Dear Friends,

This Annual Giving Report carries stories of joy and heartbreak in a year dominated by the coronavirus pandemic. For many sisters, the security of a daily routine marked by prayer, ministry and community life has been turned upside down. This insecurity is also true for our partners in ministry, our families, our world, and just about everyone. The planet itself has suffered with increased natural disasters.

Many weeks of 2020 were marked by suffering, grief and uncertainty. The weeks also were marked by a strengthening of relationships in the midst of chaos. Front-line workers have sacrificed everything for families, communities and strangers. People of faith have learned to pray and assemble in new ways, including our sisters, who have continued to pray for and with the world community despite not being able to physically assemble for Eucharist and communal prayer, or to say a final farewell to sisters, family members and friends who have died.

Yet, the Gospel message rings strong: God came as one of us and chooses to dwell with us still. This surety sings out of relationships in the midst of chaos. Front-line workers have sacrificed everything for families, communities and strangers. People of faith have learned to pray and assemble in new ways, including our sisters, who have continued to pray for and with the world community despite not being able to physically assemble for Eucharist and communal prayer, or to say a final farewell to sisters, family members and friends who have died.

In Holy Cross,

Sister M. Veronique (Wiedower), CSC

President, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross
Students’ young lives have been completely upended. The familiar, the comfortable, the known — all whisked away by an invisible entity whose ramifications are only too real.

In Congregation-sponsored schools across the globe, many elements of the COVID-19 pandemic are common. Each headmistress or principal has forged ahead as best she can, trying to help students — and their families — navigate what is a fearful and unprecedented time for many.

In this article, we share the reflections of six school administrators as they ponder the uncertainty of these times yet cling with hope to a brighter future.

Holy Cross School Kulaura, Bangladesh

Founded in 2018, serves 50 nursery, kindergarten and primary grade students.

Since most of our students come from very poor and marginalized families, many don’t have a television. They were not aware of the COVID-19 pandemic. We held parents’ meetings to inform them of the situation and taught them how to keep themselves and their children clean and safe.

I can see that students are being emotionally affected. They are feeling bored, impatient and losing spirit. They have no interest in studying television. They were not aware of the COVID-19 pandemic realities. People feel thirsty for God and for eucharistic celebrations. St. Paul reminds us: “When we are weak, we are strong.” So we have to have hope. The whole world is facing the same challenges.

— Sister Shiuli Gomes, CSC, headmistress

Holy Cross High School Bhadun, Bangladesh

Founded in 2015, serves 42 students in grades three through 10.

It was not easy for everyone in the beginning. People were panicking. Suddenly everything changed and was so hard.

Our admission process for the new academic year was going on when the pandemic hit. Because of poor internet access in the villages, we could do admissions only in person. So, parents, guardians, teachers and sisters were scheduled at given times each day.

The familiar, the comfortable, the known — all whisked away by an invisible entity whose ramifications are only too real.

We try our best to help them out. The students are missing their classrooms, friends and teachers. I miss them, too! We are grateful for our donors and benefactors and their big hearts. They provide strength and hope always, especially at this time.

— Sister Mary Renu Samaddar, CSC, headmistress
Since March 15, 2020, all schools in Brazil have been closed due to the pandemic. But we have interactive virtual classes for all 2,300 preschool through secondary students and the 600 adult students who take night classes. In some cases, this has involved buying phone credits for students to access classes.

The staff has been coming in every day to work. After cleaning and fixing things, new projects were taken on to modernize installations and to adapt desks with acrylic shields. Energy was high, but only when 20 percent of our students came back for outdoor learning and art projects in October did real hope return, carried on the wind in the form of shouts and laughter of the children. Virtual classes continued for the others.

Communications between teachers and students occur daily, and activities are modified every time parents or students make suggestions about what is helpful or what makes learning difficult for them. I made three YouTube videos for parents on what Colégio was doing. I even made three YouTube videos for parents on what Colégio was doing. I even made one for teachers, recognizing their mission in these challenging times.

I find strength and hope in the Providence of God. Daily, God shows me care and inspires me to take on the wind in the form of shouts and laughter of the children. Virtual classes continued for the others.

Communications between teachers and students occur daily, and activities are modified every time parents or students make suggestions about what is helpful or what makes learning difficult for them. I made three YouTube videos for parents on what Colégio was doing. I even made one for teachers, recognizing their mission in these challenging times.

I find strength and hope in the Providence of God. Daily, God shows me care and inspires me to take on the wind in the form of shouts and laughter of the children. Virtual classes continued for the others.

Students at Our Lady of Holy Cross School in Kasoa, Ghana, composed stories about their experiences of COVID-19.

Teaching and learning came to a sudden halt on March 15, 2020. We decided to continue to engage our students, to keep them occupied to help reduce anxiety. Through the generosity and creativity of our hardworking staff, we were able to use media like Zoom, WhatsApp and Google Classroom for the nursery through middle school grades.

Students were asked to write or record a story about their experience of COVID-19 and its impact on them and their families. They shared stories of relatives with the coronavirus, their parents’ job losses, their fears about what is going to become of their education, and their worry about themselves or their family getting infected. They are happy, however, to have e-learning.

In October we began using a new e-learning platform called Seesaw for Schools. This was an improvement because it makes teaching and learning very interactive. But so far only half of our students have been able to participate, as some families cannot afford the necessary gadgets and internet service fees.

