

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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SKILLS STUDENTS HONOR ST. JOSEPH

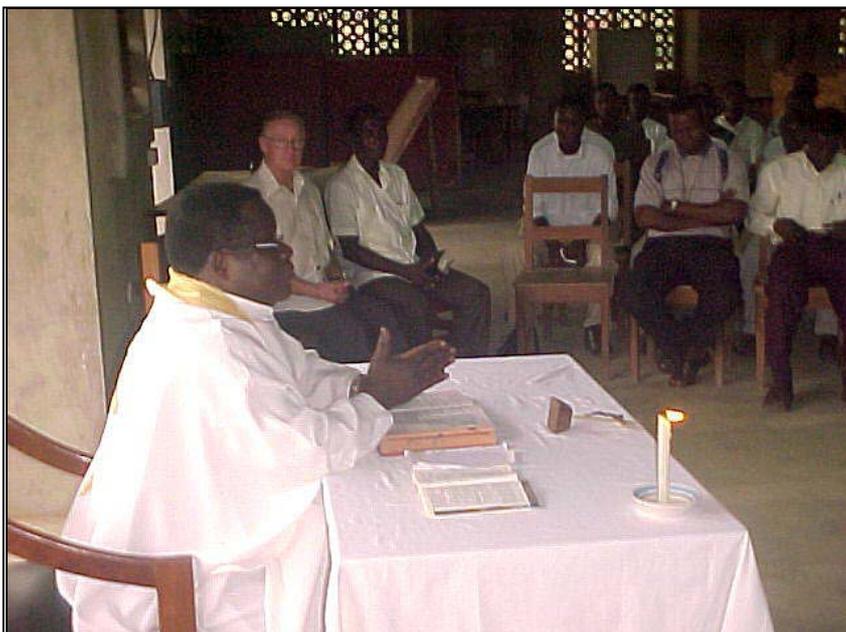
On March 19, the celebration of the solemnity of St. Joseph began in a most appropriate place—at the Holy Cross Vocational Training Center—where the students learn their carpentry skills. At 9 am the students of HCVTC along with members of the Holy Cross Community in Sekondi gathered for a Mass to honor St. Joseph. It was an overcast day—so, appreciatively cooler. Mass was celebrated by **Rev. Fr. Tawiah**, the administrator of the Cathedral and the Bishop's representative on the Holy Cross Skills Board of Directors. Students and their Skills Teachers and other members of Holy Cross celebrated with the students sitting in chairs, using tables and a workshop all built by the Skills students themselves. The students exhibited other skills as well - singing, drumming and dancing making it a very joyful celebration. After the Eucharist all were refreshed and the Principal, **Bro. Kenneth Kunditani**, gave the students a holiday in honor of St. Joseph



Later in the day the members of the District (Brothers, Priest and Sisters, Novices, Pre-Novices and the candidates for the Holy Cross Brothers and Sisters) gathered at St. Joseph Hall at St. John's School, Sekondi to celebrate the Paternal Feast. All gathered in the chapel of the Formation House and celebrated a Eucharist presided over by **Fr. Bob Gilmour CSC**. The community remembered with gratitude the entire Family of Holy Cross for their support, assistance and their prayers; we expressed our concern over the impending war and thanked our Patron, St. Joseph, in song accompanied by drums for all the marvellous things he has done for us.

After the Eucharist as our custom has become we left the Chapel and gathered on the lawn under the giant mahogany tree to continue with Feast Day festivities. It was a good day, cloudy with a bit of thunder, but no rain, however, bringing cool breezes.

Bob Gilmour CSC



EDITORIAL: REACHING OUT THROUGH THE ROSARY

The Church directs us to have special devotion to Mary once again as she celebrates this as the Year of the Rosary. We are reminded once again of the special place Mary should hold in our spirituality. She is a most powerful intercessor before God in behalf of God's People and surely looks kindly on the prayers and petitions which we place in her care. While October is the month in which the faithful are encouraged to pray the Rosary, the fact that this year has been proclaimed by the Church as the Year of the Rosary should encourage us to use this time-honored prayer that Mary has given to us. For us in Holy Cross, the Rosary should have special significance for the fact that our own Fr. Patrick Payton's lifelong ministry was concerned with fostering devotion to the Rosary.

