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THE IDENTITY OF THE RELIGIOUS BROTHER IN HOLY CROSS

An Historical Reflection

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FOREWORD

This paper is adapted from a presentation made on the topic by myself at the Province Meeting of the Brothers of Holy Cross, Eastern Province, November 2, 1985, at Valatie, New York. It is an attempt to synthesize the history of the Brothers' Society in the Congregation of Holy Cross in a particular format, and at this particular time in history as we receive our official approbated constitutions, formulated by the General Chapter of 1986, and revised in light of the recommendations of the Holy See. I hope that my reflection will inform your thinking and discussion on the very nature of our congregation, and on its possible future direction and development.

FORMAT

My chosen format is that of an historical reflection. While I make no claim to being an historian by profession or formal training, I feel there is value in reviewing our story as a community, and I feel competent to pull together the information, and present it in one piece.

One value of historical reflection is that we can see more clearly where the Spirit has led us as a faith community and thus better appreciate what we have today. On the other hand, we dare not allow history to dictate our future nor impede our growth and response to the Spirit today--neither as individuals nor as a congregation. Every founder to some degree broke out of his history. We, too, may be called to nothing less ("History of the Two Societies in Holy Cross," presented at the Midwest Province Forum, November 1980, by Brother James Moroney, C.S.C.).

I introduce a bias into this paper because I am synthesizing our community history from a particular perspective, namely that of the Society of Brothers in the Congregation of Holy Cross--an association of two (originally three) societies in one religious congregation. Therefore, I am not as concerned with documenting parallel situations or circumstances in the Society of Priests or in the Sisters' Congregations, except as they are related to the topic at hand, the Identity of the Religious Brother in Holy Cross.

I take this bias for the purpose of narrowing the focus of the paper. At the same time, the view that I am giving--an historical reflection from the perspective of the Brothers' Society--could be taken from the outlook of the Priests' Society, from the perspective of the Sisters' Congregations or, theoretically, from the view of our lay co-workers who have collaborated with us in ministry over the years. Furthermore, my historical perspective is predominately the American Holy Cross experience, depriving this reflection of the considerable impact of Canadian Holy Cross history on events in the United States.

Finally, I have arbitrarily chosen to present this historical reflection utilizing the categories made popular by Cada, Fitz, et al. in their work, Shaping the Coming Age of Religious Life (Seabury Press, 1979). This, then, introduces a sociological model by which I hope to organize the important dimensions of particular periods of our history, recognizing, and hopefully avoiding the temptation to make the history fit the model.

I have identified five historical periods for consideration:

- I: Brothers of Saint Joseph
- II: Association of Holy Cross
- III: Congregation of Holy Cross, U.S.A.
- IV: Twentieth Century, Part I
- V: Twentieth Century, Part II

I will organize the events of much of those periods according to the categories of: Foundation (or Re-Foundation), Expansion, Stabilization, Breakdown and Critical Phase.

Period I: Brothers of Saint Joseph

A. Foundation

Our foundation as the Brothers of Saint Joseph began with Father James Dujarie after the French Revolution. Among the many structures of society that collapsed in the wake of the Revolution was education, an enterprise carried out primarily by the Church. With that Revolution, education and many other aspects of church life came to a grinding halt. Dujarie first established opportunities for young men in his parish at Ruille-sur-Loir, France. Because Dujarie was the sponsor of these schools, the women who taught for him became known as the "sisters" of Ruille and the men, who were doing their teaching under his direction and sponsorship, became known as the "brothers" of Ruille.

Eventually, Dujarie helped these two groups organize as Sisters and Brothers, and the Sisters became the Sisters of Providence, and the Brothers, the Brothers of Saint Joseph.

In the 1820's in France, if a group was organizing, the government feared the "why's" of their existence: was the group trying to overthrow the government, or re-establish the monarchy? Dujarie, in order to have these men classified so as to teach in the primary schools, had to indicate an official reason for their existence. Therefore, he wrote that the Brothers of Saint Joseph existed to provide primary education of young men in his parish, and to assist in his parish, especially in what we would now call the "mission chapels" or "out-stations." The brothers were laymen who worked alone, or maybe two together, exclusively as teachers. We might ask, did Dujarie found a religious community or fulfill a government requirement? These men became a religious community, however, in this sense: because they needed some direction, Dujarie sent one of the first recruits--later know as Brother Andre Mottais--to the Christian Brothers to make a novitiate. Andre, being the most astute of the young teachers helping Dujarie, was to come back and train others who would come as volunteers to this particular organization. Andre trained them as he had been trained--as a brother. So Dujarie became the superior, then, of a religious group of brothers who called themselves Brothers of Saint Joseph, and he organized them and gave them a reason for existence conformable to the requirements of the French government of the time. The establishment of Dujarie's sisters followed a similar pattern.

