

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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THREE DISTRICT GHANAIN BROTHERS RECEIVE DEGREES

Over the past few months three of our Ghanaian Brothers have received Bachelor's Degrees at three different universities, respectively.

Brother Benjamin Biney-Mensah received a BSc in Physical Science with a major in Math at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana in March of this year.



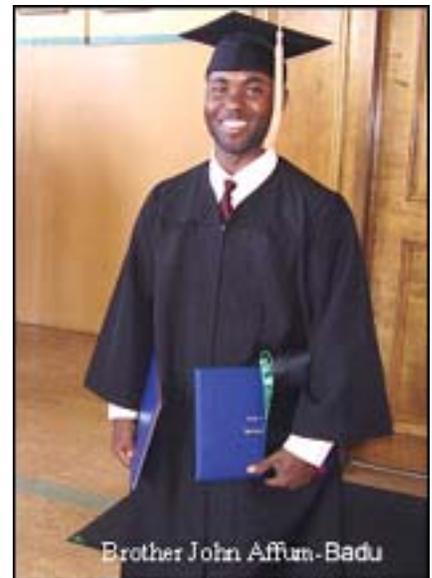
Bro. Benjamin Biney-Mensah

Actually Ben completed his studies earlier in 2005 to enable him to be a full-time teacher during the 2005-'06 school year at St. John's Secondary School in Sekondi. He is now doing post-grad studies in education in the interim of the school-break at the University of Cape Coast, to make up for the lack therein of education courses while he devoted full time to earning his Bachelor of Science Degree..

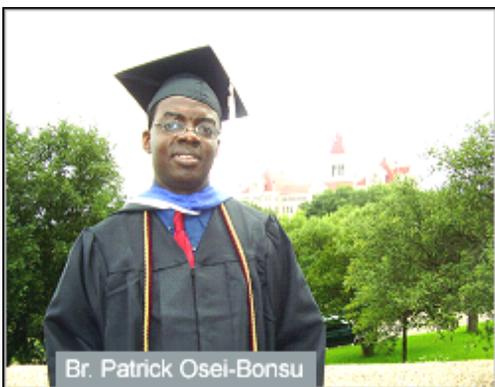
Brother John Affum Badu received both a Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Arts—a double in Marketing and Sociology in May at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas

John will begin a one-year program of studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago in September 2006.

More specifically he will be enrolled in the Institute of Religious Formation at CTU. This will equip John to assist in a significant way in our District Formation program, as well as attaining 15 credits toward an eventual Masters Degree when time is availing to complete the requirements. The institute acclaims: "IRF offers a formation blueprint to those with formation errands. It gives students an opportunity for continue formation; provide an environment conducive to spiritual growth, learning and theological reflection." (John—our prayers for success in this most important area of need in our District). John's own views on this grace-filled opportunity: "I expect simply to be formed and to learn the ways of seeking and knowing God more deeply so as to help form others discerning the call to follow Christ in Holy Cross."



Brother John Affum-Badu



Br. Patrick Osei-Bonsu

Also in May, **Brother Patrick Osei-Bonsu** graduated from St. Edward's University, Austin Texas. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Education—Religion as the major area. His certificate equips him to teach at the secondary school level. Patrick graduated *magna cum laude* through his serious application to studies at this well-reputed university.

Clearly we in the District are justifiably proud of these three Brothers, and congratulate them on the attainment of their respective degrees.

There are also six other Ghanaian Brothers, attending the University of Cape Coast, who have just completed their third

year of studies towards attaining Bachelor Degrees in Education in arts, math, and/or science. Three others are in their first year of studies, respectively at three other institutes here

in Ghana, are also preparing to be teachers in the educational ministry in our District of West Africa.

DISTRICT'S PEACE AND JUSTICE OFFICE UPDATE

Two major areas are now the concern of the District's Peace and Justice Office: Caring for Street Children, and Ministry to the Poor.

Work on the building to house the Street Children that was begun in January has now been completed in just a few months without the often noted delays for such construction on the campus of the Holy Cross Vocational Skills Center in Anaji, suburb of Takoradi. It is a two-storey dormitory to accommodate 50 boys. **Bro. Nicholas Thielman**, who is Director of the program, has now returned from his vacation/visit to Bangladesh, where he had been involved in similar work. He is in process of establishing a viable system of inviting youngsters to participate in the project that will make use of the Vocational school's facilities, as well as agricultural projects on the extensive land area at the Center.

