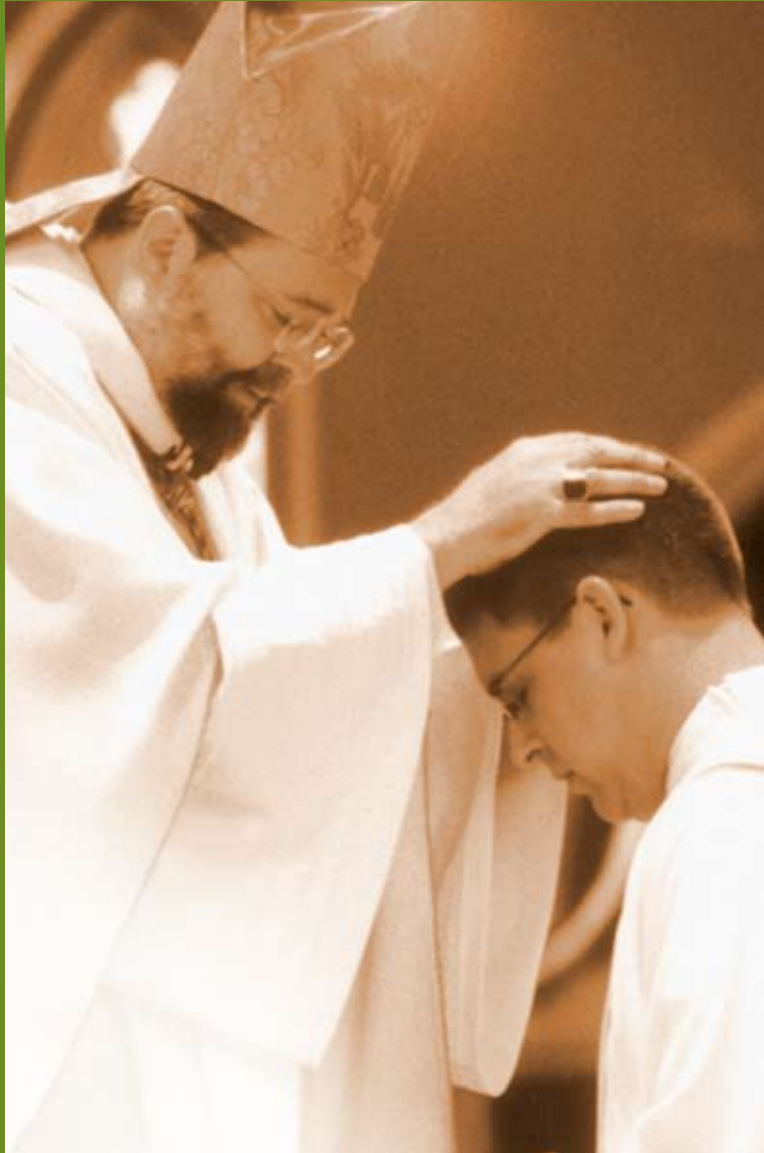


CHOICES

FROM THE CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS OFFICE OF VOCATIONS

VOLUME 28, ISSUE 3



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ORDINATIONS 2008

OUR FUTURE FILLED WITH HOPE



The Holy Cross Vocations Team: Fr. Kevin Russeau, C.S.C., Fr. Edwin Obermiller, C.S.C., and Fr. Pete Mc Cormick, C.S.C.

We have much to celebrate at this time of year as we continue in this season of Easter and the celebration of Jesus' resurrection – a symbol of hope for all. The two men that have been ordained and joined the Congregation of Holy Cross are also symbols of hope. Through their commitment and faith, they show that the ministries of Holy Cross carry on with ever-renewed passion and vigor.

For the Congregation of Holy Cross, hope is not an abstract idea or platitude. Hope is the faith-filled anticipation of Christ revealing Himself in all facets of our lives. As a community, we are inspired by our founder, Blessed Basil Moreau and these words from our Constitutions: "We must be men with hope to bring. There is no failure the Lord's love cannot reverse, no humiliation he cannot exchange for blessing, no anger he cannot dissolve, no routine he cannot transfigure."

