

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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*Christ the Lord is born today, the Savior has appeared.
Earth echoes songs of angelic choirs, archangels' joyful praise.
Today on earth his friends exult: Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia!*
—Christmas antiphon, Lauds

***Merry Christmas and a New Year
Filled with peace, hope, and joy in Christ!***

The members of the Holy Cross District of West Africa extend best wishes and prayers for God's blessing of this Holy Season to all in our Holy Cross Family, our Associates and beloved Benefactors.

CLOSING OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF HOLY CROSS IN GHANA

On Saturday 24th November the closing week of celebration for the Golden Jubilee Year in Ghana began with the Pilgrimage Mass at St John's School, Sekondi, since it was the initial ceremony concluded later in the afternoon by the parade through Takoradi back to St. John's symbolizing the journey made from Takoradi Harbor to St. John's 50 years ago for Holy Cross to establish its first community in Ghana. All four of the original pioneers undertaking operation of St. John's are still living:



Brothers Rex Hennel, Eduardo Michalik and Donald Allen. Bro. Donald was the only one of the original community able to be present for this occasion, although Bro. William who arrived some months later was also present, being now a member of the District of West Africa.. Also present were Vicar and Assistant General **Brother John Paige**, Midwest Province Vicar and Assistant Provincial **Bro. Raymond Papenfuss**, and **Bro.**

Joseph Tsiquaye, 3rd Assistant General. From our District of East Africa the following were present: **Rev. James Burasa**, District Superior, **Bro. Joseph Kaganda**, **Fr. William Lukati**, **Fr. David Kashangaki** and **Fr. George Lucas**.

A full week of activities followed, including: Cleanup Campaign at Damien Center in Takoradi, a Football Gala, Blood Donation from both St. John's and Skills students/teachers, **Bro. Joseph Tsiquaye's** talk on spirituality and vocations at Our Lady Star of the Sea Cathedral, Durbar and Dance at the Holy Cross Skills Training Center, Academic Quiz Program at St. John's, and honoring of CSC and oversea visitors at a special cocktail/reception in the evening

On Saturday a special Jubilee Day surrounded the Speech and Awards Day at St. John's relating to both Holy Cross pioneers of St. John's and present students. The chairperson for the occasion was the **Honourable Abraham Dwuma Odoom** - Deputy Minister of Health, who is an Old Boy of St. John's, while **Bro. Joseph Tsiquaye**, as emcee, did a very commendable job of keeping all unfolding in an orderly and interesting manner. The Guest Speaker for this occasion was **Very Rev. Hugh Cleary, CSC**,



Homily: Very Rev. Hugh Cleary, CSC

Superior General, whose remarks appropriately lauded the work of Holy Cross in Ghana during these past 50 years and gratitude to God who has so blessed the presence of Holy Cross to make such success possible. Special honor was given to past District Superiors. Generous space was allowed within the program for the Welcoming Address by **Fr. Eric Awortwe Dadson**, Vicar General of Takoradi, Goodwill Messages, Presentation of Awards, Vote of Thanks interspersed with songs by a most capable St. John's School choir.

On Sunday, 2nd December, a Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated in Our Lady, Star of the Sea Cathedral. This celebration climaxed the

Golden Jubilee Year of 50 years of Ministerial presence of Holy Cross in Ghana also included three other

very noteworthy events: the 40th Anniversary of Religious Profession of **Bro. Joseph Tsiquaye, CSC**; the Silver Jubilee of the Holy Cross Skills Training Center and the Final Profession of Vows of 6 Holy Cross Brothers.

Indeed it was a day of deep gratitude to God for the richness of blessings he has bestowed on Holy Cross in Ghana. A most significant event for thanksgiving on this day was that relating to the Final



Front Row: **Brothers Nicholas, Kenneth, John, Paul, Ebenezer and Patrick**

Profession of Vows of **Brothers John Badu Affum, Patrick Osei-Bonsu, Ebenezer Andre Prah, Paul Anabil Bukari, Kenneth Goode and Nicholas Arthur**. The returning of thanks to God for the magnitude of his gifts to Holy Cross in Ghana for his outpouring of blessings over these past 50 years could not have been better expressed than by this event in which these 6 young Ghanaian men gave the total commitment of their lives to God as Brothers of Holy Cross.