Street Children are generally defined as those who have no family support, and who are left to themselves to get by with whatever means of marginal self-sufficiency they can find. This, often as not, includes theft and harassment to obtain food or money from whomever. Many, of course, band together for support and protection. Most are minimally educated if at all. While other religious communities are involved to some degree in projects for helping Street Children, the project at the Skills Center may well be the most ambitious currently undertaken here in Ghana. Clearly much work will be necessary to make the Street Children Project a successful program. But surely the ministry already has the blessing of God by the fact of generous benefactors and the release by the Southwest Province of Bro. Nicholas Thielman to direct the project.

Another viable undertaking under the umbrella of the District's Peace and Justice Office is that of the Ministry to the Poor. A few years ago the assistance to the poor and marginalized was rather minimal for lack of funds, though some help was possible using funds sent by relatives or

friends in the U.S. toward this aim. It was with a mind to do significantly more for these poor in his semi-retired status with time at hand for such ministry, that **Bro. Tom Dillman** decided to make special appeals for funds when on his stateside vacation toward this aim. This has been done the past two times at three different Catholic churches in his hometown of Evansville, IN. He has now returned in April with a very satisfying response to his appeals; successful continuance of the ministry would seem assured over these next two years.

There is no food-kitchen or other means of food distribution. Rather to some several dozen persons a regular monthly allowance is given for food purchases. Many others come for medical assistance bringing a required official prescription slip from hospital or doctor. With the money at hand it has also been possible to cover at least part of necessary expenses for surgery. Some money for personal needs and



medicine has been given to AIDS patients. During Tom's leave stateside for vacation the younger religious continued the ministry to the poor. Some funds have been given to other Brothers in the District who are aware of persons needing financial assistance. Not surprisingly we learn of the death of some of those formerly coming for help, or to whom we visit, such as Missy Darko, who died just recently owing to an advanced AIDS infection.

EDITORIAL: WITNESSING IN QUAKERS PRAYER-VIGIL FOR PEACE

During my recent vacation in the U.S. I had the pleasure of spending a weekend with my nephew and niece in Alexandria, VA. They are very active members in the Friends Society/Quakers. Each Saturday at noon, weather conditions notwithstanding, a representative number of Friends gather on or near the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC for a one-hour prayer vigil. They have been doing this since October 15, 2002 toward encouraging visitors at the nation's Capitol to become actively concerned in the cause of peace throughout the world.

For the continuous stream of tourists leaflets stating the *raison d'être* for this silent vigil are laid out on the concrete wall separating the higher level walkway from West Lawn. A large banner on which is displayed "SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT" (Ps 34:14) is held upright on poles resting at ground level, banner and members facing the Capitol. I accompanied my niece this one Saturday with 20 mph winds at times gusting to 30, I judged, wind chill factor perhaps 25 degrees. Taking over the task of

holding the pole at one end after about a half-hour when the previous bearer seemed to become weary, I soon realized how demanding this proved to be—wind strength sufficient to move a Ghanaian fishing canoe at 6 knots, I'm sure, were the banner secured thereon! Even more humbling was the fact that a middle-aged woman held the pole upright for the full hour of the vigil while I held it for just an half-hour.

Some passersby did stop to make inquiries and/or pick up a leaflet to carry with them. One interesting event was that of a young soldier, who wanted his picture taken by his friend, who stood behind the group of Friends, while the soldier with hands outstretched stood on the wall with the Capitol building in the background. What were his thoughts, I wonder—offering his "all for the country", symbolically reaching out to fellow brothers and sisters in the world...?

On the backside of the leaflet were a number of statements relating to the peace-war dichotomy by noteworthy persons. A few of these are here included to give the reader pause for reflection.

"We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than loving." – General Omar Bradley

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not touched." - Dwight D. Eisenhower.

"I do not want the peace which surpasses understanding; I want the understanding that brings peace."
- Helen Keller.

"Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal."
- Martin Luther King

"If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner." - Nelson Mandela

A BIG ASSIST FROM MHS STUDENTS

An appeal was made to the students at Reitz Memorial High School in Evansville, Indiana by **Bro. Tom Dillman** when on his recent vacation to the US for used paperbacks. Memorial is the alma mater of Bro. Tom, who makes this appeal to the students on each of his stateside vacations.

The students responded generously in donating several hundred books. Fortunately there is a major book-broker in the city, allowing an exchange of two books for one, and such was done where redundancy of a given book or were deemed not suitable for students in Ghana.