B. Expansion

In 1823 the government provided a Royal Ordinance of Approval for the men. A Royal Ordinance allowed men who became Brothers of Saint Joseph or who worked for Dujarie in this way to be exempt from military service, but not to have property rights. Dujarie also introduced annual vows of obedience in this association of the Brothers of Saint Joseph. A period of expansion followed, and by 1828 there were 105 members in this association, spread over fifty houses/schools.

C. Breakdown

There came a breakdown rather rapidly in this period of our history, and there were several individual stresses that contributed to this, especially the political turmoil in France and internal disorders in the community.

Finances were one problem. Since the Brothers could not hold property the land and money of the community were held in the name of the Sisters. The Sisters determined to require some accountability by the Brothers for their use of money, but the Brothers were not cooperative in this matter. As usual, when you are arguing over the books, there are problems, and the Sisters finally decided to separate themselves from the Brothers in terms of finances, petitioning the Bishop of LeMans to do so. The Bishop agreed to the separation, but the split was not a happy occasion for the Brothers of Saint Joseph and the Sisters of Providence. In the end, the Bishop literally had to come and divide the firewood between them, piece by piece!

Another factor contributing to the internal disorder was poor formation and laxity among the Brothers of Saint Joseph. This was due mainly to Dujarie's own age and infirmity (he had rheumatism, and was unable to give the group the leadership and supervision they needed). The formation of the Brothers consisted of an annual retreat and circular letters that Dujarie, with the help of Brother Andre Mottais, would write. Otherwise, they were out of Ruille for the entire school year, one or perhaps two together, teaching in primary schools.

There were also cultural transformations in the society of the day that contributed to a breakdown in the community. For example, the Revolution of 1830 in France had a great anti-religious sentiment associated with it, and introduced a spirit of independence to the country. In that year, one-third of the membership of the Brothers of Saint Joseph quit at the end of the school year, an obvious blow to the small community. There was also poor annual retreat attendance among the Brothers after that time, and a disintegration was apparent. It is interesting to note--and providential in my opinion--that Brother Andre Mottais (one of the first recruits, and an influential Brother) had chosen Basil Moreau (a priest and seminary professor) as his spiritual director; others of the Brothers followed his example, and so we observe a link not only in geography, but in a spiritual relationship between Basil Moreau and these Brothers of Saint Joseph.

D. Critical Phase

A critical phase happened for the Brothers of Saint Joseph in 1835. Dujarie relinquished the superiorship of these Brothers whom he could no longer govern. Moreau accepted the superiorship of the Brothers (at that point there were sixty Brothers and nine novices), and introduced immediate reforms. For example, Moreau transferred the novitiate of the Brothers from Ruille to LeMans, so he could personally direct their formation. He also immediately assigned some Brothers to teaching, but also assigned other Brothers to auxiliary services. Moreau also introduced the vows of religion as a point of stability, and in 1836 Brother Andre Mottais was among the first Brothers to pronounce perpetual vows.

In 1837, a Fundamental Pact was signed between the Brothers of Saint Joseph and a community that Moreau had already gathered about him, the Auxiliary Priests. At the time of this Fundamental Pact, there were about fifty Brothers and ten Auxiliary Priests.

And so we have seen a situation of foundation, expansion, fast breakdown, and in to a critical phase with the Brothers of Saint Joseph being taken over by a new superior, reforms instituted, and a pact signed, joining them with a group of priests. The question at this point is: will the group of Brothers of Saint Joseph become extinct, survive in a minimal sort of "maintenance state," or is there to be a revitalization?

PERIOD II: ASSOCIATION OF HOLY CROSS

A. Foundation/ Revitalization

The mission became definite for these Brothers once they became organized and reformed and joined with the Auxiliary Priests in the Association of Holy Cross. They were lay religious; they were primary-school teachers, and they did auxiliary services. Their institute became one of three societies in an Association of Holy Cross along with priests and sisters. A unique characteristic of this institute--the institute know as the Association of Holy Cross--was an autonomy between the societies: each had its own particular superior, and each had its own particular chapter. The members of each society--priests, sisters, and brothers--exercised equality and mutuality in the affairs of the entire Association.