I sometimes call the students. They are always happy to hear from me. They ask when they will come back to school. I tell them to pray really hard, listen to their parents, and do their homework.

We remain thankful to our donors for their support. Many private schools have been hit hard. We have been able to maintain our employees and cover other expenditures because of our donors’ generosity. We continue to remain hopeful, knowing “this too shall pass.”

—Sister Cynthia Godia Bienaan, CSC, financial controller

The government inspected all schools before reopening them in October. I am grateful to God that our school and hostel received good ratings, which meant we qualified with excellent readiness. We reopened with one senior class, while the other classes continued to study through radio and television. A big number of our students do not have the chance to listen to classes in this way. They have network issues, or the solar power is not working, or batteries are running out. We are hoping that taking class materials to their homes will be of great benefit. Our wish is to reach all our learners, but we are limited by resources.

We managed to pay our teachers for the first two months of the pandemic, but the following months we could not make it. When the one class reopened, we called only four teachers out of 19. The remaining teachers continue struggling as we cannot pay them anything. Students are emotionally affected. They fear being around others. They strive to stay apart from each other yet want to be together and doing things. They are not feeling at peace. Continuing the ministry in this pandemic is not easy. Ensuring protocols and making sure everyone is safe keeps me tensed. There are also the uncertainties of what is next.

I believe God is watching and in control of what is happening in our lives today. For now, we need patience, courage and persistence.

—Sister Jacinta Katusabe, CSC, headmistress

Colégio Santa Maria
São Paulo, Brazil
Founded in 1948, serves 2,900 students in preschool, primary and secondary grades

Our Lady of Holy Cross School
Kasoa, Ghana
Founded in 2006, serves over 1,000 students in nursery through high school grades in dormitories

Moreau Nursery and Primary School
Kirinda, Uganda
Founded in 2008, serves 365 students up through grade seven, boys’ and girls’ dormitories

The campus of Colégio Santa Maria in São Paulo, Brazil, rang with joy and laughter when students temporarily returned in October.

If you would like to help
Support our ministries through these trying times.
Visit the cscsisters.org/donate and select the Congregation’s COVID Relief Fund in the drop-down menu. Thank you.

Sister Diane Cundiff, CSC, principal

Sister Repa Anna Costa, CSC, of Holy Cross High School in Bhadun, Bangladesh, reviews lesson plans with a student and her mother.
Honoring our past, securing our future

The Holy Cross family is a blend of many families. Each sister who enters the Congregation brings with her the gift of who she is, as shaped by her “growing up” family. In turn, that sister shapes the memories and decisions of the generations that follow her, including sometimes their faithful monthly contributions to the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Sister M. Rita Estelle (Estelle Rita Broussard), CSC, came from a large and vigorous Catholic family in Beaumont, Texas. Her older brother forged an early connection with Holy Cross when he graduated from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, in 1913 and passed the value of a Holy Cross education down through multiple generations of his family.

One of Sister Rita Estelle’s great-nieces, Anne Steinman Montalbano, recalls that Sister was very intentional about connecting with each of her family members when she came home to visit. She continued to return to Beaumont even after her parents died, says Anne. “She knew us all — and there were 126 in my generation!”

Sister Rita Estelle was quick to share her many gifts with others. An accomplished concert pianist who toured nationally with prominent musicians, Sister entertained her family with private concerts when she was home. “She would always start with ‘Tea for Two’ because that was my mom’s favorite,” says Anne. Other favorite memories include spitted games of gin rummy, listening to stories from Sister Rita Estelle’s many travels, and meeting other Holy Cross sisters who were invited along for some much-needed rest and relaxation.

Anne has been a longtime supporter of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. About four years ago she switched from giving an annual donation to establishing a monthly recurring gift. Her reason? “It’s a whole lot easier to give each month with a credit card [on file] than to write a big check,” Anne says. “And with Aunt Estelle being a Sister of the Holy Cross it just seemed the right thing to do.”

It seems the apple does not fall far from the tree.

Brother André Outreach Center
A presence in all times

For more than 30 years, Sisters of the Holy Cross have been addressing food insecurity in the West Adams district of Los Angeles, California. Through the Brother André Outreach Center at St. Agnes Parish they provide food, other living essentials, and friendship to neighbors in need — a community-growing enterprise that reached new heights in 2020 with the coronavirus pandemic.

In May last year, joined by the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, a longtime partner, and the University of Southern California (USC), the parish began distributing food through three sites: Brother André Center, a walk-up site south of the church, and a drive-thru in the parish parking lot.

The parish center, which typically serves about 50 households a week, found itself welcoming 800 families at its weekly distribution, says Sister Maryanne O’Neill, CSC, center director. Every Saturday, hours before the sites opened, people and cars stretched out in long lines, waiting to receive a week’s supply of food that included non-perishable items and fresh fruits and vegetables. “We believe we have distributed a little more than one million pounds of food to our neighbors in South Los Angeles,” says Sister Maryanne. “All while the parish has managed to have daily Mass outdoors as well as confessions, baptisms and funerals.”

After many months, however, the expanded effort resulted in overexpended energies. Given that reality and the expense of truck rental to transport food to the sites, the parish had to end its collaboration and close down the walk-up and drive-thru programs at the end of the year. “We miss the camaraderie and ‘esprit de corps’ we enjoyed while working with the USC staff and volunteers,” Sister Maryanne says. “But we are happy that USC has found another site in South LA to provide that extra assistance.” For its part, the Brother André Center carried on with its service in January, a staple of hope and sharing for all who arrive at its door.