The books were solicited mainly for the library at St. John's School, our Holy Cross school in Sekondi. However, two cartons of books donated were those of interest seemingly to girls, and will be given to **Sr. Esther Entsiwah, CSC**, who will put them in the all-girls Catholic secondary school where she teaches. Also a large carton of books with a simple format will be given for use in the Holy Cross Vocational Training Center, where the students generally have a minimal academic background and less ability to read at the secondary school level.

It required five large mailbags to contain all the books in cartons, weight limit 66 lb/mailbag.

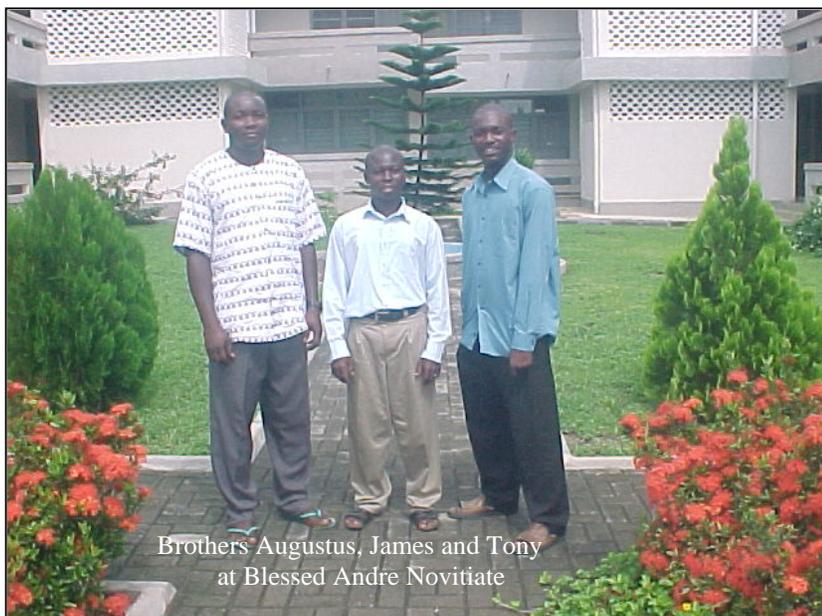
The total cost was some less than \$300, which expense was covered by a friend wishing anonymity. This quantity of books by MHS students of Classes '06 and '07 broke all previous records.

Our sincere thanks to these upper class members of Reitz Memorial High School which, has by the way, the prestigious claim of being a "Blue Ribbon" school, a distinct honor for high schools in the US. A special note of thanks to Bro. Eugene Phillipp, on the MHS staff who encouraged students to bring in books, also collecting them from respective classes. **AND** the 5 bags of books have now been received after only three months in transit —*Deo gratias!*

THREE GHANAIAANS ENTER BLESSED ANDRE NOVITIATE

On the Solemnity of St Joseph, Monday March 20th (transferred from Sunday) three

from large families: each having 6, 4 and 6 brothers, respectively and 4, 3 and 4 sisters, respectively, and both parents are still living. Augustus at 31 years of age and James at 29 are somewhat atypical years for our novices, while Tony's age is 22 years. Augustus is a professional teacher with some 9 years practical experience. All of the novices are from non-Holy Cross schools.



Brothers Augustus, James and Tony at Blessed Andre Novitiate

young men: **Anthony (Tony) Kwan-Korfuah Koomson, Augustus Mensah** and **James Boachie Yiadom** entered the Blessed Andre Novitiate.

It might be of interest to know that all are

While are interested in pursuing educational ministries in Holy Cross, Tony and James in addition aspire to help in some way through visiting the sick and/or otherwise more closely work with the marginalized in our Ghanaian society. Augustus feels that he would prove capable in educational administration.

May we give **Bro. Nee Wayoe, Director of Novices, Bro. Tony Dadzie, Asst. Director** and the novices the benefit of our prayers as they strive to bring out the best in our three talented novices during this year of the novitiate.

WATER CRISIS IN CAPE COAST--AGAIN! BUT...

In a few issues of the District newsletter over past years mention has been made of certain water-crises occurring during the "dry season". Residents in the Cape Coast area are in a somewhat precarious situation when rains are not

sufficient to maintain a viable supply level in the city's reservoir at Brimsu Dam, 20 km from Cape Coast.