Most of us, I'm sure kept abreast of news of the unfolding war in Iraq, interspersed with reports of the continuing violence of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, not to overlook the "man's inhumanity to man" elsewhere in our global community. Confronted by so much death and destruction, we surely could not but feel taken up in the suffering of those afflicted as we saw them grieving over loved ones, who were victims of the war—powerless to console those afflicted, much less to alleviate their pain and suffering, experiencing an *ineffectual* compassion at best.

We might continue to question whether the outcome through military intervention might have been attained through continuing work of the Inspection team and peaceful negotiations. It would be difficult to deny, on the other hand, that the end of the Hussein regime would not have been an outcome, regardless of how effective the Inspection Team may have been. Now there is ever present the possibility, of course, that "seven devils may come to make the last state worse than the first" (See Lk 11:24-26). Hopefully, the efforts of the hundreds of thousands participating in peaceful demonstrations throughout the world have made the war-makers more aware that war as a justifiable means in similar circumstances in the future is highly questionable. But here the light of Mark's Gospel can illumine our perspective.

Recall Jesus healing the boy with an evil spirit (Mark 9:14-9). Several points are clear: the disciples could not drive out the devil when asked by the father; the father asks Jesus to help the boy;

Jesus demands faith of the father for this to be done; nonetheless, Jesus does cast out the devil. When asked later by the disciples why they could not do this, Jesus remarks, "***Only prayer can drive out this kind of evil spirit—nothing else can.***"

We accept that peaceful demonstrations and non-violent protests are viable means to oppose immoral or unjust situations. But these without commending all to the Lord to bring to fruition that which we outwardly express will often be insufficient to cast out "*this kind*" of evil spirit. Prayer helps to keep things in proper perspective. When peaceful demonstrations do not seem to be attaining their aim, frustration and bitterness may set in. Hatred prevails rather than love of ones enemies (those opposing them) and non-violent protests become ugly with a resort to violence.

Do I truly believe that Christ *in me* is the same Christ who is *in my brother and sister*—that my plea to Him in behalf of my brothers and sisters is within his power of accomplishing? I may never know just what effect my prayer may have, much less answered in the manner that I would like, anymore than it is answered when I pray for myself in presenting my own needs to the Lord. The Lord knows better than I what the needs may be—in the economy of salvation Christ awaits my commending all into his hands. But as my own sincere prayer can engender a certain peace, hope and trust in God, and resignation to His Will for me in my present life situation, so I believe that he will effect this in some way in those to whom I reach out in my prayer, even though I may never know or meet them in this life

The rosary offers a simple prayer form for our petitions, whatever their nature. It is thus, too, that our prayer is enhanced further through the mediation of Mary, who prays with us to her Son. It is Mary, who promised that especially through the praying of the rosary Russia would be converted. Not only has this become a reality—the Berlin Wall came tumblin' down, as well!

Thus, let us be encouraged to pray the rosary that peace may come to the Mideast and to all the areas of conflict in our global community. In these very troubled times in today's world let us turn to Mary, whom Jesus gave to us as *our Mother*. He used that extraordinary moment from the Cross as his pulpit to emphasize the significance of this astounding revelation.

CHANGE OF PACE FOR NOVICES

In the program for the novitiate there is provision that for one month the novices are to live in a regular community with professed Brothers of Holy Cross. The purpose is to give some better understanding of what the nature of their future life in Holy Cross would be. During this time the novices engage in some kind of apostolic ministry. Thus, from mid-January to mid-February two of the four novices, **Br. Francis Agyevi** and **Br. Godfried Ashun** lived with the community at St. John's in Sekondi, while the other two novices, **Br. Robert Koomson** and **Br. Nicholas Arthur** lived with the community at St. Augustine's in Cape Coast.

In all probability the four novices will be engaged in the teaching ministry later in their religious life. Consequently, Nicholas and Robert were assigned to teach math and social studies, respectively, to the 3rd level students at St. Augustine's Preparatory School, a junior secondary school that is just a short walk down the road from St. Augustine's College. There are no Holy Cross Brothers on the teaching staff at this school, which made it slightly less ideal than if there were a fellow older Brother with whom to concur about a problem that might arise in the classroom. However, they did have access to such counsel upon returning from school. As it turned out there was little need for this assistance. They were assigned to assist the young boys and girls at the upper level in their preparation for the

National Educational Exams, the passing of the latter required of all secondary students in Ghana some less intense than that for those for full-time teachers here in Ghana, but nonetheless, in addition to teaching, was inclusive of collecting and evaluating assigned homework, as well as preparing and correcting exams given to the students. Nicholas and Robert felt that both living in community at Augustine's and the exposure to teaching was a most rewarding experience.