ABOVE: Camera in hand, Sister Rita Estelle enjoys a picnic with family at La Belle Ranch.
LEFT: Sister M. Rita Estelle (Broussard), CSC.

LEFT: Sister Rita Estelle enjoys a picnic with family at La Belle Ranch.
ABOVE: Camera in hand, Sister Rita Estelle enjoys a picnic with family at La Belle Ranch.
LEFT: Sister M. Rita Estelle (Broussard), CSC.

ABOVE: Sister M. Rita Estelle was quick to share her many gifts with others. An accomplished concert pianist who toured nationally with prominent musicians, Sister entertained her family with private concerts when she was home. “She would always start with ‘Tea for Two’ because that was my mom’s favorite,” says Anne.

LEFT: Sister Rita Estelle was quick to share her many gifts with others. An accomplished concert pianist who toured nationally with prominent musicians, Sister entertained her family with private concerts when she was home. “She would always start with ‘Tea for Two’ because that was my mom’s favorite,” says Anne.

ABOVE: Accompanied by her great-niece Gena Sherlock, Sister Rita Estelle receives Pope John Paul II’s blessing at the Vatican.
LEFT: Sister Rita Estelle was quick to share her many gifts with others. An accomplished concert pianist who toured nationally with prominent musicians, Sister entertained her family with private concerts when she was home. “She would always start with ‘Tea for Two’ because that was my mom’s favorite,” says Anne.

BELOW: A presence in all times — a community-growing enterprise that reached new heights in 2020 with the coronavirus pandemic.

LEFT: From left, Holy Cross Sisters Mary Alice Bowler and Patricia Anne Clossey and Father Luis Espinoza, pastor of St. Agnes Parish, gather for prayer before the first distribution event.

BELOW: A presence in all times — a community-growing enterprise that reached new heights in 2020 with the coronavirus pandemic.

LEFT: From left, Holy Cross Sisters Mary Alice Bowler and Patricia Anne Clossey and Father Luis Espinoza, pastor of St. Agnes Parish, gather for prayer before the first distribution event.
Jubilarians

Each year Sisters of the Holy Cross who have been professed 25, 50 and 75 years are honored at a jubilee celebration at Saint Mary’s. This year’s jubilarians serve in congregational and public ministries. The sisters would love to hear from you! To send a note, please see the order form on page 46. To send a jubilee card, please email communications@cscsisters.org.

Silver Jubilee — 1996

Sister Joys Rozario, CSC
Teacher, Notre Dame High School Srimangal, Moulvi Bazar District Sylhet, Bangladesh

Sister Joyce Rozario, CSC
Director/teacher, girls’ hostel and parish ministry with Saint John’s Catholic Church Parachara Khagrachari Hill Tracts Chittagong, Bangladesh

Sister Jamana Magdaline Gomes, CSC
Pastoral ministry and headmistress of Shahid Father Evans Kindergarten School Bakshanagar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Holy Cross Ministries marks quarter century of service

In 2020 (HCM) celebrated 25 years of service with underserved individuals and families in Utah, and the history and influence of its founders, the Sisters of the Holy Cross. The organization traces its origins to 1875, when Holy Cross sisters arrived in the region to begin a hospital for injured railroad workers and miners. Over the years, the sisters identified and responded to the needs of the people of Salt Lake City and its surrounding communities through health care and education.

Today compassionate outreach to vulnerable populations continues through Holy Cross Ministries, which collaborates with local partner organizations in providing early childhood education, legal immigration support, and access to health care assistance.

Among its early childhood education services, HCM offers a School Readiness Program, featuring day-long classes four days a week to prepare children academically, physically and emotionally to enter elementary school. And to support children from birth to age 3 and their family members, the organization has a Parents as Teachers (PAT) program, where HCM staff make visits to homes (or virtually during the pandemic) to conduct health screenings, facilitate developmentally appropriate activities, and monitor the growth of parental life skills.

Answering the need of many individuals in the area’s immigrant population, HCM connects those who are unfamiliar with local health care and supplemental food services with much needed resources and assists them in navigating and understanding various health and social systems. And reaching an especially vulnerable segment of residents, HCM supports domestic violence survivors and victims of sexual assault, providing them with bilingual/bicultural and holistic counseling services, available at several neighborhood sites within the community.

In 2020, HCM’s services benefitted more than 2,900 individuals, a number it aims to grow with new forms and avenues of outreach. “Building on the mission and legacy of the Sisters of the Holy Cross,” says organization CEO Emmie Gardner, “we will continue to broaden our work of compassion, inclusion and justice for years to come.”
Saint Mary’s campus is now smoke-free and tobacco-free

Saint Mary’s campus celebrated its first day as a smoke-free and tobacco-free environment on November 19, 2020. With this status all tobacco use, including the use of electronic smoking devices or hookahs, is prohibited on Sisters of the Holy Cross convent and Saint Mary’s College properties.

“This initiative reflects the Congregation’s mission and our commitment to ‘witness God’s love for all creation,’” says Sister M. Veronique (Wiedower), CSC, president of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. "Tobacco use negatively affects the entire community, including the environment. This is just one more way that we can advocate for and support the holistic health of all those on the Saint Mary’s campus and this planet that is our home.”

