

HOLY CROSS TODAY - GHANA

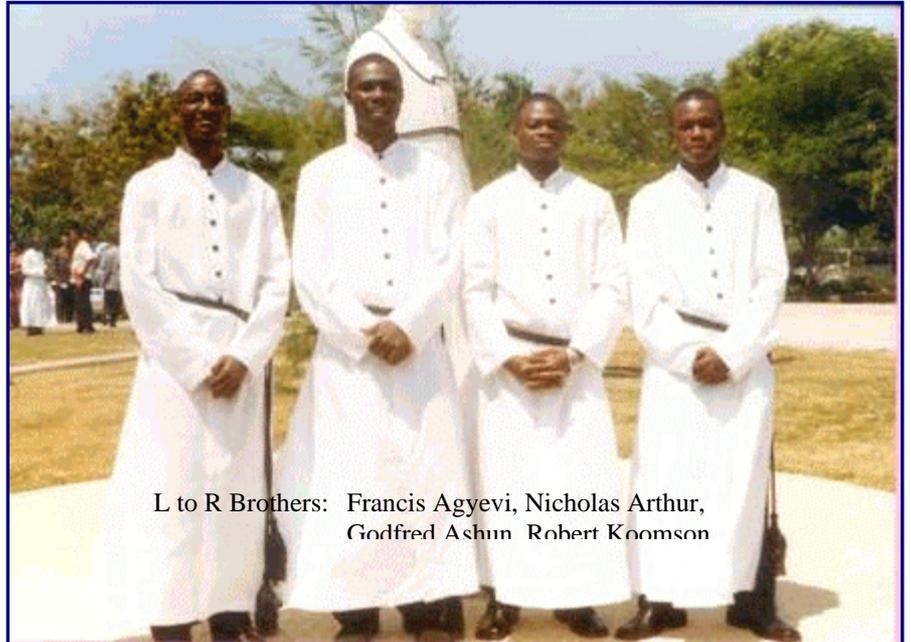
COMMUNICATING THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE MEN AND WOMEN
OF HOLY CROSS IN THE DISTRICT OF WEST AFRICA

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FOUR NOVICES PROFESS VOWS

On Saturday, June 12th, the District of West Africa celebrated the occasion of first temporary profession of Religious Vows by **Brothers Francis Agyevi, Nicholas Arthur, Godfred Ashun, and Robert Koomson** in Blessed Andre Chapel at the District Center in Brafu Yaw. **Fr. Albert Amakyi**, brother of **Brother Michael Amakyi**, was the main celebrant for the Eucharistic Celebration. Owing to his vacation to the US coinciding with his presence at the Southern Province Chapter, **Fr. Bob Gilmour, CSC** was not present to assume his usual role as celebrant for the occasion. Four other priests co-celebrated with Fr. Amakyi.



L to R Brothers: Francis Agyevi, Nicholas Arthur, Godfred Ashun Robert Koomson

Present for the occasion were both parents of the four temporarily professed, respectively, along with many relatives and friends, the Holy Cross family in Ghana, and many other religious, of special note the **Jesuit Fathers, Don, Jay and George**, our District neighbors. Perhaps 200 persons were able to be accommodated in the chapel, while seating was provided just outside the chapel in the relatively spacious circular porch for others. The remainder stood or moved about on the lawn to comprise another 200. As has been true of previous profession ceremonies, beautiful weather conditions again prevailed throughout the day.

The BrafuYaw Church choir enhanced the celebration with a great variety of songs, a number of these in Fanti, but mostly in English, to the accompaniment of African instruments. However, the choir was not to be outdone by the very spirited congregation, whose voices enriched the choral rendition. **Sr. Margaret Nimo, CSC** capably served as M.C., explaining the various parts in the profession ceremony, reverting at times to the Fanti language for those who more

readily understood in their native dialect. This is in addition to the ordered listing of events in the very attractive program prepared by **Bro. Ebenezer Prah**, enabling all to better understand the meaning and implications of the religious vows, which the four novices would be making to live as consecrated religious.