In terms of the union of these three separate societies in one association, such union was facilitated through collaboration in the apostolate, through an annual general chapter, through the same general superior (Fr. Moreau), and through a "spiritual dedication" that the founder proposed to the members: the priests (Salvatorists) would be dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the brothers (Josephites) to the pure heart of Saint Joseph, and the sisters (Marianites) to the heart of Mary, pierced with seven swords.

In his Circular Letter No. 5 in 1837, Father Moreau wrote to the Brothers of Saint Joseph:

Happily this is what is taking place at Sainte-Croix... Here charity reigns and unites the one hundred and more souls Providence has brought together. Let us earnestly ask our good Master to make this happy state of affairs last, for it is my greatest consolation and the glory of your Institute. It also brings joy to your venerable Founder, who is still vigorous enough in mind and body to take an interest in our labors.

B. Expansion

A period of expansion ensued in the Association, and priests, brothers and sisters were sent from the Motherhouse at Sainte-Croix to Algeria, Indiana and Canada. In 1840 there were 86 brothers (in 39 houses), 45 novices and 15 priests. The first priests pronounced public vows in this year (1840), led by Father Moreau himself.

C. Stabilization

For the Brothers of Saint Joseph, stabilization was a by-product of their association in Holy Cross. The relationship of the Josephites to the Association of Holy Cross is outlined by Father Moreau in his Circular Letter No. 14 of September 1, 1841. (Father Barrosse calls this letter the "Magna Carta" of Holy Cross.)

You are associated with the apostolate of the priests of Holy Cross by the services which you render through your various obediences, either to them personally, or to their students, as well as by the instruction you give to the numerous children in your own schools. As an Institute of primary teachers, your expansion is no longer confined to France alone, but has spread over into Africa and America. With the Sisters who devote themselves to the housework and the care of the sick in our principal establishments, you are united in a spirit of zeal and prayer....

The development of your Institute has been greatly aided by the Association of Saint Joseph, which the Sovereign Pontiff, at the express wish of the good Bishop of the diocese, has deigned to encourage by the grant of numerous indulgences. From all this you can see, my dear sons in Jesus Christ, what a source of blessings, success, and merits is yours. You can appreciate the beauty and glory of your calling if you but know how to make yourselves worthy of it by faithfully imitating the hidden and public life of our Lord.

Assuredly, all these different works, with which your Society is connected in varying degrees, contain many elements of disintegration. Considering them only from the standpoint of human reason, it is difficult to explain how they could begin, organize, develop, and harmonize up to the present....

But the same spirit which gave movement to the wheels of the mysterious chariot in the vision of Ezechiel, ...this self-same spirit, I say, seems to have breathed on the different instruments of the work of Holy Cross. Here, notwithstanding differences of temperament and talent, the inequality of means and the differences of vocation and obedience, the one aim of the glory of God and the salvation of souls inspires almost all the members and gives rise to a oneness of effort which tends toward that more perfect union of hearts which is the foundation of the unity and strength of Holy Cross.

Woe, then, and anathema to the priest, Brother or Sister who by word or action, would attempt to separate establishments which God has willed to unite under the same general authority.

In 1847 Moreau published the first complete set of constitutions for the entire Association of Holy Cross: priests, brothers, and sisters. The union of the three societies highlighted these constitutions. Therein he stressed fully the principle of shared responsibility and the autonomy of each Society, and he wanted to see collaboration, dependence, attachment, and mutual harmony among the three.

D. Breakdown

Seeds of "breakdown" in this period of the Association can be found in several events. In 1846 a "Brief of Approbation" of the two societies, which the Bishop of LeMans opposed, was not approved by Rome. Some Josephites voiced complaints about the nature of the union of brothers and priests, wrote to Bishop Bouvier of LeMans about it, and took their complaint to the General Chapter of 1849.

The Revolution of 1848 in France fomented an unrest in the country and community that led to a large number of departures. The future of the community looked uncertain. Brother Leonard Guittoger and about ten or fifteen Brothers in France and Algeria discussed a plan for separation. They feared the dissolution of the Association and wanted to preserve the Brothers' Society. However, their plans were dropped before the General Chapter of 1849.