Sisters of the Holy Cross, Inc., and the college collaborated on the initiative. When the new policy was announced May 29, 2020, Sisters, Inc., distributed its Smoke-Free & Tobacco-Free Policy, a list of frequently asked questions relating to the policy, and information about smoking cessation resources and programs. The policy went into effect the same day as the American Cancer Society’s annual smoking cessation event, the Great American Smokeout.

“We anticipate the good things that will come from this effort and pledge our prayer and support for all whose health and well-being are impacted,” notes Sister Veronique. “Together we are fostering and creating a healthy campus community.”

Memories in the Garden

Nestled alongside the Church of Our Lady of Loretto, on a bluff above the St. Joseph River, is the Moreau Remembrance Garden. Dedicated in 2008 to honor the Beatification of Holy Cross Founder Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau, the garden is filled with native flowering plants that bloom from spring to fall. Yet even in winter there is solemn beauty.

It is here, in this sacred and serene garden at Saint Mary’s, Notre Dame, Indiana, that the Congregation’s Book of Remembrance rests, containing the names of loved ones honored and memorialized with the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Those whose names are written in the book are remembered in the Prayers of the Faithful during the liturgies at the church.

We encourage you to consider this special way of remembering someone who touches or has touched your life. To date, more than $50 individuals or families have been either honored or memorialized in the book. Many have chosen to remember a Holy Cross sister who left a lasting impact on their lives. Send us the name of the individual or individuals you would like to honor or memorialize, and we will ensure they are placed in our Book of Remembrance. We simply ask you to consider a donation of $200 or more per name, which will support the sisters’ retirement needs and our Ministry With the Poor Fund (see page 46). You may include up to 42 characters and spaces, including punctuation, for your entry in the book. You are invited to visit Saint Mary’s at any time to enjoy the garden and peruse the book yourself.

Candidates received into International Novitiate

On January 20, 2021, the feast of Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau, seven women were received into the Congregation’s International Novitiate. They are (clockwise): Anuantah Patience Masika from Uganda, Shimit Mukhim and Dantilang Mynsong from India, Rita Boakyeewena Konadu and Linda Siburte Bonye from Ghana, and Tripy Teresa Gomes and Supy Mrong from Bangladesh.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the reception was celebrated virtually. With the permission of Congregation President Sister M. Veronique (Wiedower), CSC, and the consent of her council, the novices are following the novitiate program in their home countries. While taking online classes they are receiving support from novice directors, who are collaborating with sister mentors in each country. We celebrate with these sisters and hold them in prayer as they continue this next phase of life in Holy Cross.
Love prevails during coronavirus

The Holy Cross Residence for Seniors in São Paulo, Brazil, is a beautiful place filled with beautiful hearts. As the COVID-19 virus progressed throughout the country in the spring of 2020, staff very quickly made the necessary accommodations to lock down the facility to protect everyone who lived or worked there. Their efforts were rewarded.

“Ours was the only senior facility we know of that had no deaths due to COVID-19,” said Sister Diane Cardiff, CSC, Area of South America coordinator.

Yet, challenges prevailed. Schoolchildren from the nearby Colégio Santa Maria, a sponsored ministry of the Congregation, used to visit the residence regularly to perform musical and dance presentations. They also would bring presents and give hugs and kisses to their “special grandparents.” But the school closed as the pandemic took hold.

Feelings of loneliness and isolation set in, so the facility made a psychologist available to counsel residents and staff. Staff also were encouraged to dedicate time to just sitting and talking with the residents.

This concern for residents’ well-being permeates the facility and is expressed in a comment that Sister Diane often hears: “Since coming here, my health and physical conditions have improved, not failed, as I get older.”

Throughout the lockdown, Sister Maria Regina (Gomes), CSC, the only sister on staff, was disheartened that she could no longer circulate through social activities among the residents. But with the easing of restrictions in October, she happily began organizing socially distanced prayer services and Masses.

Family and other visitors, who had been limited to online interactions, were able to come into the facility, provided they followed pandemic protocols, of course. For resident Sister June Ann Kirby, CSC, the masked face-to-face visits from local Holy Cross sisters were “like Christmas presents.”

Just five years since its opening, the Holy Cross Residence currently accommodates nearly 50 seniors. Its many amenities include a pool, movie theater, library, dining room, tea room, exercise rooms, multimedia and art center, activities areas, hairdresser and massage services, and physical therapy. The facility encompasses 100,000 square feet and is a sponsored ministry of the Congregation—a beautiful one.
Interest in vocation grows among young women in the United States

Sister Helene Sharp, CSC, keenly remembers the Sisters of the Holy Cross who taught at her high school in Utah in the 1960s. “They were so happy. They were so real,” she recalls. “I remember one who worked in full habit in the garden. When transients would come by, she would give them sandwiches and something to drink.”

Her exposure to the sisters influenced Sister Helene’s eventual decision to join the order. Now, 50-some years later, as the Congregation’s United States vocation coordinator, she is helping other young women discern their calling.

“There is definitely a growing interest on the part of young women in the U.S. today,” says Sister Helene. “Young women are looking for something deeper in life — for community, prayer and spirituality, not so much the ministry part of a congregation, but how we live in community and the prayer aspect of it.”

The Congregation, for its part, seeks young Catholic women who are open to being called and sent.