Indeed, we are men with hope to bring in parishes, higher education, and missions throughout the world. That hope is revealed not only in the work of the Holy Cross priests and brothers that live in community, but also in the ways our lay collaborators – faculty and staff at Holy Cross universities, parish families, donors, volunteers and others – also bring hope to those in need.

For me, there is no greater blessing or greater challenge than to keep that hope alive in a world that seems to become more hectic and fragmented by the day. With the men of the Holy Cross community – including Fr. Drew and Fr. Steve – sharing in this great endeavor, our burdens are lightened and God's glory is revealed more brightly than ever.

Consider what you can do to bring God's presence closer to your heart and deepen your own personal commitment to fulfill His call. The Holy Cross Vocations team is ready to help you find the right path.

Rev. Edwin Obermiller
Director, Office of Vocations

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue of *CHOICES* features the stories of two young men who have made a choice that is nothing short of life-changing.

Andrew Gawrych, C.S.C., and Stephen A. Lacroix, C.S.C., have decided to become Catholic priests in the Congregation of Holy Cross. Years of preparation led to plans for their ordination by Bishop John M. D'Arcy in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame on March 29.

These two men will lead remarkable lives as a result of the vocational calling that they have discerned. They already have experienced many different situations of service and sacrifice, community and collaboration, listening to the voice of God, and embracing the Body of Christ.

You may be a young man in the early stages of considering a vocation as a priest or brother. You may be the parent or friend of someone considering religious life. You may be someone who simply finds joy in the call the Lord issues to every generation—the call to come, follow Him—and in the hope-filled response that many people offer—"Here I am, Lord."

Regardless of your vocation in life, the following pages will be well worth reading and pondering. As vocation directors, we do not take people's choices lightly. We in the Congregation of Holy Cross seek to celebrate these choices and invite you to share our joy with us, with each other, and with Father Drew and Father Steve.

REV. STEPHEN LACROIX, C.S.C.

- Born in Framingham, Mass., 1972
- Graduated from high school in Sugar Land, Texas
- Graduated from Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas 1994
- B.S. in Business Administration
- M.B.A. from University of Ariz.
- M.Div. degree, Notre Dame, 2007
- 2007-2008: Deacon, Christ the King Parish, South Bend, Ind.

REV. ANDREW GAWRYCH, C.S.C.

- Born in Superior Township, Mich., 1980
- Graduated from high school in Leavenworth, Kan.
- Graduated from University of Notre Dame, 2002
- B.A. in Government and International Relations
- Study Abroad: Santiago, Chile, Jan.-July 2000
- M.Div. degree, Notre Dame, 2007
- 2007-2008: Deacon, St. John Vianney Parish, Goodyear, Ariz.

HYPERLINKING TO HOPE



Rev. Stephen Lacroix, C.S.C.
Serving as a deacon in Christ the King Parish in South Bend, bringing people in touch with Jesus in so many ways—

from distributing the Eucharist to visiting the sick, from Baptisms to marriage preparation, perhaps all in the course of a day—has reminded Steve Lacroix how Christ “permeates all aspects of our lives and joins us all together as one body.”

The power of Christ’s call can be seen in Father Steve’s discernment of a vocation to the priesthood. Eight years out of college, Steve had already established a successful career in information systems and had earned an M.B.A. from the University of Arizona. But he got to know the Holy Cross community that serves St. Gregory Parish in Phoenix and began volunteering with the homeless at André House.

“It became clear that serving the Church gave me much greater satisfaction than my corporate work,” Father Steve recalls. He entered the Holy Cross candidacy program at Notre Dame and graduated from the M.Div. program there in 2007.

The Lord had been calling before Father Steve worked in Phoenix, but fears of the unknown, of “being different,” and of not being “good enough” had gotten in the way. “Some of these fears were rational and some weren’t, but fear is always unhealthy in the discernment process,” he says. “When I finally got past my fears, discernment became a lot more joyful and a lot less stressful.”