Francis and Godfried taught at the Holy Cross Vocational Training Center in Takoradi, which is roughly 8 or 9 km from St. John's. Here, perhaps, their apostolate was more ideal in that there were 5 Brothers on the staff at HCTVC. Francis already has acquired his certificate in the electrical trade, and thus was able to give a considerable assist to **Br. Linus D'Rozario**, who is assigned to teach the electrical department there. Godfried had religion classes covering the some 120 students in the school. Both Francis and Godfried, too, spoke in praise of their living in community as an enjoyable and profitable experience.

The "Living in Community" program is an outreach experience from the regular novitiate schedule, as are the apostolic ministries that are a provision in both the novitiate and pre-novitiate programs. This fulfils a twofold purpose in exposing them to another facet of their future roles in their lives in our Holy Cross community.

COLLABORATION PAR EXCELLENCE

Brother Jerome Kroetsch had become quite ill bearing symptoms of a malaria infection that did not respond to usual medication of one kind or other in early February. Thus he was taken to St. Francis Hospital, in Afoso (Hospitaller Sisters of the Sacred Heart), where the diagnosis was cerebral malaria, the more severe forms of malaria. He was given initial treatment there and released to recuperate at the District House and take prescribed medication. But a few days later after his return to the Center, things took a turn for the worse and he entered the new modern hospital here in Cape Coast. After a few days he improved sufficiently to warrant his return to the Center once again. However, he could not seem to regain

his strength.

Taking advantage of the offer of **Sr. Jane Chantal, CSC**, who is a professional nurse, highly regarded by members in the District for her expertise, Jerome went to stay with the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Takoradi. Progress toward good health seemed somewhat elusive, and there was concern over the fact that Jerome had no feeling on his left side from foot to shoulder, though there seemed to be no serious loss of mobility. Following the advice of Bro. Michael in concurrence with Sr. Jane, Jerome returned to the States for a thorough medical check-up and rehabilitation in mid-March.



As diagnosed by **Dr. Reidy** at Dujarie House, it seems that the malaria spiked Jerome's temperature such as to cause a mild stroke. After undergoing considerable tests and initial treatment, Jerome has begun a more extensive physical therapy course in early May. He hopes that he will be able to regain normal feeling and full movement on his left side. Jerome hopes, as

well, that all will enable him sooner than later to return to Ghana to resume his role as steward and to Work at the Holy Cross Vocational Center.

We in the District express our deep thanks to Sr. Jane and the Holy Cross Sisters for their *collaboration* with us in a most significant way in assisting Br. Jerome during the earlier period of his recuperation here in Ghana.

STAIRWAY TO THE STARS

The Brothers' residence at St. Augustine's College in Cape Coast is on the upper floor of the Administration Building. The former manner of getting to the rooftop level for the Brothers to hang out their laundry to air dry was to use a straight ladder. One may presume that had been the means used ever since the Brothers took up their abode there in 1965, and undoubtedly by the Dutch SMA Fathers, who preceded them.

Seven parallel clotheslines, each of some 16 ft length, have been erected on the large flat area. It is an ideal place for air-drying laundry in the ever present ocean breeze, while not so ideal in the past regarding access.

To make ones way to the level roof on a given washday, he would take bucket in hand filled with the laundry for which the Brothers do have an automatic washer *sans* dryer. He then would climb the distance on the very substantial ladder of 13 (!) rungs. The latter would seem to give lie to that being an unlucky number by those of superstitious persuasion—no record in evidence of anyone having tumbled in going up to the roof or coming back thereof in oral or recorded history of CSC in Ghana.

Recently **Br. Michael Amakyi, CSC** received a donation to enable him to see into the possibility

of constructing a regular stairway to the roof. Two problems existed toward the feasibility of the undertaking. The distance between floor and roof is 14 ft, requiring an stairway of considerable length in the space available, and the thickness of the roof did not seem adequate to safely allow the removal of a large section to provide the opening from the stairway to the rooftop without a supporting column or two.

