

# 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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## News Briefs

● **Brother Michael Amakyi** returned in early August after finalizing plans to attend higher studies leading to a doctorate at the University of Dayton. After just a week's respite he went to Cameroon where he had been invited to conduct the District Retreat preceding the District Chapter and to be the moderator for the latter, as well.

Brother Michael now ends his term as director of the local CSC community at St. Augustine's for the past 7 years. The Brothers at St. Augustine's especially express their thanks to him for his capable leadership as director. Thank you, Michael, and God's blessings for success and joy in your academic work at the University of Dayton.

● **Brother Patrick Osei-Bonsu** has now returned from the States to take up residence with the Holy Cross community at St. Augustine's College, and will teach Religious Studies there. All students take a course in Religious and Moral Studies, while a certain number elect to take a major area covering all three years of Christian Religious Studies. The latter take CRS as one of their subject areas on the National Exam, which is a requirement for graduation in all secondary schools throughout Ghana.

● As the new academic year begins at the University of Cape Coast, six of our temporarily professed religious in the District of West Africa will begin their final year of studies leading to their graduation. Hopefully by next year at this time, **Brothers Nicholas Arthur, Paul Bukari, Kenneth Goode, Vincent Ntsiful, Robert Koomson and Ebenezer Prah** will be preparing to take up teaching roles in the classroom. All have been attaining commendable grades as they strive to complete the regular Bachelor's Degree requirement.

● **Brothers Stephen Aidoo, Francis Agyevi and Godfrey Ashun** will be continuing studies at their respective polytech institutes. **Brother David Kpobi** has taken leave of teaching art courses at the school for the Deaf in Cape Coast, and has begun studies toward obtaining a certificate in Computer Studies in Accra.

● **Brothers Davidi Kpobi and Stephen Arthur** combined their respective talents once again (earlier project was the Marian Shrine, see December '05 HCTG) in planting various flowers to make a beautiful garden having a floral arrangement of a modified Congregational Seal at the District House. All who pass by and view it for the first time remark on its beauty.

● After completing his studies in October at Worker's College, **Bro Raymond Frimpong** will enter the School of Nursing in Cape Coast.

● Beginning August 25<sup>th</sup> St. Augustine's facilities were utilized for a national "Devotion to the Sacred Heart Congress". A rough estimate of some 10,000 persons attended the 4-day congress. Canopies covered the very large athletic field where Mass was celebrated each day, as well as religious programs during the day. Cardinal Peter Turkson was in attendance each day, though preferring to have the honor as main celebrant on only one day. Even the dining hall tables were used as beds, while others owing to the fine weather preferred to sleep outdoors *sans* sleeping bags. On the school's main campus were dozens of tables or cloth-covered ground areas displaying rosaries, and other religious artifacts. Many had brought food provisions with them to prepare over the four days, while others relied on private food

vendors. Even so, it was astounding that so many could be fed by these limited means. It was the largest crowd in recent history (perhaps ever) assembling at any time on St. Augustine's campus.

## VOCATION RECRUITMENT: COME AND SEE PROGRAM

On the first weekend of September the District of West Africa sponsored a religious vocation "Come and See" program at the Holy Cross Center in Brafu Yaw. Invitations were sent out to those who had made enquiries about the Brothers to the Vocation Director, and to others who were known by District members, as having some interest in knowing more about the Brothers of Holy Cross. Information from a few other sources were included.

Some Twenty-four young men arrived Friday evening, September 1<sup>st</sup> to participate in this four-day event, making use of the ICF facility for accommodations. Activities were rather brief for this first evening: Evening Prayer, supper and general orientation with reference to the theme of the programme, "**COME FOLLOW ME**", before retiring.

Saturday began with Morning Prayer at 6:30 and Mass at 7:00 followed by Breakfast. The day was filled with a mixed bag of activities: two talks in the morning and one in the afternoon, these given by **Brothers Michael Amakyi, Nee Wayoe, and Brothers Ken Goode and Nicholas Arthur**, respectively.



The morning and afternoon talks were separated by noon lunch and games. Evening Prayer, Supper and a Movie rounded off the day. Most all Holy Cross members living at the Center were in attendance.

The Sunday schedule included Mass, recollection and Holy Hour in the morning with a scheduled trip/tour of Holy Cross places in the Sekondi-Takoradi area in the afternoon—meals appropriately scheduled, of course. In the Evening there was a period of Evaluation of the event by participants followed by social activities.

On Monday, following Mass and breakfast all departed, hopefully each of the participants enlightened and encouraged to respond generously

to the Lord as they perceive more clearly his call.

## UPDATE ON JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

After a lengthy patience-demanding hiatus of many months in Bangladesh awaiting his residence visa for Ghana, **Bro. Nicholas Thielman** (Southwest Province) finally has returned to continue in the project for street children here in Ghana. Unfortunately the resident visa is still in process waiting final approval from the Immigration Ministry, while Nicholas has been allowed re-entry on a visitor's visa. Regardless, the **HOLY CROSS HOME OF HOPE** will open its doors sometime in October. Bro. Nicholas has stated that he prefers the term "**Homeless Children**" to "Street Children" in future references. The age level is 10 – 15. The boys will be taught a skill in the fields of either Carpentry, Auto Mechanics, House Building and Tailoring.

