

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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THE FAMILY OF HOLY CROSS GATHERING AT ADOM NYAME

On Easter Monday, March 24th, the members of the District of West Africa of Holy Cross journeyed from Sekondi, Butumayegbu and Cape Coast to celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord with the Sisters of the Holy Cross at Nyame Adom (“By God’s Grace”). Sisters and candidates of the Takoradi community also were present. The “super highway” has now been completed from Cape Coast to Accra, which thus includes the shorter distance to their new Center. Clearly this has considerably shortened travel time and made the journey a no longer wearisome experience for such as this occasion.

These Easter Monday gatherings each year are now something of a tradition for Holy Cross in Ghana. The day began with the Celebration of the Eucharist with **Fr. Bob Gilmour** as celebrant, which was enhanced significantly by the full-voiced singing of all present, accompanied by our young Ghanaian Brothers playing various African rhythm instruments—all of which seemed to promote and sustain a prevailing joy throughout the Celebration.

While the Center was dedicated as recently as December, 2007, expansion of the facilities has noticeably begun. To allow the cooking staff to complete preparations for dinner, visitors were given a tour of the grounds, **Sr. Helene Sharpe**, for whom “director of developmental projects” seems an apt title, led the entourage. The walk to the site where construction of the new school has begun at the far end of the compound, perhaps a quarter-mile distance, made one aware of the expanse of the property for which the Sisters have great plans to allocate its use.

The new school will initially comprise the pre-Kindergarten through primary grades. Already some 50 or young children are attending the beginning classes. Most of these are brought to the school by a bus chartered by parents of the children. The children are taught in a couple of available rooms in the Sisters’ large house at present. They are also given a meal sufficient to satisfy hunger and refurbish mindset to give due attention to the remaining class-work for the day.

The tour stimulated hunger by the walk and wait, all returning to more greatly appreciate the fine dinner back at the house. For this we gathered



Sr. Helene and Bro. Dan Dardoe



under the large palaver hut or one of several canopies set up to provide shade on the rooftop patio for food and beverage with further socializing enhanced by several games that the Sisters had at hand. Sr. Helene had brought out the architectural plans of the new classroom building for those who might have been interested in viewing same.

The grand occasion activities gradually wound down by mid-afternoon with lingering farewells as visitors made their departures. Our thanks again to our Holy Cross Sisters for all good things, especially this special day of celebration together of our CSC Family in Ghana.

EDITORIAL: OIL FIND, A PROBLEMATIC PATH TO PROSPERITY FOR GHANA

Over the past year all three off-shore oil test-bores well-inside territorial waters have given evidence of a massive oil deposit in Ghana. Truly, it gives cause for optimistic speculation of a huge boost for economic growth and future prosperity in Ghana. On all accounts this portends to be potentially the largest single field discovery in this region—providing an estimated annual revenue of 1 billion Ghana Cedis (~ \$1B), which is more than the amount now received from foreign assistance.

It's dreamtime now for Ghanaians, time to think about the possibilities for a highly improved standard of living, despite prevailing hardships owing to the present global prices of oil. But a critical look at how other neighboring countries have fared in developing respective resources in oil, lumber, iron-ore, diamonds, even gold here in Ghana, causes concern; corruption relating to these factors has vied with proper and prudent use of revenue from resources in benefiting the population at large. Truly, it may prove more problematical to set up a viable system relating to the flow of revenue, as much or more than, providing for the expected flow of oil. Oil production from one of the wells, in fact has begun. As Ghana considers how to use its much enriched revenue to given projects, it would be well to hear the words of Tanzania's former President Nyerere about prioritizing national expenditures for the common good; stressing that African nations can no longer afford to build monuments of national grandeur, while neglecting this priority (Arusha Declaration-February 5, 1967). There is ever present that temptation for a nation to posture its prosperity for stature's sake.

Surely, for Ghana the top priorities should be for educational and medical needs. New school facilities with emphasis on vocational training, and renovation of many now existing shabby ones, are needed to accommodate increasing numbers of children and to provide the means so that all have the opportunity to attain self-sufficiency. And there is a great need for at least a few more large national universities, which present number is completely unable to provide for all those seeking post secondary school education.. Again, while a recent national health program has been established to assist a significant number of Ghanaians, it is still woefully lacking—attested to by the fact of so many persons coming to our own District Ministry to the Poor program for help to buy needed medicines, including some two dozen wheelchairs over the past few years. And even a simple operation is beyond reach of most Ghanaians without some outside assistance to pay for it. An adequate "Medicare" program for *all* Ghanaians should be possible when the oil-money pours in. And conjoined with the above priorities should be highly increased salaries for teachers, nurses and doctors in government hospitals and clinics, and for government employees in general.