The most feasible plan seemed to be to make use of the opening in the roof to which the ladder gave access. The decision was to construct a wooden stairway, which would consist of two sections, separated and attached to a platform resting on four sturdy 3 in × 5 in × 8 ft legs, reaching to just above the kitchen doorway. Construction of the stairway was well-planned, such that over the several weeks of construction there was always access to the roof by the ladder or the partially completed stairway.

The roof gives a beautiful view of the surrounding countryside and the ocean. In addition to utilizing the rooftop space to hang out the laundry, one may be inclined to use the new convenience to spend some leisure time of a night on the rooftop for a bit of star gazing, as well.

THE DISTRICT FORMATION PROGRAM

Following the District Chapter due attention, as continuing from the previous chapter, was given to the infrastructure of the West African District's formation program. At the conclusion of the work of the Chapter, each member in the District was given a 30-page booklet in which every phase of the program has been spelled out, including the philosophy underlying the District's program, and the criteria for selection of candidates to Holy Cross. Credit is especially due to **Fr. Bob Gilmour**, assisted in part by **Br. Ebenezer Prah**,

for the editing and printing of the booklet. The information for this article is gleaned from the booklet. For those who are older members in Holy Cross, especially, it may be of interest to note how things have evolved in the preparation of those entering to become Brothers of Holy Cross from their entry to first religious vows and temporary profession years, as compared to that experienced in our own early formative years. Thus this information would seem of sufficient interest to include in this Newsletter.

The Formation Program includes the following: Pre-candidacy; Candidacy; Pre-Novitiate; Novitiate; Post-Novitiate. The Post-novitiate Program will be presented in a later issue of the Newsletter.

Pre-Candidacy. At present the Pre-candidacy program is administered by **Bro. Daniel Dardoe** at St. Joseph Hall, a “stone’s throw” from the Brothers’ residence at St. John’s Secondary School in Sekondi. Those

who have expressed interest in becoming a Brother of Holy Cross, but who have need to complete academic work toward attaining their secondary school certificates, are enrolled in the program concurrent with that in St. John’s School. “The program seeks to create an environment conducive to study and provides additional academic assistance to enable these young men to (complete their studies) needed for entry into Holy Cross. (In addition to the academic orientation) the program

strives to assist them to appreciate the meaning of their interest in Religious Life in Holy Cross *through a regimen of prayer work, recreation together, and a series of conferences dealing with the basics of their Christian Catholic Faith.*” The duration of this program is a maximum of four years.

Candidacy. The Candidacy Program, also at St. Joseph Hall and under the direction of **Br. Daniel Dardoe**, is for those aspiring to continue their formation to become Brothers of Holy Cross, who have completed their studies at St. John’s and received their National Exam results. Young men from other schools attaining this same status, as well as others qualified—Teachers, Technical Students, University Graduates, who wish to become Brothers of Holy Cross also will enter this program. The program is to draw all prospective candidates together to orientate them for entry into the pre-novitiate.

The content of the program includes: remedial classes in English—reading, writing, public

speaking; reading Fanti, Fanti grammar and French; learning typing skills; basic steps in prayer; presentations by District members on their respective Holy Cross experiences; reading/sharing lives of the Saints; work program for at least two hours each day; exposure to common courtesies for boys and girls. The duration of the program is a minimum of six months.



Pre-Novitiate Program. Candidates who have been accepted into the Pre-novitiate program are here given the opportunity: to pursue further studies in Religious Life and in academics to grow in their aspirations; to discern the nature of their religious calling; and to experience first hand the living of authentic Christian life in community.

Objectives of the Program are: to deepen the meaning of the call to the religious life according to our Holy Cross way of life; to sufficiently integrate physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and cultural aspect of the candidate’s person which permit a responsible option for a community life style in the Congregation of Holy Cross; to enable the candidate to grow in his personal relationship to Jesus Christ and awareness of his option to follow him.

Note. Sufficient space is not available in this issue to include a presentation of the novitiate program, which is somewhat more extensive in content. This shall be done in a near future issue, if not the next, of the District Newsletter.

SEEDS FOR THE HARVEST

Early in April, we received a note from **Fr. David Schlaver, CSC** that free seeds for those engaged in farming in foreign mission areas would be available through the Foreign Mission Office. Responding to this offer, a rather lengthy list was submitted to request a variety in quantity and kind of seeds that will be used here in the District.