It is necessary that any applicant for a residence visa must be outside Ghana. Thus Nicholas took leave of Ghana toward this purpose, with at least the construction completed for the large, beautiful dormitory to house the children. Much additional work was done during his absence by the trainees in the Skills Vocational Training School on the same compound in making tables, chairs, bunk-beds and other necessary furnishings. Some 35 or so complete furnishings for that number of children have now been completed evidently with a high degree of craftsmanship by the Skill's trainees.

Present funding will enable the above number of children to be accommodated, perhaps later with additional funding this number will reach 50, the maximum number that the dorm can house.

**Bro. Patrick Baah** has been appointed co-director of the program, and shortly these two will contact parishes throughout the Ghana to solicit candidates for the program from church members, albeit, the program will be inclusive of children of any denomination or none. Those suggested will be interviewed, etc., to determine most worthy participants in the program.

The number of those given assistance through the **Ministry to the Poor** here in the Cape Coast area has



shown a regular, though small increase, over the past year, mostly in those coming for medical assistance. Some 50 or so persons (non-denominational) are given a regular monthly allowance for food, of which a dozen of these are handicapped including several who are blind. **Mr. Alex Tetteh**, Director of the Ghana Handicapped Organization in Accra, has been able to supply wheelchairs for 3 paraplegics the past few months a greatly reduced cost of 700,000 cedis (~\$78!) each. These have a chain-driven system joining wheel-sprocket to steering column so as to combine hand-pedaling with steering. The organization will be able to supply one wheelchair each month, so if all goes well, by Christmas all paraplegics on the MP list

should be on wheels!

On his visit to Ghana with a primary aim to contribute service to helping the poor or marginalized in Ghana, **Davis Bournal**, grand nephew of **Bro. Tom Dillman**, was able to assist his uncle in some of the District's Ministry to the Poor activity for a week or so before going to Skills Training Center to assist in the program there. The latter unfolded mainly in assisting **Bro. Joachim Ratan Gomes** (Bangladesh Province) to plant trees and related work to enhance the landscape of the Skills Center. He and his uncle were able to make necessary repairs, including replacing the zinc roof and painting of the hut of "**Small**", a blind, who receives weekly assistance with food from the MP. They also did considerable repairs on "**Emma's**" shelter (see June '06 issue). During his last two weeks of his 6-week visit to Ghana Davis joined the HCC group) in their tour about Ghana to learn more of its people, culture and economy.



## TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE FOR ICF DIRECTOR

Upon his return to the District Center **Brother Robert (Bob) Aron, CFC**, Director of the ICF continuing formation program, had a shocking tale to relate of his recent vacation in Kenya. While visiting with fellow Christian Brothers at their community in Nairobi, four gunmen entered their dining quarters just as they were seated at the table awaiting food to be served. The very traumatic experience for Bob included having a gun held at his head, while trying to comply with the robber's demand for the ring, given to him by his father towards life's end, which stubbornly resisted removal from his finger. Fortunately it slipped off before the robber carried out his threat to cut off the finger. All money and other valuables except hardware, but including clothing, were taken by the gunmen.

Bob said that Nairobi is becoming notorious for the rampant crime there. It is disdainfully referred to, especially by victims of the criminals, as "Nairobbery!" It would seem that our Holy Cross community in Dandora of Nairobi's environs has been relatively trouble-free in this regard, or at least nothing of this serious crime rate has been related through the CSC website to us here in Ghana. Alas poor Nairobi once the showcase of East Africa, if not the continent!

## EDITORIAL: ACCEPTING THE DISCIPLINE OF RENEWAL

In their June letter the four Congregational leaders of our Holy Cross family declared a year of prayerful rejoicing and spiritual renewal in preparation for Fr. Moreau's beatification. And in conjunction with this, Superior General Fr. Hugh Cleary has stated that "the spiritual renewal should deepen our commitment to the consecrated life (and) appreciation of the magnificent heritage that is ours."

Not referred to in either of these letters is the Day of Prayer and Fasting on 13<sup>th</sup> September each year, manifesting our "preferential option for the poor, funds thereof going to one of our needy mission areas. Could not the Day of Prayer and Fasting serve as a preface for this year of Spiritual renewal—motivating us to include the effort to substantiate more realistically our preferential option for the poor? And on 14<sup>th</sup> September we celebrate the Triumph of the Cross, reinforcing our hope of our own victory with Christ, further inspiring our efforts toward spiritual renewal.

In his recent letter our Superior General has stated that spiritual renewal includes "an attachment to Christ by participation in the mysteries of his life and a *basic self-discipline* (italics mine) used to hasten our conformity to Christ so that he might be present to the world through us". This basic self-discipline is requisite to a viable spirituality. Clearly, this discipline is an essential element of taking up our cross daily as true disciples of Christ (See Lk 9:23).