It seems beyond belief that when Holy Cross first came to Ghana in 1957 the community was rather self-sufficient with adequate salaries, not only for its own needs, but even able to contribute toward construction in expanding facilities at St. John's School. Even a vacation for the Brothers to the US was provided by the government. All this rather abruptly disappeared after the military coup in 1966, with subsequent nationalization of all private schools, setting up a "Kelly bar the door!" reaction for the economic deterioration. The Ghana currency of 1 Cedi in 1957 of somewhat equal parity with the US dollar inflated drastically to reach a 9400 Cedi to \$1 exchange rate in 2006! Today the District is highly dependent on an annual subsidy from the Midwest Province to cover its needs. It is now conceivable, that with adequate teachers' salaries, and commensurate economic growth, great strides can be made toward District self-sufficiency—hopefully "Providence" in the near future.

But just now Ghanaians, along with others in the global community, are feeling the severity of the greatly increased cost of living, and Ghanaian President John Kufuor has taken generous steps to alleviate their suffering. Import duties on major foodstuffs such as rice, wheat, yellow corn and vegetable oil were to be removed, and consumer prices should be reduced accordingly. The excise duty and debt recovery levy on all petroleum products also were to be removed. The government will increase its subsidy toward lowering the cost of electric power production, and also subsidize the cost of fertilizer and insure effective distribution to farmers to realize good harvests. In early June, the president stated that all secondary schools will now be tuition free. The president has stated that such measures are now possible in view of the present solid national economic base and the projected revenue; pumping of oil is programmed to start within the next two years—a realistic hope, not just a dream for all Ghanaians, indeed!

ICF TO MOVE FROM DISTRICT CENTER

The Institute for Continuing Formation had been using the large three-story building on the District Center compound since its inception in June, 1992 under the auspices of the Major Superiors Association in Ghana. The building was actually the second one to be completed on the compound after the first, original District House (now Dujarie House). The original building was constructed with a mind toward housing formation needs to the District along with other foreseen needs in the archdiocese such as lay and youth retreats/activities, the bishops synod, accommodations for our own CSC visitors for such as District Chapter, and so on. It was quickly visualized as an ideal location by the Major Superiors in Ghana for such a program as has been established in the facility. An annual rental fee and all operating expenses are covered by the MS.

For some 16 years the institute has provided a highly regarded continuing formation program, benefiting several hundred Sisters and Brothers, the former significantly higher in numbers.

These have been from diverse religious communities, mostly Ghanaians, but also from a half-dozen other neighboring African countries. After 9 years of an annual 9-months program, mostly temporarily professed, the schedule was changed to three sessions of 3 months each owing to the request of many who wished to have the benefit of participating in the formation program, but whose ministries could not allow their leave of 9-months for this. In the past two years the 9-months schedule has been resumed.

The major superiors had decided some years ago that it would be to their advantage to set up their own facility for this program and whatever other needs might surface. Construction has now been completed at the new building site just north of Elmina castle near the Archbishop Porter Polytechnic. **Bro. Bob Aron, FIC**, finished his commitment to the ICF ministry here in Ghana in June with the ending of this last formation program. In the special program for him by the ICF participants on the 14th of June a plaque expressing appreciation was presented to him for his contribution over these past years in behalf of all to whom he has ministered at ICF. At this time formal appreciation from our Holy Cross community was also given to him. Bob will be returning now to his native land, Australia, for his new ministry there.



Holy Cross ICF Building

CAPE COAST FOSU LAGOON HARD HIT BY DROUGHT

The drought affecting many parts of Africa has significantly affected parts of Ghana, as well, though perhaps to some lesser degree. One such effect is shown in the photo of Fosu Lagoon in Cape Coast. In normal times the bottom half of the photo, beginning with the tree-line in background, would show water completely covering the growth of vegetation that has sprung up on the dry bed, the latter now serving as a grazing area for sheep and cattle.

Presumably some readers of this newsletter outside our District of West Africa, who have at one time or other visited Cape Coast, would surely remember the sight of the beautiful lagoon. Probably, too, there would be the image recalled of individual fisherman casting their large



In normal times this whole area of the lagoon has a sloping water-depth from 3 – 6 ft.

