

# 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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## ST. AUGUSTINE'S COLLEGE CELEBRATES DIAMOND JUBILEE

On Sunday, March 6, St. Augustine's College began its weeklong festivities to celebrate its Diamond Jubilee of 75 years with the 'Launching Mass' in the school auditorium. Special activities of one kind or other were scheduled for each day during the week culminating with the Thanksgiving Mass on Sunday, March 13.

The festivities throughout the week, however, did not preclude the continuing effort by students, painters and masons including, as well, replacing the badly rusted four entrance-exit gates with newly fabricated ones. All was completed in time to make the Augusco compound beautiful, indeed, for the major event, Speech and Prize-Giving Day on Saturday, March 12.

This final day of activities was held in the large quadrangle north of the administration building, that accommodated some 4,000 people most being shaded by canopies set up for the some 5-hour ceremonies. The most distinguished of the many honored guests were **Cardinal Peter Turkson**, Ghanaian Archbishop of Cape Coast and **President John Kufuor**.

The Headmaster, **Mr. Francis Amissah**, had tactfully made it known sometime prior to the occasion to the 'powers that be' of the school's need for a new large bus for student transport. This hope was fulfilled when in his remarks at the occasion His Excellency John Kufuor expressly promised the gift of a new bus for St. Augustine's as some expression of gratitude for the school's great contribution through the past 75 years to education in Ghana.

St. Augustine's was the first Catholic Secondary School in Ghana, being originally established in Amissano as a conjoint facility with the seminary under the direction of the Irish SMA Society. In 1936 the secondary school was transferred to its present location in Cape Coast, the seminary remaining at Amissano. In

1965, at the invitation of **Archbishop John K. Amissah**, **Brothers Fred McGlynn** and **Eduardo Michalik** became the 'pioneers' of Holy Cross at St. Augustine's College, to be followed later by many other Brothers of Holy Cross. Since the past few years when **Bro. Michael Amakyi** terminated his employment as



math teacher, no Brothers have been teaching at St. Augustine's College. However, the Brothers do have residence on the upper floor of the administration building, and consequently continue in their service to the school. **Brothers Kenneth Goode, Nicholas Arthur and Robert Koomson** lend their assistance to campus ministry as time allows from the need for their studies at the University of Cape Coast, and **Bro. Michael** is frequently consulted as a resource person by the administration. At times, when the school chaplain is absent for the student Mass, **Bro. Tom Dillman** assists in a prayer service with a homily based on the scripture readings for the day. Clearly, the Brothers continue to maintain a Holy Cross presence at Augusco.

## EDITORIAL: DIVINE PROVIDENCE, DISASTERS, SALVATION

For not a few Christians and other believers in the goodness of God, there is something ‘scandalous’ to ones’ faith in the seeming action of God ‘allowing’ such as the recent Tsunami catastrophe to happen. Even more so for one who is a victim in the event—the agonized cry of an elderly woman in a CNN news report on the scene in Indonesia, “Why did God allow this to happen to us?” And on this day in other reports there was the incidence of the coal mine disaster in China and, of course, the continuing killing of mostly civilians through suicidal bombings in Iraq. It is well for us to call to mind some of the fundamental concepts relating to the Providence of God, which the Church holds, and reaffirm our concept of the goodness of God and his abiding, unconditional love for us.

By faith we accept the basic premise that God ordains and ‘*provides*’ what is necessary for all that he has created to attain their fulfillment. God’s providence is inclusive of the laws of nature and science—cosmic/terrestrial and the natural laws governing mankind’s own relationship to creation as a rational being, providing for oneself and other persons and things. Clearly it involves history. And since the Incarnation, encompassing all the above, there exists the new law of Christ, who through his redemption has made all things possible of being grace-filled events. Even the ‘natural evils’ of violence, disasters and death, can be a means of grace and spiritual growth for ones fulfillment through death into God’s glory.

As Christians we embrace a faith that does seem to encourage prayer for God’s intervention when there is a serious threat to us or to what we hold dear, nor even to discourage prayer for a miracle. Again, there may have been times in ones life when an unforeseen extraordinary event occurs that in retrospect seems almost to be a direct sign that God is indeed concerned for what happens to us. It is God’s providence, too, which makes use of modern technology and the physician’s capable hands, all of which he has empowered man to develop to perform such as the quadruple bypass and cataract surgery. By such, God has lessened the need for miraculous cures, while ennobling the dignity of mankind.