The recurrent water problem has made life sometimes unbearable for residents, who become

dependent on water supplied from local private wells not always close by and at a high cost. A few years ago two people were killed in a mob struggling for water.

Schools sometimes have had to close and the academic year rescheduled. In view of this, within the past year or two, St. Augustine's has benefited along with many other schools in Ghana in having several new poly-tanks installed on its campus. These provide perhaps an additional 50,000 gallons of water to the already existing poly-tanks for some days after the city water supply is stopped. And fortunately this time, all students except 400 seniors who returned early to prepare for national exams, were still away on vacation. This provided, of course, a supplementary water supply for the 5 Brothers residing here at Augustus.

An effort has been made, however, to permanently resolve the problem. When the water level was minimal the reservoir at Brimsu

Dam was dredged to considerable depth, also to extend its area, and a new water treatment plant was constructed. This temporarily caused a very low water level, but which rains would most probably replenish to avoid a water shortage. Unfortunately the hoped for rains were sparse, and throughout much of April there was a need to ration water to the Cape Coast area. By early May it was necessary to stop pumping at the reservoir, and the city was without supply from the water mains for more than a week. Fortunately, several very heavy rains occurred shortly thereafter significantly raising the water level, and subsequent rains seem to have resolved the crisis.

In addition to enlarging the reservoir, a new large pipeline will soon connect the Pra River to the Brimsu Dam reservoir to help maintain a safe water level in the future. Thus it would seem that there would be no serious shortages of water at the reservoir in the future.

UPDATE: SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS

The two novices in the Sister's of Holy Cross of the Uganda-Ghana Area have returned to complete their novitiate training in Uganda. They seemed pleased to have had the ministerial experience in living with and assisting the Holy Cross Sisters' communities in Takoradi and Kasoa.

Sister Edith Tumuhimbise completed her participation in the ICF program in March, and has since returned for further ministry in Uganda with plans for Final Profession in July.

The building re-construction at Nyame N'Adom is now in progress after a lengthy hiatus of renegotiations over contractual obligations.

The After School program at Holy Cross Family Center in Kasoa continues to be well attended with some 20-30 children at each session. The weekly program schedules three

classes for each of three days. The eagerness of the children for this benefit can be noted in their oft-repeated query: "Can we come for learning today?"

The Sisters have had many visitors during the past few months. **Sr. Arlene Kniola** joined **Sr. Joy O'Grady**, President of the Congregation, and **Sr. Geraldine Hoyler**, Financial Counselor, for a first time visit to Ghana. **Sisters Mary Tiernan** and **Susuma** from the Congregation's International Vocation Office, came from the USA and Bangladesh, respectively, to visit the Sisters here. **Sisters Mary Alice Bowler, Madeleine Marie, Lillian Sullivan and Mary Louise Wahler** were in the country at different times for visits and meetings over recent months.

—**Sr. Helene Sharp**

Bits & Pieces

Bro. Francis Agyevi has been attending Takoradi Technical Institute majoring in electrical installations to better equip him to teach electrical skills at the Holy Cross Skills Training Center. Now in his second year at TTI the student body has elected him as the School Prefect. He also holds the position of prefect within his class. Congratulations to Francis who has been so honored, reflecting his positive influence on fellow students at TTI.

within his class. Congratulations to Francis who has been so honored, indicating his positive influence on fellow students at TTI.

Bro. Paul Mensah, District Superior, returns on June 30 after an extensive visit to the US, which included attending the graduation ceremonies for **Brother Patrick Osei Bonsu** at St. Edward's University. Owing to necessary attention to business matters at Notre Dame Paul was not able to attend the graduation of **Brother John Affum Badu** at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. (See front page: THREE GHANAIAN BROTHERS ATTAIN DEGREES). Along with other business matters he also attended the Midwest Province Chapter with **Bro. Michael Amakyi** as delegates from the District of West Africa.

Following the Province Chapter, **Bro. Michael Amakyi** will be checking into possible options of several universities concerning his entering graduate studies.

Our 9 Ghanaian Brothers completed their studies and final exams for this academic year in early June. Most will be taking time for several week vacations at home before returning for the planned religious workshops in early July.

Davis Bourland, grand nephew of Bro. Tom Dillman, is visiting here in Ghana through July and early August. This relatively extensive period will enable him to assist insofar as possible in the Street Children Project at the Holy Cross Skills Training Center in Takoradi. He also will be available for other necessary labor at the Skills Center's program for regular students.

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