Father Steve especially looks forward to bringing the Church’s sacraments to people to satisfy the hunger that everyone feels—“the deep hunger that can only be satisfied by experiencing the love of Christ in our lives.” He has already experienced a variety of ministries during his formation, from teaching catechism to seventh graders



“Although it may appear that a priest’s life does not attract the interest of the majority of people, in reality it is the most interesting of adventures and the most necessary for the world ...”

—*from a speech to seminarians by Pope Benedict XVI on Feb. 1, 2008*

to working with Alzheimer’s patients to counseling women in crisis pregnancies.

“I had natural gifts for some of these ministries more than others, but these experiences were so full of graced moments that there could be no doubt that the work was God’s, not mine.” The Holy Cross emphasis on life in community “has certainly made me a better man,” and he has seen how this congregation of men “with all sorts of different interests and personalities” makes for a brotherhood filled with mutual support and valuable strengths. “God can do more with us than we’d ever dream possible.”

Father Steve also draws energy from participating in this “really exciting time in the life of the Church” when people everywhere need to discover God as the answer they are seeking. “With our emphasis on education, Holy Cross is in a great position to evangelize in a culture where people don’t have the religious background they once had.”

Bringing this beacon of hope to the world is a big challenge in this secular age, but challenge has been a constant in the life of the Church. Priests and religious have a crucial role to play in forming Christian communities that witness to the Gospel values, Father Steve says.

He sees celibacy as a way of freeing his heart to be more loving “to the people I serve, to my brothers in community, and, most of all, to God.” The vow of poverty, too, promises a freedom from preoccupation with the world’s materialistic tendencies and a greater trust in God as provider. Likewise, obedience is an expression of trust that God “will put me where He needs me the most for His Church.”

At one point in his life, giving up his sense of control “would have driven me crazy,” says Father Steve. But now he has a sense of peace, and in his work as a deacon he has seen firsthand how God is at work in people’s lives. He’s looking forward to going where God wants him to be. “I couldn’t



Deacon Lacroix proclaiming the Gospel during a liturgy.

PRAY ALWAYS

A journey toward priesthood is inseparable from progress in one's prayer life, says Father Steve Lacroix. His deeper experiences with a wider variety of prayer forms are already proving to be invaluable aids in his service to parishioners at Christ the King.

"Formation and spiritual direction were really key in helping me to find different ways to pray," he says. "Just like it's helpful to use a bunch of different exercises if you want to stay in shape, I need a lot of different types of prayer in order to stay spiritually healthy."

One of his most rewarding discoveries was *Lectio Divina*—praying with the Scriptures. So as to unlock more of the wisdom of the Word, this prayerful reading takes more attentiveness than our fast-paced world usually encourages.

Another major discovery was the Liturgy of the Hours, the structured prayer of the universal Church that follows the liturgical calendar from day to day and prescribes different prayers from morning to night. This "Daily Office" of readings prayed by priests and religious brings a rhythm to a busy life and offers "a great way to make sure that God is present in all of this."

But, the rhythm doesn't stop there, because the goal is "to make our entire day one constant dialogue with God." That's also where personal, unstructured prayer, such as time before the Blessed Sacrament, plays a key role. The mix, drawing upon the Catholic Church's toolkit of so many prayer traditions, allows a person to find the right expression at the right time in the priest's constant effort to be a man of prayer.

In fact, Father Steve finds that "the more the structured parts of my prayer life are working, the easier and more fruitful the unstructured conversation tends to be." The structured prayer creates "a habit of listening for the voice of God. It makes it easier to be aware of the presence of God around me during the day."

That is an elusive goal for everyone, but it's an important one, whether one is serving a parish or performing other ministries. "I'll probably do several jobs over the course of my priestly life, but I know the most important thing I can do for the people I serve is to pray for them," says Father Steve. "Everything else has to come from that."

"The pastoral activity that awaits you must see you acting together united in a single body—an 'ordo' of priests who, with the bishop, watch over the Christian community."

—Pope Benedict XVI

KEEPING IT REAL AND SIMPLE



Rev. Andrew Gawrych, C.S.C.