A directive was given in our recent District Chapter to make use of available land for growing various produce to lessen insofar as possible the expenditures for foodstuffs. At this time there are viable gardens/farms at our houses in Cape Coast, District Center in Brafo Yaw, Holy Cross Vocational Training Center in Takoradi, and St. John's School in Sekondi.

In the Cape Coast area we are very fortunate to have St. Peter's Major Seminary at hand. There a huge chicken farm exists to assist in the feeding of the more than **270(!)** seminarians in residence. Consequently the chickens provide an ample supply of manure for the needs of gardening/farming. It does make a decided difference in the size of the harvest for crops given the benefit of its nutrients.

The **novices** had considerable success in growing onions, tomatoes, cabbages and lettuce

last season, enabling them to supply other houses in the District of their harvest. In this tropical climate, it is possible to have two growing seasons for the fore mentioned crops.

The headmaster of St. Augustine's College has given permission to **Bro. Tom Dillman** to use a small part of the very large campus to engage in his gardening hobby for the past several years. In addition to some of the common crops, tomatoes, onions, etc., he has planted some dozen or so paw paw trees, and several dozen banana plants. The paw paws have flourished such as to provide a half dozen or more each week to the District House—the 6 Brothers in the scholasticate join **Brothers Vincent and Emmanuel** for meals in the District House. The banana plants are less prolific, but do allow for giving some to other houses, as well.

The former St. Joseph Farm has been closed down for several years, but plans are being considered to plant some easily manageable crop such as cassava, yams, and corn. **Brothers Linus D'Rozario** and **Jerome Kroetsch** have indicated their interest in this project. It is hoped that the crops could be marketed on a wholesale basis so as to provide a significant source of income to the District.

WORKSHOP TO FACILITATE LOCAL HOUSE CHAPTERS

On Saturday, May 17, **Fr. Anthony Adenu-Mensah, OFM (Conv.)** conducted a workshop for members of the District. The theme of the workshop was: Communication, Local Chapters and Periodic Evaluations as effective tools to enhance community living. Fr. Mensah is an Old Boy of St. John's Secondary School in Sekondi and thus is acquainted with our teaching ministry in Holy Cross. Completing his studies in Rome to earn a licentiate in Communications he has since had extensive work in helping others, especially priests and religious in Ghana, to develop skills in communication to enable them to relate better to persons within their own community and with those to whom they minister. His ministry has generally been focused on pastoral communications. By his own admission,

this was the first occasion in which he had been invited by a religious community to present his



views and insights in the area of communications, expressly for the purpose of facilitating greater fruition stemming from the house chapter.

A basic principle in our communication with others in our community for its most effective ministry is *to communicate what we do best individually and as community in our own relationships both within and outside our religious community*. Since recent reforms in religious life, there has been a great improvement in our understanding of our vow of obedience with dialogue between superior and subject/community before major decisions are made. It is through communication that we have the means for self-growth through establishing relationships—drawing closer to others creating community. There is ever the need to improve our communication skills, so as to reflect the authenticity of our own unique personhood. Occasions where verbal exchange is on a more personal level, our words must come “*from the heart*”—even holiday greetings, expression of condolences or extending the sign of peace during the celebration of the Liturgy can become somewhat superficial and stereotyped messages in a relatively unemotional manner.

“The house chapter (ideally) is the greatest moment in which communication takes place—moments of joy.” Members should come to the chapter disposed to celebrate community. Thus the stage is set for encouraging openness and willingness to discuss problems/conflict of a

serious nature. The chapter is an occasion to evaluate our response to the will of God as expressed through our constitutions and major chapters, to make sure that the “fire of the Holy Spirit” is present in all we undertake to do. It is the time in which we reflect on our individuality and commonality to become more aware of how God’s grace and Providence has worked in our community to enrich our lives together—to review our growth in Christ and the charismatic nature of our ministries in the Christ-centered quality of what we do.

Offering his suggestion as to the manner in which the chapter might be effectively conducted, Fr. Anthony stated that in their own house chapters the first part allows for *shared prayer*. This could include the relating by individual members of the joys and pleasures through God’s favoring labors with success, or frustrations and disappointments nonetheless coped with through the sustaining power of the Spirit. The second part of chapter would be to discuss/reflect on a special theme that will have been selected prior to the chapter. Chapters should be on a weekly basis of perhaps two-hours, the latter somewhat related to number of members present. The workshop closed with the celebration of the Eucharist in Bl. Andre Chapel followed by social get-to and dinner. We are indebted to Fr. Anthony for his excellent presentation, which surely should help to facilitate meaningful local chapters in our District.