This Final Event in the week of ceremonies was a most joyous and fitting manifestation of thanks to God by the Holy Cross community in Ghana to conclude its Golden Jubilee Year of presence in Ghana!

THE DISTRICT 2007 YOUTH PROGRAMME

From 30th August to 3rd September a District Youth Programme was held at St. John's School, Sekondi, which was organized by **Bro. William Gates** and others in the Holy Cross Family in St. John's. This was the second such programme organized for the Catholic youth in the Sekondi Deanery, the first being some seven years ago, also at St. John's.

The theme of the programme was "CHRIST YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER", the same as that designating the theme of the first one. It gave the opportunity for us to recall our encounters with Christ in our own lives, which has drawn us closer to God, the source and summit of all created things.

A welcome address was given by the Deanery Youth Chaplain, **Rev. Father Raphael Eshun**, in which he expressed his gratitude to Bro. William for organizing the programme, and strongly encouraged the 27 male and female participants to actively participate in the activities of these three days.

The activities had the primary aim of enriching the spiritual, moral, social and academic lives of those participating. These included: Morning Praise, Eucharistic Celebrations, Talks, Reflections and discussions, Stations of the Cross, Adoration, Recreation and Video shows of the lives of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Patrick. Those who had participated in the first programme of 7 years ago had the opportunity to give witness talks to the others.

A supplementary theme to that stated at the outset was "THE CHALLENGES OF YOUTH IN PRESENT DAY GHANA". These were treated, respectively, in presentations by the catholic speakers, **Mr. P. Forson** of the Ghana Rubber Estate Ltd and **Mrs. Teresa Ayipah** of Twin City-FM. The talks were very fruitful and practical, touching on believing in Christ and living as brothers and sisters, so as to be able to face the challenges facing us in the world today.

Indeed the whole programme, including the food, was considered a most enjoyable and beneficial experience by all, and the participants expressed their hope that the programme be scheduled each year.

— Benedicta Oduro, participant

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BIG SIX

On Saturday 20th October six of our young Ghanaian Brothers received their degrees in graduation ceremonies at the University of Cape Coast. **Brothers Paul Bukari, Robert Koomson, Kenneth Goode, Vincent Ntsiful, Ebenezer Prah and Nicholas Arthur** had successfully completed their respective areas of academic requirements in June, but the long hiatus to this formal graduation date seems to have been necessary to allow for everything to be properly organized for the occasion lasting some four hours. All graduates did wear caps and gowns for the formal occasion, but there was no opportunity to get a group picture of our six Brothers in respective gowns, as each was taken into tow by well-wishing parents, relatives and friends. Later in the evening a celebration was held for the grads at the District Center with mostly Holy Cross members and relatives of the grads present to share in the joy of the graduates their academic achievement. Though caps and gowns had been worn for the graduation ceremonies, below is the photo of the grads in their "graduation suits". Indeed, all there present were of one mind in the expressed message posted in the background of the photo: **"CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BIG SIX!"**

To return the favor of a tuition-free university education, excluding board and incidental expenses, each

of the Brothers along with all other of the some 4,500 graduates with Bachelor Degrees will begin one-year National Service programs in various government institutions throughout the country. While all the brothers have education-related degrees, Brothers Ebenezer and Nicholas will be working in offices relating to accounting, Brother Kenneth has already begun teaching at the new Catholic University, and Brothers Paul and Robert will teach at St. John's; Bro. Vincent will be teaching at St. Augustine's.

It may be of interest to know that there are now five or more major universities in Ghana, and also many smaller, private universities (colleges), including the new Catholic University. The total number, including those attaining Masters and Doctors degrees from University of Cape Coast, alone, this year is some 9,000 or more graduates.