The General Chapter of 1855, in view of receiving approval and approbation by Rome of the congregation, provided for the merging of the autonomous governments of the two societies. Provinces then became mixed, but the distinction of the two societies was maintained. All Brothers belonged to the Brothers' Society.

In 1856, Rome issued a Decree of Praise, a final and necessary step toward full approval, It reads:

Worthy of praise is this institute made up of Priests and Layman so joined together in friendly alliance that, while the nature of each Society is preserved, neither prevails over the other, but both cooperate in the best possible way in realizing their respective ends (Quoted in Fr. Barrosse, Circular Letter No. 24, p7).

We see, then, that:

The distinct clerical or lay character of the societies is recognized. Their equality is affirmed: "neither prevails over the other." Their collaboration in achieving their respective "ends" --today we would say "carrying out their respective ministries" --is acknowledged as the purpose of their union. Holy Cross is given existence as a papally approved religious congregation precisely as a congregation characterized by its recognition in its very structures of the distinctness and equality of clerical and lay vocations and their collaboration in mission (Fr. Barrosse, Circular Letter No. 24, p.7).

E. Critical Phase

In 1857 the constitutions were approved for the men's societies. The scheme of the Association of Holy Cross was significantly modified in that the sisters were separated from the men's groups; the autonomous governments of the men's societies were fused, and there were to be priest superiors in the houses, except in those houses exclusively of Brothers. Parity (equal number of priests and Brothers) was maintained on the general council and in the general chapter. At the time of our approbation there were 322 Brothers and 72 priests in the congregation.

In 1866 Moreau was forced to resign as general superior. Bishop Dufal (of Bengal) was elected in absentia as general superior. The news of his election and his subsequent return to France was greatly delayed by the complications of communication and travel. When he finally arrived in 1867, he found the congregation in the midst of great confusion and staggering financial difficulties. He was greatly distressed and overwhelmed by the situation.

Dufal was not the only one distressed. In a letter to Father Drouelle, C.S.C., Procurator General of Holy Cross, Pope Pius IX indicated that the confusion, disunion, and disorganization of the congregation that he had approved a mere ten years earlier were of grave concern to him. He went so far as to declare to Drouelle, "Your Motherhouse must disappear...."

Father Drouelle, a contributor in his own right to the financial problems of the community, did manage to convince the Pope of an alternate plan to the dissolution of the congregation, namely, an extraordinary general chapter that would be held in Rome.

In the midst of this major crisis, Brother Leonard Guittoger secured eighteen signatures on a petition by brothers to separate from the priests. The petition charged gross mismanagement of the affairs of the congregation, and also that "capable Josephites are being influenced to become Salvatorists."

In 1868 an extraordinary general chapter was held in Rome. Bishop Dufal resigned as superior general and Edward Sorin, was elected to replace him. The chapter decided to liquidate the assets of the Motherhouse at Sainte-Croix (in LeMans) in order to pay the outstanding debts, move the general administration to Notre Dame du Lac (in Indiana), forbid Josephites to become Salvatorists (a prohibition which remained in effect for over one hundred years, until the 1974 General Chapter and post-Vatican II interim constitutions). The decision of this chapter addressed the concerns of the "separation petition" by Brother Leonard and other Brothers, and the petition was withdrawn.

PERIOD III: CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS: U.S.A.

A. Refoundation

The chapter decision of 1868 to move the general administration to Notre Dame du Lac was no surprise. While a period of breakdown and crisis was occurring in France, the seeds of revitalization had been sown and were growing in Indiana.

The Brothers sent to the Indiana mission with Father Sorin were primary school teachers and involved in auxiliary services. They had a clear sense of mission and purpose, and consequently a clear identity. Edward Sorin became a "father figure" to these Brothers, representing the American frontier spirit, and adaptation to a new land and circumstances. Vocations to Holy Cross from the ranks of new immigrants abounded.

B. Expansion

The Indiana mission expanded rapidly. After Sorin and the six Brothers arrived at Black Oak Ridge, Washington, Indiana in 1841, they immediately opened a novitiate. Moving to Notre Dame in 1842 gave the small mission group a patrimony of land and location, and by 1845 only three years after the founding of "du Lac," there were 45 Holy Cross personnel there including four priests, four Sisters, 30 Brothers, plus novices and candidates.