One might expect the path to priesthood to bring dramatic changes and complexities into one's life, but Father Drew Gawrych says his journey as a member of Holy Cross is helping him to simplify his life, get back to

spiritual basics, and become a more integrated person who experiences and shares God's love.

"Although it might sound crazy, I would say the biggest change in me over my years of formation was, in some ways, no change at all," says Father Drew, who devoted his deaconate year in 2007–08 to parish work at St. John Vi-
anney Parish in Goodyear, Ariz. "I became more myself, more the person God had created and loved me to be."

The superficialities of role-playing, mask-wearing, and self-determination have gradually fallen away, thanks to deeper experiences of God's love in personal prayer, in Holy Cross communities, in steps of formation alongside lay classmates, and in service through such ministries as parish life and a hospital emergency room chaplaincy.

"The meaning of ministry, at least for me, is quite simple: the love of God," Father Drew says. "I minister to others for no other reason than I have been loved by God and I want to bring, bear, and be that love of God to others so they, too, may experience his deep and unconditional love for them."

Service was one of the ways Father Drew's perspectives stayed fundamentally the same but evolved and took on a clearer focus as he moved through discernment of his vocation, from the novitiate to an M.Div. degree from Notre Dame, to the deaconate, and on to ordination.

"A strong call to serve others" gave him his first attraction to the priesthood, but he was also attracted to marriage and family life, and he saw



Deacon Gawrych embraces parish life through the Sacraments, such as baptisms.

international peace or relief work as other viable paths.

Father Drew tried to decide by calculating pros and cons, “but it was only when I stopped trying to sort it all out and started listening in the silence of my prayer for God’s voice that I experienced God’s call to enter the seminary.

His joy in priesthood as a life of service has not changed, but it has deepened. “Over my years of formation, I have come to see how the Eucharist is at the center of the service priests give the Church and the world.” He describes the Church’s celebration of the Eucharist as a feast of love and the best way “to serve and change the world.”

Of course, if the world needs some changing, so does every individual. But, again, Father Drew sees no sharp distinction between his “former life” and his life in Holy Cross. He can’t think of anything he misses from that earlier time, especially in light of the fullness of life that Christ promises through ministry to others. “The seeds of much of what I enjoy today were planted by God long before in me through my parents and others,” so times of change and preparation have come naturally and incrementally.

How has he changed? Daily prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially meaningful when he prays in community with other Holy Cross brothers,” helps keep my days God-centered.” An assignment as an emergency room chaplain reminded him that it is a grace to be with those who are suffering.

Living in community with his Holy Cross brothers and experiencing their wisdom and friendship—in the context of single-hearted intimacy with God, obedience to him, and sharing all things in common—has been “essential”

“From this moment on, sanctity must be the final goal of all your choices and decisions. Entrust this desire and this daily commitment to Mary, Mother of Trust.”

—Pope Benedict XVI

LIVING HOMILIES, CLOSE TO THE CROSS

The parishioners of St. John Vianney Church in Goodyear, Ariz., where Drew Gawrych, C.S.C., served his deaconate year before ordination, reasserted for him the vital importance of hope.

In so doing, they just happened to be echoing a lesson that Pope Benedict XVI recently discussed in an encyclical—and a virtue central to the message of the Congregation of Holy Cross and its founder, Blessed Basil Moreau, C.S.C.

“People are starving for good news that gives them hope in their lives,” says Father Drew, who calls it a privilege to serve as a sign of God’s presence and, therefore, as a sign of hope. All Holy Cross members embrace the message, “Hail the Cross, our only hope,” bringing to others an anchoring, steadying trust in divine providence and in God’s power to bring good out of suffering or sacrifice.

There is, indeed, much hardship facing many members of St. John Vianney, a diverse parish located on the outskirts of Phoenix, including Hispanics and Caucasians, English-speakers and Spanish-speakers, natives, and immigrants. Many parishioners have broken lives. But it remains a vibrant parish with a strong sense of family, conducting roughly 300 Baptisms, 50 weddings, and 80 funerals each year.