Another ‘qualifier’ of providence is God’s due regard for the free will with which he has endowed each rational being, which works for good or ill in ones relationship to others. And this even to the degree that he let his own beloved Son undergo the ignominious death on the Cross. But even this greatest evil, *deicide*, wrought by man, became the means of that same Son’s

glorification and the ultimate victory over all evil that has power no more to prevent man’s ultimate fulfillment of sharing in Christ’s glory.

It is the seeming *absence of God*, who appears to turn a deaf ear to our cry for help, which is not easy for us to accept vis-à-vis God’s goodness. And why did God create an imperfect world—albeit we perhaps can accept its being populated with a ‘free-willed’ imperfect people. Could he not have excluded ‘faults’ in the earth’s crust causing earthquakes and tsunamis, or negated the terrible destruction by volcanoes, or...? We as Job, the tragedy-beset biblical figure, can only humbly accept the mystery of suffering and death God in his omnipotence and wisdom allows, reaffirming our faith in God’s love for us. He did promise that all things ultimately will be brought to their fulfillment.

He has sent his only Son to share in our human condition even to undergoing his passion and suffering, undergoing death by crucifixion, seemingly abandoned by the Father at the very last, but all a means to his ultimate eternal glorification, and thus becoming Redeemer of all mankind. But our redemption in Christ implies a discipleship that must accept the cross in our lives also, our obedience to God’s will for us as we work out our salvation as imperfect persons in an imperfect world.

**Story:** Rajeev with his beloved Sophia were walking toward Trincomilee beach on Sri Lanka’s coast. Suddenly people came running toward them before a wall of water rushing in from the sea. Sensing danger they turned and fled with them toward high ground. The water sweeping in with increasing speed and depth suddenly swept Rajeev off his feet, separating him from Sheila, as he managed to grab onto a large plank rushing by him. Eventually high ground was reached, and Rajeev realized after much searching that Sheila had undoubtedly drowned. He cried out, “Why, God, did you not save Sheila instead of me? She was such a wonderful person—a joy to all who knew her!” In some inexplicable way he had an awareness of God replying, “Ah, it is Sheila who *is saved*, living now in the boundless joy of all the blessed in heaven, and you whose salvation is yet to be attained. But let the suddenness of Sheila’s death be a sign and constant reminder to you.”

## ASSOCIATES OF HOLY CROSS IN GHANA

On Sunday January 9<sup>th</sup> the Associates of Holy Cross Accra Chapter in Ghana met with **Bro. John Tryon**,



**CSC** in Accra before his return stateside a few days later. Some 12 families were present with a lesser number absent, because of being necessarily involved in the Sunday morning parish activities. In his welcoming

remarks, **Mr. Kwamena Assam**, coordinator of the Associates, expressed his appreciation in behalf of all the members to Bro. John for extending his stay with the Holy Cross community in Ghana so as to meet with the Associates.

Bro. John addressed the group with a keen awareness of the importance of our Associates of Holy Cross, since he has remained in close touch with various chapters of the Associates in the US, and he expressed his appreciation, as well, of having the opportunity to meet with the Ghanaian Associates. He reminded the members that the Associates have been an important part of our Holy Cross family with its origins from our Founder, Venerable Basil Moreau. No small contribution to the Congregation is the support through prayers by the Associates through the years.

Bro. John gave to each member present a medal of Blessed Andre, encouraging them to confidently seek the aid of Bl. Andre in

their time of need, as well as to promote devotion to him by others.

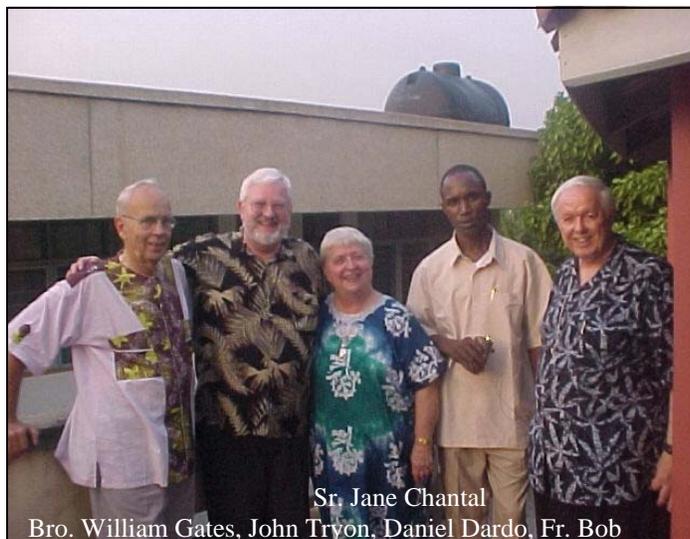
Other members of the District present for this occasion were **Brothers Daniel Dardoe, Patrick Baah, Benjamin Biney, and Vincent Ntsiful.**

