foot of the Cross, feeling in her own heart the piercing, too.
And after the tragic death of her Son, holding him now in her arms she wept.**

**O Mother of sevenfold sorrow, you looked on as he was laid in the tomb,
Desolate, yet your hope prevailing, in the promised victory that would come.
And the check now was entered in full, your last *fiat* joined with that of your Son.**

—Bro. Tom Dillman

UPDATE: SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS – GHANA

The Holy Cross Sisters have welcomed six new members to the Kasoa community. They are Sr. Mary Elizabeth Bednarek, CSC, from Brazil, Sr. Veronica Fajardo, CSC from the United States and two St. Mary’s College graduates, Katie Yohe and Megan Ryan. In addition to these four two discerners will be joining the Kasoa community.

Sr. Mary Elizabeth is the Area Coordinator of Formation and Sr. Veronica, Katie and Megan are teaching at Our Lady of Holy Cross School.

This is the first time any of the four have been to Ghana, and they have had some time to do some sightseeing before getting into the classrooms, and the Formation work.

We are delighted to have them with us for whatever time they will be able to stay.



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