Continuity and life

On any given day, Sister Helene and her U.S. vocation team — Sister Patricia Anne Classey, CSC, and Sister Mary Ellen Johnson, CSC — may receive questions from women who want to learn about living a consecrated life. One thing they tell them is that the consecrated life is a call from God. “God sets the terms,” she says, encouraging them to discern where and to what God is calling them.

Some inquirers are seeking a contemplative community, one devoted exclusively to prayer. “We are an apostolic community,” explains Sister Helene. “Our focus is on ministry but with a definite contemplative aspect.”

Interestingly, Sister Helene will sometimes encounter women who want to join an order that still wears the traditional habit. “I ask them, ‘How important is that to you?’ If they say it’s very important, I tell them perhaps we are not the right fit. I also explain that how we dress is our habit, which may include the silver heart with the image of Our Sorrowful Mother, our pattens, or a simple cross. The traditional habit does not define a sister. We don’t need it to tell people who we are.”

They see the vibrancy

The age range of the inquirers is wide, with most generally between 20 and 35. “There is definite interest coming from Generation Z,” she says, referring to the generation commonly defined as those born between the mid-to-late 1990s to the early 2010s. “We need the whole spectrum of generations. To have a healthy, growing community we need members of all ages who are willing to live, pray and work together. We need to share the wisdom from the elders with those aspiring to grow with us. Only then will there be continuity and life.”

As a vocation coordinator, in both the U.S. and previously in Ghana, Sister Helene sometimes encounters the misperception that “young women don’t want to live with old ladies.”

“The truth,” she says, “is that they do. They tell me, ‘I learn so much from the older sisters.’ They see the vibrancy of who we are and what we do.”

A good portion of the inquirers Sister Helene receives are from students and graduates of Saint Mary’s College and the University of Notre Dame, both in Notre Dame, Indiana. Currently, she, Sister Pat Classey and Sister Nieves Llida Ortiz Galván, CSC, engage in Zoom meetings with six Saint Mary’s College-affiliated women and others who have contacted the Congregation. In addition, they have been guiding regular Zoom prayer/discussion times with young women from the St. Adalbert Parish youth group in South Bend, Indiana. Sister Nieves, based in Guadalajara, Nuevo León, Mexico, had previously ministered at St. Adalbert and, when asked, was happily willing to join in on the discussions.

When a woman decides she wants to live to the next step, she comes to the motherhouse as an aspirant to initial profession, with the perpetual profession coming some years later.

Sharing in a vowed life

The National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) is a vibrant resource for Sister Helene. Last fall she participated in a Q&A Zoom conference on Generation Z with other NRVC members. “It was informative and life-giving!” she says. That event was followed a month later by the virtual NRVC Convocation attended by Sister Helene and five other Holy Cross sisters.

Reflecting on the energizing conference, Sister Helene recalls, “The newer members in the various communities of both women and men at the conference all talked about the richness that comes from having interactions and relationships with the older members. We came away from it with the understanding that there are men and women wanting to share in vowed, community life. There is a great need and sense of hope that we have definite roles to play in the current realities. The belief that forgiveness is a missing piece in people’s lives is a concern in the lives of many.”

Sister Helene also calls on the Congregation’s founder, Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau, to guide her in helping young women discern their call, just as he did 175 years ago. “I harass Father Moreau every day!” she laughs, “and always thank him for sending us women who need to be here.” It is a joyful ministry for her, as she strives to help women — as she was once helped — discern the call of God in their lives.

“I harass Father Moreau every day! And always thank him for sending us women who need to be here.”

— Sister Helene Sharp, CSC, U.S. Vocation Coordinator

Everyone has a vocation

If you would like to learn more about living a vowed life in community with the Sisters of the Holy Cross, please call (574) 284-5531 or email vocations@cscsisters.org.
The young girl assesses the formation of her competitors who watch her closely. She then slowly dribbles down the court. Immediately, the other team’s forward challenges her, trying to get at the ball. But she quickly flicks it away to a teammate, who grabs it, pivots and sends the orange sphere in a beautiful arc toward the basket.

This is basketball at Our Lady of Holy Cross School in Barakathal, India. The students have the spirit and they certainly have the enthusiasm. Now the boys and girls just need a decent playing facility. Organized sports are an important part of a well-rounded education that strives to nourish the body, the mind, and the spirit. Playing on a team teaches children how to collaborate toward a common goal, how to be a leader and, sometimes just as importantly, how to follow a leader.

“One important element of education is incorporation of sports and recreation to support the healthy social development of students,” said Headmistress Sister Khochem Mossang, CSC. “Critical social habits are developed including teamwork, determination, willpower and discipline.”

National studies in India have linked participation in sports to lower rates of tobacco, drug and alcohol use. And basketball in India is a popular sport, with professional leagues and schools hosting championship tournaments at all levels. With a new court, Our Lady of Holy Cross school will be able to host games and compete against other regional schools — giving students an opportunity to meet children outside their social circle, expand their minds and hearts, strengthen their bodies, and just enjoy the thrill of the game.

In early 2021, Sister Khochem was delighted to learn that an anonymous donor would be funding the basketball court. There is much excitement at Our Lady of Holy Cross School, as this project has become a true slam dunk.