The hope and the instruction in God’s good news flowed in both directions, Father Drew recalls from his deaconate. He, the pastor, and the assistant pastor were energized by the spirit of the people they served. “I’ve learned from their fruitful example and the amazing ways they invite you to be part of their lives as they seek Christ’s presence in their lives.”

For his part, Father Drew learned he enjoys sharing God’s good news through homilies at Mass. “Homily prep has become central to my own spiritual journey.” In light of the task of writing a homily, daily life becomes a deeper encounter with everyday experiences and insights into God’s presence in all kinds of situations.

The experiences are especially meaningful in the context of community—the Holy Cross community in which he lives, as well as a parish community in which hope constantly regenerates.

“To us,” he says, “the people of God are signs of God’s presence in the world.”

for becoming “the person that God created me to be.”

No doubt there will be other changes ahead following ordination. “I am excited by the chance, God willing, to fulfill many different ministries in Holy Cross,” including service as an international missionary. There are bound to be challenges and surprises, but Father Drew says the fundamentals stay the same.

He approaches the unknown just as he learned to approach his decision to be a priest. “God is always faithful, and if we can dare just enough to place our faith in Him, to trust Him, then God will ensure that whatever good work He is beginning in us will be carried through to completion.”

Father Drew looks at the future with eyes fixed on the Eucharist. “My greatest hope for the Church and for Holy Cross is that we can become that Eucharist for the world, that we can become bread broken and wine poured out for the life of the world so that all people may share in God’s eternal life and love.”



Deacon Drew shares conversation with children of the parish during school lunch.



Deacon Steve in discussion as part of the Holy Cross ministry to parishioners.



“Prayer should be the beginning and end of your studies.”

—*Blessed Basil Moreau*

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE MEET IN CELEBRATION OF BLESSED BASIL MOREAU

The beatification of Father Basil Moreau, C.S.C., the founder of the Congregation of Holy Cross, took place in LeMans, France, last September, and many people are taking advantage of the opportunity to renew their connection with this remarkable man and his legacy.

A new book, *The Cross, Our Only Hope: Daily Reflections in the Holy Cross Tradition*, offers meditations written by scholars, pastors, counselors, and administrators. The meditations focus on the themes of the congregation’s spiritual tradition, including trust in divine providence, compassion, hope in the Cross, discipleship, and the promotion of justice.

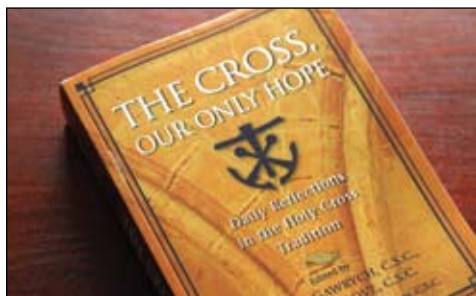
Rev. Andrew Gawrych, C.S.C., one of the priests ordained on March 29, is one of the co-editors of the book. He worked with co-editor Kevin Grove, C.S.C., a seminarian who is pursuing a master’s of divinity degree at the University of Notre Dame. The book is published by Ave Maria Press, a ministry of the Congregation’s Indiana Province.

A book signing at the Hammes Notre Dame Bookstore on Friday, Dec. 14, attracted not only long lines of book-buyers but also more than two dozen Holy Cross priests.

As an example of the contents of the book, here is an excerpt from the section for January 20, the date now set on the Church’s calendar as Blessed Basil Moreau’s feast day. The section begins with a quote from Moreau, himself, and proceeds with a meditation from Holy Cross priest and parish pastor Rev. John DeRiso, C.S.C.

ZEAL IS THE GREAT DESIRE TO MAKE
GOD KNOWN, LOVED, AND SERVED, AND
THUS TO BRING KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION
TO OTHERS.

—BASIL MOREAU



“LOVE IS A POWERFUL FORCE. IT MOVES SPOUSES TO GIVE OF THEMSELVES IN MARRIAGE. IT COMPELS PARENTS TO SACRIFICE FOR THEIR CHILDREN. IT INSPIRES PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS, AND LAY MINISTERS TO LABOR FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL. AND IT’S WHAT PROMPTED FR. MOREAU TO GIVE UP ALL TO FOLLOW CHRIST AND TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME....AS DISCIPLES OF JESUS, WE MUST ASK OURSELVES CONTINUALLY IF WE ARE WILLING TO MAKE THE SACRIFICE THAT THE LOVE OF THE LORD AND HIS MISSION REQUIRE.