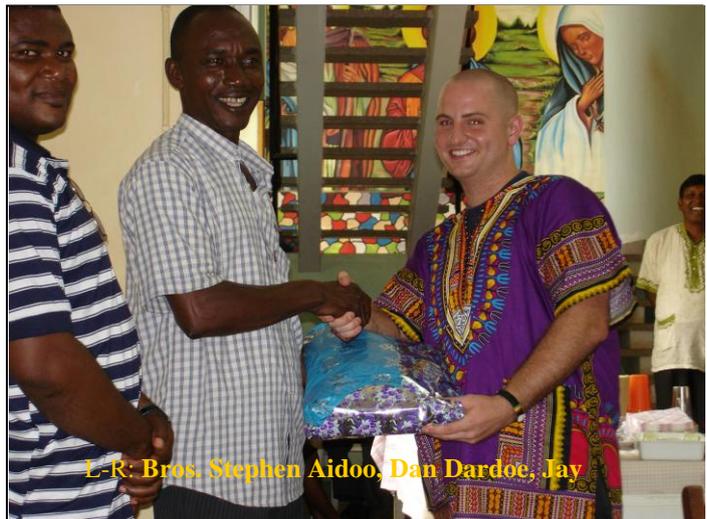
circular nets out over the water to pull in the seeming never-ending supply of smaller-size fresh-water fish. Indeed, it was a source of livelihood for several dozens of these fishermen, the number now sorely decreased owing to the reduced area as shown in the upper portion of the photo. Only about 1/3 remains of the former fishing area, which has served as a daily supply source of small fresh-water fish for many people living in the large area surrounding the lagoon.

About a month ago, health authorities in Cape Coast became concerned about the probability of increased pollution of the lagoon, which serves as a basin for waste products from various sources. **The resulting tests found that the Fosu Lagoon was the third greatest polluted body of water in Ghana.** Consequently people have been strongly warned to not eat the fish caught in the lagoon.

Heavy rains of May have continued into June, and the Lagoon no longer has the appearance of a derelict pond of water. The higher, more normal water level will hopefully reduce the pollution to a less dangerous factor detrimental health. Nonetheless, there is a not a suitable substitute food source for that taken from the lagoon, and so many fishermen still pull in their daily catches, of which there always are those willing to take the risk of eating possibly contaminated fish—the plight of many whose food options are limited, indeed.

DISTRICT HONORS JAY DONNE

On Saturday 7th June, a farewell party was held at Moreau House for **Jay Donne**, a graduate of Holy Cross College, who has been in residence here in the District for the past year on assignment of HCC. He has been trying to formulate a program that would enable students of HCC to become meaningfully involved in quasi-lay ministries here in Ghana. He has been living at Moreau House in Butumayegbu, while participating in the Holy Cross Skills Program, including some assistance to the young men living at the recently established Home of Hope. The District fully appreciates his contribution to our work here during his stay, and pray that he will realize the fruits of his labors in trying to set up a viable program of involvement by Holy Cross College students in our District's extended ministries.



L-R: Bros. Stephen Aidoo, Dan Dardoe, Jay

HOLY CROSS SISTERS' WORKSHOP

The six CSC men's novices and the CSC sisters from both Takoradi and Kasoa were privileged to have a weekend workshop on Compassionate Listening and Islam presented by **Sister Marianne Farina, CSC**. Sister Marianne, a Professor at GTU in Berkeley, California, gave two days of training in Compassionate Listening and a two day seminar on Islam and Inter-religious Dialogue. The workshops used the facilities of the Bl. Andre Novitiate. All attending appreciated the insights thus gained from the workshop.



—Text/photo: Sr. Helene Sharpe

GRADUATE: BRO. JOHN AFFUM



On May 15, 2008 **Brother John Badu Affum** received his Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies at Catholic, Theological Union in Chicago. This ceremony conjointly celebrated its fortieth annual Commencement. Members of the District of West Africa: **Bro. Paul Mensah**, District Superior also an alumnus of CTU, was present for the occasion along with **Brothers Kenneth Goode** and **Ebenezer Prah**. John's studies will enhance his future role in formation programs in the District. The members of the District of West Africa congratulate John and rejoice with him on his noteworthy achievement.

Kenneth and **Ebenezer**, coincidentally, spent some 6 weeks stateside during May and June at ND attending a Financial Management Workshop. The workshop, co-organized by the General Administration and the College of Business at the University of Notre Dame. The two brothers expressed their great satisfaction in having the opportunity to participate in the workshop, deeming it a significant learning experience as stewards in our District.

Two of our District members were present on June 21st at Notre Dame with others in the Province, who were celebrating, respectively, their Jubilees of religious profession in Holy Cross. We congratulate and rejoice with **Bro. William Gates**, longest standing member of our District of West Africa, as he celebrates his 60th year of religious profession, and our District Superior, **Bro. Paul Mensah**, on the occasion of his Silver Jubilee. The District wishes to express its deep gratitude to both of these men for their laudable contributions over the many years of ministry in Holy Cross in Ghana. **AYEKOO!**