Basketball dreams come true for students in Barakathal

The young girl assesses the formation of her competitors who watch her closely. She then slowly dribbles down the court. Immediately, the other team’s forward challenges her, trying to get at the ball. But she quickly flicks it away to a teammate, who grabs it, pivots and sends the orange sphere in a beautiful arc toward the basket.

This is basketball at Our Lady of Holy Cross School in Barakathal, India. The students have the spirit and they certainly have the enthusiasm. Now the boys and girls just need a decent playing facility. Organized sports are an important part of a well-rounded education that strives to nourish the body, the mind, and the spirit. Playing on a team teaches children how to collaborate toward a common goal, how to be a leader and, sometimes just as importantly, how to follow a leader.

“One important element of education is incorporation of sports and recreation to support the healthy social development of students,” said Headmistress Sister Khochem Mossang, CSC. “Critical social habits are developed including teamwork, determination, willpower and discipline.”

National studies in India have linked participation in sports to lower rates of tobacco, drug and alcohol use. And basketball in India is a popular sport, with professional leagues and schools hosting championship tournaments at all levels. With a new court, Our Lady of Holy Cross school will be able to host games and compete against other regional schools — giving students an opportunity to meet children outside their social circle, expand their minds and hearts, strengthen their bodies, and just enjoy the thrill of the game.

In early 2021, Sister Khochem was delighted to learn that an anonymous donor would be funding the basketball court. There is much excitement at Our Lady of Holy Cross School, as this project has become a true slam dunk.
Sister Clarence Marie (Larson), CSC
(Clare Leona Larson)
February 18, 1927—September 15, 2020
Entered from Everett, Massachusetts
Initial profession on August 15, 1952
Clare Leona Larson was born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, on February 18, 1927, to Esther McCarron and Clarence Larson. She attended public schools in Everett, Massachusetts, and had nearly six years of secretarial or related work experience in the Boston area prior to entering the Congregation in August 1949. Her years in ministry from 1953 were initially in secondary education, teaching either religion or commerce classes at Holy Cross-sponsored schools. She was also a great basketball coach at the Academy of the Holy Cross and St. Patrick’s Academy, both in Washington, D.C., and St. Mary’s Academy, Alexandria, Virginia.
In 1963 Sister proved invaluable as a teacher, principal, and secretary at Holy Cross-sponsored schools. This was the beginning of her long commitment to the Congregation. In 1997 she returned to St. Mary’s Academy, where she served as an able secretary or secretary-treasurer, first for the Eastern Province in Rockville, Maryland, and then the College Region in Washington, D.C. In 1975 Sister served as the assistant secretary to the Congregation, and in 1986 she became the business and secretarial manager of the Holy Cross Center in Silver Spring, Maryland. She received her new name in religion on February 2, 1946, and on February 2, 1948, she completed intensive IBM courses, Sister M. Gerald (Hartney), general treasurer, secured Sister Alberta’s assignment to Holy Cross Shared Services, where she directed and managed data processing at the motherhouse for 25 years from 1971 to 1996.
Sister Alberta spent six years as the assistant superior at Saint Mary’s College, Indiana, and then the assistant general treasurer, director, and secretary of the Holy Cross University, after which she asked in 2003 to retire and help out at Saint Catherine by-the-Sea Convent, Ventura, California, where she could be closer to family. In early 2011 Sister Alberta returned to Saint Mary’s and also participated in community life.
Sister Alberta trained her scientific skills of observation on both the natural world and the persons around her. She took your measure and sized you up quickly. Yet she was selective in sharing personal information in forms and questionnaires, though appreciative for opportunities afforded her in the Congregation. To one regional superior she wrote, “I am very grateful, but I don’t know how to express myself. Perhaps by the way I pray, work and live in general, I will show my deep-felt gratitude. God has been very good to me.” Sister Alberta received Communion in her room on Thanksgiving morning. Now she is fully united with the Risen Christ.
Sister M. Barbara Jeanne (Fehr), CSC
October 15, 1924 – December 16, 2020
Entered from Washington, D.C.
Initial profession on August 15, 1952

Sister M. Barbara Jeanne (Fehr) died at Saint Mary’s Convent, Notre Dame, Indiana, in the last hours of December 16, 2020, as fresh flurries of snow fell upon the earth.

Barbara Jeanne Fehr was born in Washington, D.C., on October 15, 1924. Her primary and secondary schooling introduced her to Holy Cross at schools in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Washington, D.C. Barbara entered the Congregation in August 1949 and received the holy habit on August 15, 1950. Following her initial profession of vows, she began teaching at Saint Cecilia’s Academy, Washington, D.C. After perpetual profession in 1955, she completed her master’s in theology at Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana. She then accepted an assignment to teach at Holy Cross College, East Pakistan, now Bangladesh.

Sister left Bangladesh in 1971; the next 23 years were spent stateside in religious education, advocacy for the care of the elderly and the poor, and pastoral care. She wrote, “Though not a political activist, I try to take part in some peace and justice issues and try to keep abreast of issues.” In 1994, she moved to the motherhouse to continue such ministries and other volunteer service to the Congregation, including assistant archivist from 2007 to 2014.

Sister Barbara Jeanne has completed her part in the work of Holy Cross and has ended her journey, guided by the star of faith to behold Jesus Christ in glory. She asked that the following farewell, inspired by the Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore, be a part of her celebration of life. Here is her translation in prose:

“I am taking my leave. Bid me farewell, my brothers and sisters. I bow to you all and make my departure. Here, I give you back the keys of my door and I give up all claims to my house. I only ask for final kind words from you. We were neighbors and friends for a long time, but I received more than I could give. Now the day has dawned and the lamplight of my dark corner is out. A summons has come, and I am ready for my journey.”