—Bro. Patrick Baah

## CELEBRATION OF BL. ANDRE'S FEAST DAY

On Thursday late afternoon, 6<sup>th</sup> of January, the District members met together along with members of the Sisters of Holy Cross to celebrate the feast of our beloved Blessed Andre at the Center in Brafu Yaw. **Fr. Bob Gilmour** was the celebrant and inspirational homilist for the joyous celebration of the Eucharist. Our young Ghanaian brothers embellished the ceremony throughout accompanying the singing with music of organ and African rhythm instruments.

We then gathered afterward on the District House rooftop for our social and dinner. The occasion also served to express the District's appreciation to **Bro. John Tryon** for his contribution to our formation program through his conferences to the novices during his stay. His presentation related to the spirituality of our founder, Venerable Basil Moreau. John had received word that his brother in California, who had



St. Jane Chantal  
Bro. William Gates, John Tryon, Daniel Dardo, Fr. Bob

been suffering from cancer, was very near death. He left on the next available flight and did arrive in time to be with his brother for a few days prior to his death. We

again thank John for coming to Ghana to share of his presence and gifts with us.

### ST. JOHN'S 'ON THE MEND'

At our February District meeting, the members present took the opportunity to commend **Brothers Joe Annan** and **Sylvester Quaye**, Headmaster and Assistant Headmaster, respectively, for the significant improvement in academic standing that has been made in the past two years of their administration.

St. John's had attained a highly regarded status among secondary schools in Ghana during its earlier years when under the administration of the Brothers of Holy Cross. When it became necessary to relinquish this administrative post owing to depreciating numbers in the District, the school gradually regressed in academic stature and other areas as well.

Some three years ago, the Brothers of Holy Cross resumed an administrative role at St. John's, responding to a concerted plea especially by the 'Old Boys' (alumni).

Last year, St. John's ranked 80<sup>th</sup> in the National Exam results of some 400 government secondary schools in Ghana. This year, St. John's ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> in the first reported results of the National Exam of all these schools. But a second evaluation based more realistically by giving weighted value to the exam scores showed St. John's moving up even further to rank 22<sup>nd</sup>! St. John's "Old Boys" are smiling once again, and morale among staff members and students runs high now, much to the credit of Brothers Joe and Sylvester.

**Bro. Benjamin Biney** joined the staff as a math and science instructor at the beginning of this new school year in September.

### GRAND FAMILY REUNION FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH



On Saturday morning, March 19<sup>th</sup>, the members of our Holy Cross Family in Ghana gathered at the Brothers' chapel in St. Joseph Hall of St. John's School in Sekondi at 11 AM to celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph. **Fr. Bob Gilmour**, the celebrant for the occasion, in his usual manner gave us inspirational opening reflections relating to St. Joseph, the patron of our Congregation of Holy Cross. **Bro. Daniel Dardoe** presented additional, substantial food for thought in his homily for the occasion.

Owing to the presence of the St. Joseph Hall



candidates, who added their respective musical talents in both voice and African rhythm instruments, clearly there was no need in the modest size chapel for artificial amplification. It seemed fortunate that the older religious made themselves equal to the task as human 'pitch pipes' to keep the exuberant voices—perhaps vying for top honors in 'praising the Lord'—who may at times strayed a bit from the established melody of a given hymn—(tongue in cheek)! All members of the

District now in Ghana along with the 4 novices, and the 5 candidates, who soon should begin their pre-novitiate year were present.

We assumed a sharing of spiritual presence with all of our District members presently outside Ghana: **Bro. Joe Tsiquaye**, General Council, and our four Brothers stateside: **Paul Mensah, John Badu Affum, John Kwesi Asiedu** and **Patrick Osei-Bonsu**. All the Holy Cross Sisters were present along with their two candidates—only **Sr. Helene Sharpe** deciding to favor an inconveniencing illness, remained at the Sisters' convent in Kasoa.