UPDATE FROM BL. ANDRE NOVITIATE

Once again I am very pleased to bring you news from Blessed Andre Novitiate. In recent months we have had the opportunity to become involved in two special activities that have enriched our novitiate experience: a gardening project and a workshop shared with postulants from the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

We in the novitiate felt some responsibility to help insofar as possible to reduce food costs for the house by undertaking a garden project. Under the direction of Mr. Eshun, who has the necessary skills acquired for this, we worked with serious determination to prepare the soil, which surely is not ideal for growing most of the common vegetables, such as lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, cabbage, etc. But at the end of the work periods, we felt the satisfying tiredness that comes with seriously undertaking the manual labour required to dig the soil deeply, remove stones and small rocks as well as weeds. Soil was enriched by adding plenty of fertilizer, this conveniently available from Bro. Stephen Arthur's chicken farm adjacent to the garden area. The rainy season that is generally considered as covering the mid-August to November period was often at fault in not responsibly complying with this schedule. Thus many buckets of water were carried to make up for the lack of rain until October here in the Cape Coast area. There was also the continuing war with bugs of great variety, but pesticides helped keep these under control. Some harvesting of crops has already been done, but growing of most continues. We thank God for his providential rains and sunshine, humbly accepting, insofar as possible, the bugs in the garden and mosquitoes elsewhere, as a necessary part of our spiritual growth in this novitiate year!

From 31st October to 3rd November the novitiate hosted the young lady postulants from the nearby community of the Society of the Child Jesus for the workshop on "journaling". The sharing in this several-day programme seemed to be a joyful experience for all. We better realize now how beneficial it is to receive input from both sexes in discussions of religious matters that are common to both, and the opportunity to socialize, as well. We hope there will be further opportunities to share in such workshops.

—Info submitted by Novice Aristide Biney

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE VS GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS

The General Education Service (GES) has expressed its disagreement to the views of the Catholic Bishops in Ghana, who had sent a strongly-worded letter detailing their opposition to aspects of the new educational reform now being implemented. Especially, was GES equally critical of, and opposed to the demands by the Bishops that appointments are of only Catholics to serve as Heads of Catholic Schools. Furthermore, the Bishops had written: “We insist and now require that the head of a Catholic institution and his or her assistant should pass the test of approval by us.”

There was concern expressed, as well, specifically relating to areas of morality for all teachers: “We require that where a teacher, Catholic or non-Catholic, teaching in a Catholic school shows a behavioral pattern that is contrary to the Catholic religion and moral principles, he or she should be sanctioned appropriately.” The Bishops also stipulated that religious instruction be a compulsory subject taught at all levels from the basic to senior levels, that “sidelining religion and morality from education is tantamount to condemning the human person to a lack of a means of developing himself or herself fully to be a human being in the society.”

A GES spokesman indicated that religious education was included in subject areas being reduced in content, “to enable the pupils to study more effectively”. He explained that religious and moral education had been duly attended to in other remaining subjects. He stated his conviction rather strongly that both religious and moral education were the responsibility of parents and respective religious bodies to ensure the moral upbringing of children at all times. Surely the spokesman is aware of the fact that there is no small number of parents, who are irresponsible in the upbringing of their children, perhaps whose lives reflect a questionable morality. One might think that his education would include knowledge of the old Latin adage, *nemo dat quod non habet*—(liberally paraphrased) one cannot give as one's heritage what one does not possess!

FORMAL BLESSING OF NYAME N’ADOM CONVENT IN KASOA

On the morning of 22nd December the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Ghana will have a special day of celebration surrounding the Blessing of the Convent at Nyame N’Adom (Kasoa). The program of activities will include a Peace March from the main intersection in Kasoa to the junction, from which busses will transport participants to the convent.

A Peace Pole will be erected following arrival at the convent. The pole, which is of some 7-feet in height, has a square shape of 6-inch sides. It has been embellished on its four flat sides with varied peace symbols/texts. The Peace Pole ceremony will include special prayers for peace.