Sister Ann Therese McAndrew, CSC
May 16, 1925 – December 29, 2020
Entered from Chicago, Illinois
Initial profession on August 15, 1946

Sister Ann Therese McAndrew left clear instructions several years ago on the details of her funeral. She had been a faithful member of the Sisters of the Holy Cross for 77 years when she died at Saint Mary’s Convent, Notre Dame, Indiana, at age 95. She asked that there be no mementos for her, thinking it would be an imposition to have another sister in her entrance group, or band, feel compelled to excel her virtues as a fellow woman religious. As it happened, she alone was the surviving member of her band. As she insisted, “Just speak about the goodness of St. Joseph. I consider him my good friend.”

Sisters of the Holy Cross taught her in elementary school at St. Theodore, Chicago, Illinois. Anna McAndrew’s family included her older sister, Mary Catherine, and brother, James Thomas. Mary Catherine had entered the Congregation only the month before Sister Ann Therese. Sister Therese was known for her keen understanding of children and adolescents. Students and staff loved her. A parent wrote, “In her simplicity she was a role model for religious life, particularly for the teenage kids in the high school she loved.” In her last years at St. Joseph High School in South Bend, Indiana, she had charge of the chapel and loved her time as sacristan, setting up for student Masses.

In July 2014, she retired to a full-time ministry of prayer at Saint Mary’s. She had lived her life quietly as a consecrated woman religious following Jesus Christ. Sister selected Matthew 22:34-40 as the Gospel reading for religious life, particularly for the teenage kids in the high school she loved.”

In her last years at St. Joseph High School in South Bend, Indiana, she had charge of the chapel and loved her time as sacristan, setting up for student Masses.

In July 2014, she retired to a full-time ministry of prayer at Saint Mary’s. She had lived her life quietly as a consecrated woman religious following Jesus Christ. Sister selected Matthew 22:34-40 as the Gospel reading by which she wanted to be remembered. Sister Ann Therese loved God with all her heart, soul and mind. And she did her best to love her neighbor as herself.

Catholics pray to St. Joseph as the patron of a happy death. Clearly Sister Ann Therese pondered her life’s purpose and the ultimate mystery which awaits us all.

Without warning, the lights go out at Our Lady of Holy Cross School in Kasoa, Ghana. The fans stop spinning. Computers become mere hunks of metal and plastic.

At least once a week, learning is disrupted for more than 1,000 students during the school day. Likewise, students living in the new dormitories often find themselves in the dark while studying during after-school hours.

In this West African country the power grid is unreliable and power outages are a regular fact of life. But thanks to a collaboration between the Congregation’s Carbon Footprint Reduction Fund (CFRF) and the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters, the school is converting to solar energy generation, which means the growing campus will no longer have to dread such regular disruptions. Equally important to the school reducing its energy use is its transition to clean energy directly from the sun.

The project furthers the Congregation’s goal to become carbon neutral by 2050 and uphold the statement issued in 2009 (and reaffirmed in 2019) by the Family of Holy Cross (sisters, brothers and priests). The statement reads, in part: “Earth and the life it sustains are precious gifts of God, now radically threatened by climate change and ecological exploitation. Safeguarding these sacred gifts for future generations is a moral responsibility integral to the mission of the Family of Holy Cross.”

“The sisters in Ghana celebrate this important achievement for our students and our Earth,” said Sister Cynthia Godia Bienaan, CSC.

Twenty-four 250W solar panels are installed in classroom buildings and administrative offices. The system is designed to interface with the solar grid so that if solar fails at any point, energy can still be derived from the grid.

The project also contributes in a small way to mitigating climate change and its repercussions in Ghana. In recent years, the country has seen progress in reducing poverty, but climate change could reverse this positive gain as it threatens agriculture, which is critical to the country’s economy.

“We give thanks to all those who have joined with us in this work of caring for creation and improving the learning environment for Our Lady of Holy Cross School, especially through support of our Carbon Footprint Reduction Fund,” said Dana Taylor, assistant Justice coordinator for the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

“In the midst of the Church’s yearlong celebration of Laudato Si’ (May 24, 2020–May 24, 2021), we recognize more than ever that to participate in the care for God’s creation is to create a world in which all people have the necessary tools to flourish … a world in which everything and everyone is connected.”

The Carbon Footprint Reduction Fund (CFRF), recently identified as a “good practice” by the Interdicasterial Working Group of the Holy See on Integral Ecology, supports projects of Holy Cross sisters and their ministries globally that aim to reduce carbon emissions and contribute to ecological sustainability. It provides important support for projects to help them secure outside funding partnerships by providing an initial investment. For those looking to immediately make a direct impact on the care of creation, the CCFR represents an investment worth considering.

Development Report: 2020

“Hope opens new horizons, making us capable of dreaming what is not even imaginable.”