### NEWS FROM OUR HOLY CROSS SISTERS IN GHANA

**Sr. Evelyn Ntiamoah** spent the remaining week of her vacation following her first profession of vows visiting her Mother and family the first week of January, returning to Takaradi on Jan. 8th. She continues to enjoy her secretarial work at the Skills Project.

**Sisters Maggie and Helene** joined **Sr. Jane Chantal** and **Sr. Evelyn** in Takaradi on Jan. 15th for a Country Meeting. The major focus of the agenda had to do with planning, formation issues, and the building project in Kasoa.

**Sisters Martina and Catherine**, 2nd year candidates, attended a three day workshop with Sr. Jane Chantal in Takoradi from Feb. 15th-18th and then returned to Kasoa to await the arrival from St. Mary's, Notre Dame, Indiana of **Sr. Pushpa Gomez** who is the member of the Leadership Team serving the Area of Africa. Due to a snowstorm in the States, Sr. Pushpa arrived on Jan. 22nd. It was her first trip to Ghana and she plans to come back when she has

Following the Celebration of the Eucharist all moved to the spacious lawn below the chapel for a social beginning with popcorn and beverages, this followed by the traditional Ghanaian dinner for such occasions, 'fufu with light-soup' and/or 'jalof rice', the menu embellished by a rum-chocolate cake brought by **Sr. Jane Chantal** and, of course, ice cream. With memories of the celebration together of our patronal feast of St. Joseph to add to our existing file of similar happy occasions, Holy Cross Family members took leave in the early afternoon.

more time. She departed for Uganda with Sr. Maggie on Feb. 26th to participate in the First Vow ceremony of **Sr. Theresia Mbugua**. Sr. Theresia spent 3 months last year in Ghana sharing her ministry experience with Sr. Evelyn working with the Street Children in Accra. Sr. Maggie returned to Kasoa on March 8th.

**Sr. Helene** gave a Communications Workshop in Sunyani from Feb. 27th to March 5th. More than 40 candidates and postulants from various formation programs in Sunyani participated in the event.

There have been a number of irregularities in our building project in Kasoa. Please pray that we can peacefully and effectively resolve the contract issues so that we can complete the project reasonably close to the time as planned. Our Direction Statement from our last General Chapter is to form right relationships with all so that justice can be done. This is no small challenge!!!

—Sr. Jane Chantal csc

### BRO. PAUL MENSAH: HOMECOMING WITH A SENSE OF GRATITUDE

Time indeed flies! The journey to the United States for my sabbatical, which started on December 30, 2001, seems like yesterday. Yet by the time I return home on March 31, 2005, I shall have been away from Ghana for three years three months.

My first stop of the journey was at Holy Cross College at Notre Dame, Indiana, taking a few

courses there while concurrently taking most courses in computers at Ivy Tech College in South Bend during the first year.

My second stop of my sabbatical journey was at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois—first at the Institute for Religious Formation (IRF) for studies in the formation ministry. I graduated

with a certificate in June of 2003 and continued in the Research Master of Arts program. I will graduate on May 19, 2005 with Master of Arts in Theology with a concentration in Spirituality and minors in Scripture and Cross-culture. My thesis topic is *“Mission and Charism of the Congregation of Holy Cross: Toward A Spirituality for Today’s Needs.”*

The past three years have been grace-filled opportunities for me. It has been a time of grace because little did I know that I would be gone for three years and that my journey would take me to Catholic Theological Union to encounter many marvelous people – teachers, students, etc., who have shared with me many occasions for discussion about life’s meaning and purpose. Again, a time of grace because the IRF program not only provided the opportunity to visit Turkey to get acquainted with the roots of our biblical faith—an opportunity one rarely gets—but also an opportunity that has expanded my vision of the tradition that informs our faith journey.