—REV. JOHN DERISO, C.S.C.

The first celebration of a feast day for Blessed Basil Moreau also provided good timing for a conference on sainthood, held at the University of Notre Dame January 18–19. The conference, titled “A Great Cloud of Witnesses: Saints in the Catholic Tradition,” attracted such speakers as Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, archbishop emeritus of Washington, D.C., and Kenneth Woodward, former religion editor of Newsweek

Blessed Basil Moreau’s feast day of January 20 was celebrated by Holy Cross communities of priests, brothers and sisters—and by those whom they serve—in a variety of ways and in a variety of places. The Holy Cross parish of St. Gregory’s, located in Phoenix, Ariz., brought together the local bishop, a number of Holy Cross priests, and some 600 parishioners and friends for a Saturday evening vigil Mass. The parish also instituted new awards reflecting the Holy Cross mission to educate both hearts and minds.

For the beatification last September, the University of Portland, a Holy Cross institution, held a series of celebratory events. They included Masses, a choir concert, an all-night vigil with Eucharistic Adoration, and discussions about sainthood.

“Let us confidently abandon ourselves to the love of our Father ... under the protection of Mary and Joseph.”

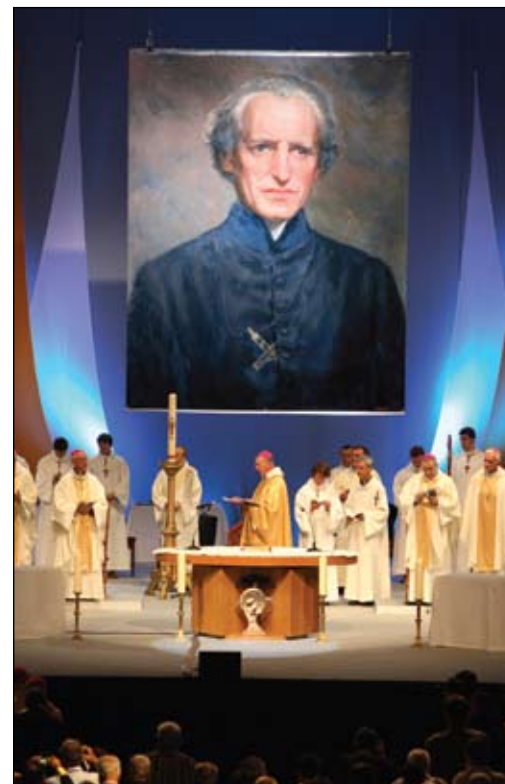
—*Blessed Basil Moreau*

PRAYER FOR THE INTERCESSION OF BASIL MOREAU

Lord Jesus,

You inspired Father Basil Moreau to found the religious family of Holy Cross to continue your mission among the People of God. May he be for us a model of zealous service, an example of fidelity, and an inspiration as we strive to be followers of Jesus. May the Church be moved to proclaim his saintliness for the good of all people. Lord Jesus, you said, “Ask and you shall receive.” I dare to come to you to ask that you hear my prayer. It is through the intercession of Blessed Basil Moreau that I ask ... (state your intention). May I learn to imitate his holiness and service and look to him confidently in times of need.

As a reminder of the Redeemer who brings victory over suffering, Moreau gave his order a motto drawn from a liturgical hymn: “Ave Crux, Spes Unica,” or “Hail the Cross, Our Only Hope.”



Hundreds of Holy Cross religious gathered in LeMans, France, in September 2007 for the beatification of our congregation’s founder, Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau.



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PRIESTS & BROTHERS

In parishes, high schools, colleges and universities, and missions in fifteen countries, from the University of Notre Dame to the streets of Dhaka, Holy Cross Priests and Brothers lay down their lives as educators in the faith.