The first reading (Jer. 1:4-10 - God's call to Jeremiah) was done by **Sr. Helene Sharp, CSC**, and the second reading (1 Tim 6:11-16 – Paul commanding Timothy, as a man of God, to live a virtuous life) was done by **Bro. Patrick Baah**. The Gospel reading taken from Luke 9:57ff. recounted the incidents of the “would-be followers of Jesus,” who found obstacles to rationalize their lack of response to Jesus' call. The homily by Fr. Albert Amakyi focused on this as well as to counsel the four, who soon would be making their religious profession, in regard to some of the consequences for them in their acceptance of the religious life. His words of wisdom were well chosen.

This was followed by the Rite of Profession in the traditional style of the Congregation of Holy



Cross. After the cords had been blessed and given to the four new Brothers, they knelt facing the congregation, while all Holy Cross Religious stood facing them with hands extended, praying for God's special blessing on our newly professed members—then continued with the singing of the beautiful hymn, "Let Us Stand Together," introduced by a solo rendition of the melody on

the oboe by **Bro. Philip Smith**, who then directed the singing of the Holy Cross religious. Many persons there present using the occasion of the exchange of peace, singing/dancing to the accompaniment of the choir as they came forward to individually congratulate each of the four young men.

It should be noted that in his concluding remarks to the newly professed and the congregation, Bro. Michael Amakyi requested that all present take a moment for silent prayer for the two young Nigerian Jesuit novices who, while visiting their local community here, had drowned earlier in the week. We in the District again extend our condolences to the Jesuit community in Ghana and Nigeria.

After the very impressive liturgical celebration, all moved outside for a social gathering under canopied cover. In all aspects it was a most fitting and enjoyable occasion.

Please keep our newly professed Brothers in your prayers.

TREK TO GHANA

Brother Philip Smith spent the first three weeks in July visiting the brothers in the District of West Africa. While in Ghana, he got a first-hand glimpse into the operations of the District Center and formation, St. Augustine and St. John Colleges, and the Skills Development Center. All of the brothers, those in final vows and those temporarily professed, graciously gave of their time to see to it that Phil left with as complete an understanding of the operations as possible in such a brief stay.

Phil presented four seminars on education and teaching to the teachers at St. Augustine, St. John, Ghana National College, and to the brothers of the District. During the seminars teachers were assisted in exploring what constitutes "good" teaching practice. The topic for the brothers was *Brother, Servant, Educator*, which looked at education through the lens of the letters of Father Moreau that specifically deal with educating the heart and the mind. Of great interest to all teachers is student motivation. There was

discussion of the cane as an effective student motivator.

The total experience was truly life changing for Phil, as this was his first venture into a "third world" country and culture. Ghana was definitely the right first plunge, as the people are warm and friendly. —Submitted by Bro. Philip Smith



EDITORIAL: THE “SACRAMENTALITY” OF RELIGIOUS CONSECRATED LIFE

In July we celebrated the occasion of the temporary religious profession of the four young men in our District of West Africa. Being present at this Liturgical occasion, the thought kept returning to me how wonderful is this commitment to God’s *call* through the profession of religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. In this action one takes a new life style and obligations—this being conditioned for those making profession at this occasion according to the *Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross*. These constitutions have been given *papal approbation* in the Church, which means that by living one’s life in fidelity to the vows in Holy Cross, there is *moral assurance* sustaining a viable hope of salvation—clearly it is a directed following of God’s will for the one consecrating his life to God.

The Church has not recognized religious consecration as a sacrament. However, there surely are certain aspects of the religious life that would indicate at least a *quasi-sacramental* quality to it. It would seem worthy of our reflection to consider this in view of the characteristics attributing to sacramentality.

In his two-volume work, *Catholicism*, Richard P. McBrien accepts Aquinas’ view that *a sacrament is an efficacious sign of grace causing what it signifies*. He then lists four different signs underlying this: (1) a sign which proclaims faith; (2) a sign which expresses worship, as a ritual participation in Christ’s own worship of the Father; (3) a sign of unity in the Church; and (4) a sign of Christ’s presence, and ultimately of God the Father. (pp. 734-735).

It seems to me that religious consecration does satisfy the first criterion—an efficacious sign of grace causing what it signifies, bonding the religious to Christ in a special way through the vows by which one consecrates oneself to His service alone, not to another person as in the sacrament of Matrimony. Christ has honored this state of life in His public ministry—in leaving all for the sake of His name one will inherit eternal life (See Matt. 19:29).