As I now begin preparations to come home, I am coming prepared to serve the needs of the Congregation of Holy Cross in its response to God’s mission in our part of the world. I come with a deep sense of gratitude to God whose providential care and guidance exceeds ones imagination. I

come with gratitude and thanks to my professors who challenged me to open my heart, mind, ears and eyes to see the beauty, opportunity and gifts in each person, so as to better appreciate them and celebrate with them each other’s giftedness that we encounter in God and ourselves. I come with a sense of gratitude to the Congregation of Holy Cross, the Midwest

Province in particular, for their support. My special thanks to the Provincial, **Brother Robert Fillmore, C.S.C., and his Council** for allowing me to continue with the Masters program; to **Brother Raymond Papenfuss, C.S.C.**, Ghana Mission Promoter, for his support in thinking through the needs of the Church in Ghana; to **Brothers Philip Armstrong, C.S.C., and Edward Dailey, C.S.C.**, for encouraging me to be the “keeper of the fire,” the heritage of the Congregation of Holy Cross; to **Brother Michael Amakyi, C.S.C.**, the District Superior of West Africa, for his support in granting me the needed sabbatical. To the Community at Columba Hall, River Grove and Ghana for your support and prayers, I am grateful. To all of you I owe a debt of gratitude and thanks, for whatever I am now and will become, I have you to thank.

May the joy of Easter bring us all the blessing of peace and love. Happy Easter!

—Bro. Paul Mensah

## FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

On March 4, 2005, the brothers in the district of West Africa welcomed **Brother Philip Smith, Neumann Jones, Sean McGowan, Ben Modlin, Franco Verteramo, Beverly Price, James Alexander, and me, Annie Nagengast**, into their homes and their lives. Respectively, we were a Brother, four young men discerning the Brotherhood, a television producer, an educator, and a 2003 graduate of Notre Dame, but collectively we were embarking on a journey that would ultimately change us.

We arrived at the District Center in Brafu Yaw late in the night on Saturday, March 4, and began our weeklong journey into a new world. During our week in Ghana, we visited the Kakum Rainforest, the Cape Coast market and the village of Moree. We spent a morning at Cape Coast Castle and that same afternoon at Elmina Castle. We visited **Father Bob** in Takaradi-Sekondi and toured St. John's Secondary School, where the young men met with pre-novitiates and interacted with the prefects of the school. **Brother Daniel** showed us the Skills Center and **Sisters Jane and Evelyn** welcomed us into their home for lunch. Later in the week, we visited St. Augustine's College, where we were given a tour of the school and watched a military ceremony practicing for the forthcoming 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee celebration. We ended our week with a send-off party, which was done up in true Ghanaian style.

To list the places we visited is simply not enough. I cannot list every man, woman and child we encountered in the villages and markets, but they are who made this journey life changing. We heard children's laughter, spoke with anyone who would talk to us (which was nearly everyone), and smiled back at the hundreds of

smiling faces that fell upon ours. I do not list here every brother and sister we met and whose kindness we felt, yet it is these people who made this journey special. They are the ones who continue to make a difference as they embrace their call to spend a life with God and live in fellowship with their community in Ghana.

We traveled to Ghana with several motives. For the young men, it was an immersion into a Holy Cross community outside of South Bend, Indiana. Beverly conducted interviews of the brothers and sisters, Jim saw the conditions of schools, and I established relationships which I hope to nurture into the future. Yet despite all of our individual intents and expectations, we left with newly inspired attitudes. We experienced first-hand the love and community that is the way of life in Ghana. We were a group of travelers who



L-R: Sean McGowan, Ben Modlin, Bro. Kenneth Goode, Newman Jones, Bro. Vincent Intsiful

descended into Africa in the night's darkness and left having seen a great light.

—Annie Nagengast

## *Bits and Pieces*

- **Bro. Edward Dailey** visited Ghana for two weeks in mid-February to assist in updating the personal data file for each member in the District. He also gave helpful input toward the management of the District archives, acquisition and organization of materials as generally followed in the keeping of the province archives. **Bro. William Gates** is the present archivist for the District.
- **Bro. Paul Mensah** will be the new director of the candidates living in St. Joseph's Hall at St. John's School in Sekondi when he returns to Ghana on March 31<sup>st</sup>. He will replace **Bro. Daniel Dardoe**, who has assumed this role, while remaining Director of Holy Cross Vocational Institute.
- The members of our District of West Africa take this opportunity to express our gratitude to **Bro. Daniel** for taking over his capable and conscientious attendance to this responsibility as director of candidates in our formation program.

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We in the District of West Africa take this opportunity, as well, to forward to all priests, brothers and sisters in our Holy Cross Family throughout the world our prayers for God's blessings on all as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Peace, joy, and hope in Christ!*

*He is risen! Alleluia!*

*Happy Easter!*