DISTRICT BIDS FAREWELL TO SR. DIPOLI



At April’s ending **Sr. Dipoli D’Costa** left Ghana to return to Bangladesh. She came to Ghana in May 1998 to stay at the Holy Cross Sisters’ mission in Kasoa,

During her five year ministry in Kasoa, Sr. Dipoli was available as needed (often), volunteering her service at St. Martha Elementary School in the general education area. She set up a canteen

service putting some kind of order and efficiency in the feeding of the school children. She utilized the services of the market women, who carried to the school their respective food provisions in a variety of pots and pans to sell to the children.

She also was involved in parish ministry, which included visitations to the homes of members of the parish members. She also was chaplain for the St. Therese Organization in the parish, who saw to the material needs of the pastor.

Not only will Sr. Dipoli, who enhanced her devoted service in ever a cheerful and gracious manner, be greatly missed by those in the parish, but by all of us in our Holy Cross family in Ghana. We bid you our sincere farewell and pray for God’s continued blessings in abundance in your new ministry, dear Sister Dipoli.

DEATH OF THE FATHER OF BRO. EBENEZER PRAH

Many members of the District attended the wake-keeping on Friday evening, April 4th, at the family home in Elmina (near Cape Coast) for Brother Eenezer's father, **Mr. John Kojo Mensah Prah**. Hundreds of relatives and family were there for the evening of singing, dancing and visitation to the bereaved family.

On Saturday morning, April 5th, at the Bethel Methodist Church in Elmina the members of the District along with the Sisters of the Holy Cross joined Bro. Ebenezer and his family for the Burial Service. During the service of songs and readings **Novice Godfred Ashun and Sr. Esther Entsiwah CSC** did readings in Fante, and **Bro. Ebenezer** read the tribute to his father. At the conclusion of the church service, Very Rev. Robert Felix Bassaw, officiating minister, gave prominent recognition to the Holy Cross religious there present.

Following the burial service in Elmina cemetery for the deceased the family hosted the Brothers, Priests and Sisters for a meal at the Catholic Mission, after which all took leave. Do remember Bro. Ebenezer's father (John Kojo Mensah Prah), Bro. Ebenezer and his family in your prayers. . —Fr. Bob Gilmour, CSC

THE TRINITY

"Exalted at the right hand of God, Jesus received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured it forth..." (Acts 2"33).

**God the Father, source of life and love,
Creator of all that is,
Son of God, Self-Gift of the Father,
having all that is His.**

**Holy Spirit, proceeding from both,
united with Them as One,
the bond of Love—eternal Kiss
of the Father and the Son.**

**Incomprehensible Mystery,
Your Name through faith we profess.
Triune Godhead: Lover, Beloved, and
Love
—Giver, Gift and Giftedness.**

-Br. Tom Dillman

OUR HOLY CROSS SISTERS IN GHANA

The Sisters of the Holy Cross have finally been formally registered by civil authority for property rights of land in Kasoa. The Sisters can now begin to build without fear of later land disputes. However, they do have continuing land disputes with the termites in their farming efforts. The Sisters claim some victories over the varmints—chemical weapons in the battle morally justified!

Sr. Esther Entsiwah has left Ghana to begin studies to attain a Masters degree in Business Administration at the University of Notre Dame.

—Sr. Helene Sharp, CSC

Bits and Pieces

The District Planning Committee is reviewing possible business ventures that might be viable ways of gaining income for District needs.

The Peace and Justice Commission (PJC) of the District of West Africa held its first meeting on Saturday, 10 May. **Brothers Anthony Dadzie (chairman), Tom Dillman, Ebenezer Prah, Kenneth Goode and Benjamin Biney** are members of PJC. Presently the commission is exploring several areas of possible involvement.

Miss Carine Wadia has withdrawn from the Sisters of the Holy Cross novitiate program.

Sr. Helene Sharpe has given a mini-course in communications to the participants in ICF. She has followed this later with a mini-course on Anger and Conflict Management.

Daniel Dardo has recently completed a one-week class, Jesus and the Four Gospels with the novices.

Please pray for **Leonicia (Minu) Osimane**, the sister of **Bro. Emmanuel Minu**, who died on May 16th.

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