—On Hope, Pope Francis

This past year was perhaps the most challenging year I can recall for us collectively as a global community. The quote above from Pope Francis now speaks to me in a special way as all seek to hold onto hope. All of us have lost something this past year. Certainly, we have lost our normal ways of connecting with one another and for some of us, we’ve even lost friends and family. Despite our challenges, you have continued to join in our ministries’ efforts to provide healing and hope to our world in need. The hope you have provided to so many, including myself and other sisters, became manifest in numerous ways in 2020. Here are just a few examples:

• Three school buses were purchased for Moreau Nursery and Primary School in rural Kirinda, Uganda. Parents no longer have to worry about their children being harmed while traveling to and from school, thanks to your amazing response to our spring appeal.

• We established a COVID Relief Fund and your gifts of nearly $37,000 to this fund enabled our sisters to feed the hungry, and provide soaps, face masks and other critical medical supplies to help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

• You shared more than $730,000 this year for our Retirement Fund, enabling our sisters to receive the best care possible and for us to ensure their safety and health during these difficult days.

Thank you for being such a shining light for us all through these trying times. It is in solidarity with one another that we can meet any challenge put in front of us and hold onto hope for 2021.

—Sister M. Rose Edward (Goodrow), CSC Director of Development
Looking for the perfect gift for Mother’s Day or Father’s Day? Celebrate with the gift of prayer. When you place your order, the Development Office will send your recipients these beautiful cards, designed by Sister Ellen Mary (Taylor), CSC. They will know that they will be remembered by the Sisters of the Holy Cross at Mass on Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. Gifts may be made in honor of someone living or in memory of someone dear. Your donation will help people around the world through Ministry With the Poor. Order now and we will mail your cards at the appropriate time.

Send a Mother’s Day card to:
Name_________________________
Address_______________________
City___________________________State____ZIP_________
☐ Mother’s Day greeting __________________________
☐ in memory of ________________________________
(please list additional recipients on separate paper)

Card given by:
Sign card from_________________________
Address_______________________________
City___________________________State____ZIP_________
Daytime telephone_______________________

Payment: Mother’s & Father’s Day Cards
Amount of donation: $__________
☐ Check payable to: Sisters of the Holy Cross
☐ Credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Name on credit card ____________________________ (please print)
Signature for credit card ____________________________
Card # ____________________________
Expiration date ____________________________

Mail to: Sisters of the Holy Cross, Development Office, 407 Bertrand Hall – Saint Mary’s, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-5000; (574) 284-5641

Mother’s Day & Father’s Day Cards For 2021

Moreau Garden

Gardens are a space for reflection, gratitude, and connection with our loved ones. The Moreau Garden Book of Remembrance offers you a place to make a gift in honor or in memory of someone who will be remembered in the daily prayers of our novices and sisters. Add your name or the name of someone you love by sending the form below and a minimum donation of $200, which will benefit our Ministry With the Poor and Retirement funds.

This gift is: ☐ in honor ☐ in memory
Print name as it should appear in the book on the line below (up to 42 characters and spaces).
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Send a Garden Remembrance Card to:
Name_________________________
Address_______________________
City___________________________State____ZIP_________
Donor Information:
Sign card from_________________________
Address_______________________________
City___________________________State____ZIP_________
Daytime telephone_______________________

Method of Payment: Moreau Garden
Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of $200 or more for each listing (up to 42 characters and spaces). Amount $__________

Check payable to: Sisters of the Holy Cross
Credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express
Card # ____________________________ Expiration Date ____________________________

Name on the credit card ____________________________
Signature for credit card ____________________________

Mail to: Sisters of the Holy Cross, Development Office, 407 Bertrand Hall – Saint Mary’s, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-5000; (574) 284-5641

New Cards For 2021

Give gifts of prayer from the Sisters of the Holy Cross. The Development Office will send cards telling your recipients they are being held in prayer by the Sisters of the Holy Cross. In addition to the cards pictured here, there are get well, celebration, honor and three styles of memorial cards. All of the available cards may be viewed on our website: cscsisters.org. Your tax-deductible donation helps our Ministry With the Poor.

Send a card to:
Name_________________________
Address_______________________
City___________________________State____ZIP_________
(please list additional recipients on separate paper)

Type of card
☐ In memory of: ☐ Calla Lily ☐ Sacred Heart ☐ Our Lady
☐ In celebration of: ☐ Birthday: balloons ☐ Birthday: bouquet ☐ Easter
☐ Encouragement ☐ Get Well ☐ Jubilee
☐ Other: ____________________________

Card given by:
Sign card from_________________________
Address_______________________________
City___________________________State____ZIP_________
Daytime telephone_______________________

Amount of donation: $__________

Check payable to: Sisters of the Holy Cross
Credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express
Card # ____________________________ Expiration Date ____________________________

Name on the credit card ____________________________
Signature for credit card ____________________________

Mail to: Sisters of the Holy Cross, Development Office, 407 Bertrand Hall – Saint Mary’s, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-5000; (574) 284-5641
A heartfelt thank you!

Prayers have been answered and dreams fulfilled! Students now have a safe way to travel to and from Moreau Nursery and Primary School in Kirinda, Uganda. In spring 2020 we appealed for help in purchasing a bus for the students, who faced long and dangerous treks to school. Thanks to the compassion and generosity of so many donors, the school was able to buy not one bus but three! School Headmistress Sister Jacinta Katusabe, CSC, shares her heartfelt thanks and excitement “that our students can now travel safely.” She adds, “You have brought so much hope to our humble school. We are grateful for your love and support to the Sisters of the Holy Cross serving the people of Uganda.”