The following responds in turn to each of the four underlying signs of sacramentality: (1) Surely the profession of religious vows is a sign of faith; (2) It is a public proclamation made before the

the religious congregation’s authorized official witness and two others, at least, in which one commits oneself to God for a year or for life; (3) One becomes a member of a religious family, living and sharing a common life, according to a way of life approved by the Church; and (4) The religious by his consecration takes upon himself the obligation to make Christ present to others in his ministry, toward the building up of the Kingdom of God.

Furthermore, the religious life, especially in regard to the vow of celibacy, gives witness to the eschatological reality of the Communion of Saints in heaven, where the bonds of marriage no longer exist, where all are bonded together in *One Love*—sharing in the all surpassing love of the Triune Godhead.

Karl Rahner develops thoughts on the sacraments *which confer a state of life* (italics mine), since being “without doubt decisive existential moments in human life (that is, as pertaining to salvation history)... When a person accepts an ultimate, basic and all-encompassing function in a human or in a Christian community, there is no doubt that something quite decisive takes place existentially, and also therefore in an individual history of salvation.” Rahner then goes on to say that there is a sacramental visibility of the fact when a person is called by God to accept this state of life with regard to his *salvation*, which lies in the sacraments of *orders* and *matrimony*. (Foundations of Christianity – p 417).

What Rahner here holds for Holy Orders and Matrimony as sacraments of the Church, seems to me to be no less true for the state of life of one who commits his life to God as a consecrated religious. It also seems to be supported by the four characteristics listed of O’Brien as presented above.

I submit that the above presents some reasonable argument toward accepting the *sacramentality* of religious life. Hopefully it will serve as a catalyst for those who per-Providence read these remarks, and who are more erudite than this editor in sacramental theology. It is my hope that they may reflect more deeply on the matter so as to encourage the Church to review its present position precluding consecrated religious life as a sacrament of the Church.

THROUGH EYES OF FAITH

In the summer of 2000, Holy Cross College offered a class in which students traveled to



Ghana to study and experience the lives and work of the Holy Cross Brothers. Subsequently, each summer students from the college continue to travel to Ghana. Holy Cross College had been a two-year school offering an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts. Starting in the fall of 2003 the first students will enter into the school's new Baccalaureate Program earning a Bachelors Degree in Liberal Arts. One of the components in this program is the required class, "Through Eyes of Faith, An African Learning Experience." All students entering into this program are required to come to Ghana.

NOTE OF THANKS

We take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to Fr. August Busch and his fellow Knights of Columbus, Evansville Chapter for their generous contributions toward the purchase of a new automatic washing machine for the Brothers at St. Augustine's College, Cape Coast.

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This summer I was lucky enough to experience Ghana for the second time. I first came in the summer of 2002 when the class was open to all students. Seeing the work of the Holy Cross Brothers first-hand not only at Holy Cross College, but also in Ghana, has made me appreciate all the work that the Brothers do. We are fortunate to have such generous, kind, hospitable, and loving men to guide and watch over us.

Participants in this year's visit to Ghana are: William Blair, Charmane Cane, Megan Craney, Thomas Hogan, Patrick B. Lindenmeyer, Jennifer Nelson and Monica Schoenfeld. These were accompanied by Fr. Mark Ghyselink, CSC, Director of Campus Ministry at Holy Cross College. The Friendships that we make do not last

only the two weeks we are here, but rather they last a lifetime. As students, we study the culture, economics, and environment of Ghana. As Christians, we study the Brothers' mission, faith, humanity, and vocation. The seven components enrich us not only academically, but also spiritually, making us truly complete in all aspects of our lives. Holy Cross students are fortunate to have this experience that lasts well beyond our academic years. None of this would be possible without the kindness and generosity of the Brothers of Holy Cross.

—Patrick B. Lindenmeyer, Class of 2005

Bits & Pieces

—Bro. William Gates returned to Ghana and is now living at the District Center. He will work on the District archives and assist in directing our temporarily professed Brothers.

—There will be 8 temporarily professed Brothers in the District attending the University of Cape Coast. There are 3 Brothers who are continuing studies in the U.S.

—A recent article by Maureen Hayden, journalist, was in the *Evansville Courier and Press* reflecting the views of Bro. Tom Dillman on the Liberia conflict and possibilities of its resolution based on his past experiences in Liberia—interview via email exchanges.