The Blessing of the Convent will then follow with the celebrant for the occasion being **Most Rev. Matthias Nketsiah**, auxiliary Bishop of Cape Coast.

Refreshments and social gathering will conclude the program.

GHANA CHANGES SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAM

With the beginning of this new school year the Ministry of Education has inaugurated a significant change in its program for the senior secondary schools in Ghana. The former SSS structure, which covered three years, has now been expanded to four. The students already in the second year of the former SSS program will complete their studies in 3 years. For all new students, the designated levels will thus now be SSS-1, -2, -3,-4. While the content of the Syllabus bearing upon the National Exam, which all final-year students must take will remain much the same as before, the format has been changed to enable the students to have more time to assimilate the subject matter in given subject areas. Especially students who are majoring in math and science areas will benefit, since they now will take only core math and general science in SSS-1, and begin with elective math and specific science courses in SSS-2. Before they had to take both core and elective math and begin elective science courses in the first year. There

still remains some unfortunate overlapping of subject matter in core math and elective math, both of which are required through the successive years by elective math and science students. Hopefully further study will be made to avoid this redundancy in the core and elective math courses, purging the latter of this needless repetition, to allow more time for the more sophisticated math content.

Clearly, in 2010 when accommodations will have to provide for four, not three, levels of students, most all schools surely will have to expand its dormitory facilities, that is, some 400 new beds for the need here at St. Augustine's College. Just how funds might be forthcoming from the government to provide for these dormitories throughout the country is not yet spelled out. Hopefully this will be indicated soon enough to make adjustments in successive years enrollment figures should it be necessary to maintain present accommodations.

One significant benefit of the change to 4 years will be evident in 2010, when no secondary school students will complete their now 4 years instead of 3 as before. This will enable the major universities in Ghana to catch up considerably on the perennial backlog of a great number of earlier graduates of SSS on the respective waiting lists of applicants to these universities. Now the latter often are turning to polytechnic institutes to become qualified in a given professional area, giving them a greater possibility of gaining future employment therein.

NEWS BRIEFS

- In the July-September issue the writer of the article, HOLY CROSS YOUTH RALLY, was erroneously attributed to **Bro. William Gates, CSC** whereas it should have been **Sr. Scholastica Ampadu, CSC**, to whom we duly offer our apology.
- On 6th October 2007 the Holy Cross Family in Ghana celebrated with the Church in Ghana at St. Paul's Pro-Cathedral, Sekondi the beatification of our Founder Fr. Basil Moreau. The Main Celebrant was **Most Rev. George Kocherry**, Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana with Co-Celebrants: **Most Rev. John Martin Darko, D.D.**, Bishop – Sekondi-Takoradi Diocese, and **Most Rev. Matthias Nketsiah, D.D.**, Auxiliary Bishop-Archdiocese of Cape Coast, were conjoined by some dozen priests, among whom was **Fr. Bob Gilmour, CSC**, who gave a most inspiring homily, exceeding, some would say, that of his inspirational homily on the day of the beatification at Bl Andre Chapel on Sept. 15th.

The Cathedral was filled to overflowing with all organizations of the Cathedral represented, the processional/recessional more than twice the length of the large Cathedral aisle. As a post-Communion reflection, **Holy Cross Sisters Margaret Nimo and Esther Entsiwah, along with Bro. Paul Mensah, CSC**, led the congregation in the Hymn to Basil Moreau, the 8 verses being included in the program. After a few verses had been sung, most of us who had not heard the hymn before gradually learned the melody—a very beautiful hymn to our Founder, indeed!

Following the celebration in the Cathedral, about half of those present—more than 600 persons, accepted the invitation to gather in the "backyard" of St. Joe Hall at St. John's for the social. A grand and glorious day in the sequel to the celebration on Sept. 15th!

- As the editor will be away on his vacation to the US during the next 3 months there will be no regular January–March issue of Holy Cross Today-Ghana. However, **Fr. Bob Gilmour, CSC** will provide info with pictures of individual significant unfolding events in the District over these months.

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