Have we considered that renewal does require us to exercise greater discipline in certain areas of our lives that inhibit our response in love to God with *whole* mind, heart and soul—our whole being? If we lack discipline in the *use* of God-given goods, the result is *abuse*. It is a matter of discipline regarding the use of the goods given us in God's creation that makes the act good or bad. Without discipline the use of TV, cell phones, car, "walkman/diskman", not to forget food and personal expenditures in our monthly allowance, can too easily become abuses, of whatever degree. Where the use of these goods encroaches on the time we clearly have as obligation or responsibility "according to the Constitutions of our Congregation of Holy Cross" (as we expressed in our religious profession) regarding Common and/or Private Prayer, Spiritual reading and Community sharing, there is where we might choose a beginning point for our spiritual renewal. We may need to curtail involvement in social involvements (ministries, as well as personal relations) to provide the quiet time necessary to deepening our union with God.

If we have no problem in the above category (?!), maybe a good beginning would be in the area of personal relationships—making a deliberate effort from time to time, especially at the outset, to say a kind, encouraging word to a confrere whom we find less pleasant to relate to. Do we take time for exercise necessary to our physical well-being?

Basic self-discipline is synonymous with carrying our cross, a requisite for discipleship in Christ, and is essential to spiritual renewal. May this year of spiritual renewal lead to an increasing awareness of God's unconditional, everlasting love for us, and the consequent desire to live our lives more generously and joyously in his service.

Relevant to the above is the proximity of October, the month in which the Church traditionally promotes special devotion to Mary through praying the rosary. This surely has its value to help us sustain our focus on spiritual renewal. We should feel obliged to pray for the poor and oppressed, and for those in position to do so, may be motivated to help them in their struggle for human rights and freedom from present social injustices, violence and inhumane living conditions. Another primary intention we surely should have to pray the rosary is for vocations to Holy Cross especially during this Year of Vocation Promotion, which conjoins our Year of Spiritual Renewal.

As we prepare for the beatification of our holy founder, let us accept as our motto that which clearly he held as his own, "Hail O Cross, our only hope". Hope in the victory Christ has gained for us through the cross is the *crux* of our spiritual renewal and discipleship in Christ. Without this our religious lives and ministries remain in a static, if not sterile mode, not dynamic and "kingdom building".

*We joyfully embrace the reality of the cross in our lives as Christ's disciples as we celebrate the Feast of the "Triumph of the Cross". The cross gives us hope in the assurance of our own future glory in Christ, because we walk the way to Jerusalem with him. O Crux Ave, Spes Unica!*

## UPDATE: HOLY CROSS SISTERS IN GHANA

- **Sister Jane Chantal** will not be returning to Ghana. She wishes to express her deepest gratitude and thanks to each one who has touched her life during her years here. We wish her well in her new assignment in Los Angeles.
- **Sister Ester Entsiwah** has attended meetings at St. Mary's and **Sister Margaret Mary** participated in the Tertian Program in Canada. Both have now returned to Ghana at Takoradi and Kasoa, respectively.
- We welcome **Sister Giovanna Chavez, CSC** from Peru. She will be living and ministering with us over the next months.
- Work continues on the house at Nyame N'Adom. All are pleased with the progress being made.
- **Sisters Scholastica Ampadu** and **Theresa Fameyeh** will profess their first vows on September 23 in Entebbe, Uganda. They will then be assigned to serve in one of the Sisters' ministries in Ghana. **Sisters Catherine Before** and **Mattina Dery** will be beginning their second novitiate year in Jinja.
- **Sr. Evelyn Ntsiamaah** has now moved to Kasoa to work in the Sisters' ministries there. She has made a significant contribution as Secretary and other related services at the Holy Cross Skills Vocational Center over the past year. Her cheerful disposition and capable manner in all this work in collaboration with the Brothers has been greatly appreciated. It reinforces the desirability of collaboration between the Brothers and Sisters ministries in the future.

## ANNUAL TREK TO GHANA BY HCC STUDENTS

Once again Holy Cross College students came to visit Ghana as part of their Baccalaureate Program at Holy Cross College. A study of African culture is one of the more important aspects of the program.

While in Ghana, the students had great pleasure in experiencing a broad spectrum of sights and sounds, people and places.

The group of 24 members was the largest thus far over the past years to have visited Ghana. The group this time were treated, as well, to a ride some distance out on the ocean in a ship courtesy of the Ghana Navy and a visit to one of Ghana's gold mines in Obuasi. And as in the past, a highlight of the experience was the visit to Khakum State Park, one of Ghana's vast forest areas. There are a series of man-made suspension bridges stretching across a broad valley above the tree tops, challenging enough to traverse, even for the brave.

This year it was possible to arrange air travel for direct connection between New York and Accra, Ghana over Northwestern Airlines, providentially by passing the terrorist bomb threat in London. All arrived safely on 8<sup>th</sup> August back in the US after a most meaningful and enriching stay in Ghana.



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