By 1854 the Indiana-based mission counted 67 Brothers and 23 priests in 22 United States foundations, including work in primary, secondary and commercial education. This rapid expansion is exemplified by the establishment of six colleges in the twenty-year period between 1856 and 1876 in such places as Susquehanna, Pennsylvania; Watertown, Wisconsin; Cincinnati, Ohio; Galveston, Texas; Brownsville, Texas; Austin, Texas; and Chicago, Illinois.

C. Stabilization

A period of stabilization ensued, largely because from 1860 onwards, most effort in the United States was concentrated at Notre Dame du Lac. Over one hundred foundations were opened between 1842 and 1893, but over sixty of these were closed. The Brothers were involved in most of the foundations as primary, commercial, or college teachers, and a great number in auxiliary services such as prefecting, manual labor and skilled trade enterprises such as farming, carpentry, engineering, construction, etc.

The General Chapter of 1872 established one novitiate for both priests and Brothers, and the General Chapter of 1880 called for a Brother assistant to the priest novice master. The 1865 Chapter decree prohibiting Josephites from becoming Salvatorists was extended to prohibit transfer from one society to another after the level of postulancy.

D. Breakdown

Edward Sorin died in 1893, and we begin to witness the seeds of breakdown again. With the death of their "father figure" the dormant complaints of Brothers began to surface. Some of these complaints were a reaction to a decline in their own membership and in the number of schools. (At this time in the United States, primary education was being taken over rapidly by the religious Sisters.) Other complaints included no systematic recruitment of teaching Brothers, no re-education of primary-level teaching Brothers for higher levels of education, and low morale among the Brothers. A spirit of anti-intellectualism surfaced too. Brothers did not show a great deal of leadership, and often they let others dictate what they were to do.

Fears of extinction again began to threaten the Brothers' Society, and many teachers left the congregation at this time because they could not see what the future held.

In 1901 several Brothers addressed a petition to the superior general, listing these grievances:

--they were losing schools and school personnel; Brothers were being replaced by Sisters very widely in the elementary schools of the U.S.

--there was too much distinction between priests and Brothers and the way they lived community life;

--there was little voice for Brothers in community government especially on the local level.

--the teaching Brothers were being forced into manual labor for lack of teaching jobs available.

--there was little effort in encouraging Brothers' vocations. Part of this breakdown was characterized by the fact of no Brothers in formation from 1903 to 1906.

PERIOD IV: TWENTIETH CENTURY, PART I

A. Critical Period

I consider this period to be an extended critical phase, according to our presentation format. We do find the seeds of refoundation, of course, from our privileged position of hindsight, but for those who lived through this period, this may not have been so clear. For the first time in our history, there was no charismatic leader (like a Dujarie, a Moreau, or a Sorin) on the scene, and I believe that contributes to the critical phase situation of this period for the Brothers.

As early as the general Chapter of 1880 there was a concern voiced over the lack of education offered to the young members of the Congregation, especially to the young Brothers. The concern was community-wide but it was especially to the point in France where the government was tending to require higher standards for teachers before it would approve a school. At first the concerns were not effectively acted upon, but by 1898 the general chapter was ready to make specific recommendations and did so.

At the General Chapter of 1906 one of the complaints against Father John Zahm, the U.S. Provincial, was that he had frequently ignored the directives of the 1898 Chapter in regard to the education of the young Brothers. Zahm was not re-elected provincial at that chapter. Rather, his major opponent in the U.S. Province, Father Andrew Morrissey, was elected U.S. Provincial and held office until 1920. The General Chapter of 1906 responded to some of the problems presented in the 1901 list of grievances by the Brothers, and under Morrissey, some reforms were implemented. For example, it established Dujarie Institute as a formation house for Brothers destined for secondary school teaching, and the recruitment of teaching Brothers was intensified. Young Brothers began to regularly receive at least a high school diploma, and often an A.B. if they were capable of earning it at Notre Dame, and the Brothers moved decisively into secondary education.

Father Francais was the first to encourage Brothers to go into this high school teaching because he saw it as one of the greatest needs of the Church. However, in 1907, of over 210 Holy Cross religious, including novices, there are only forty teaching Brothers. (Parenthetically, 1924 is the first year a bachelor's degree from Notre Dame was earned by a teaching Brother).

The General Chapter of 1906, in further attempting to deal with the 1901 list of grievances of the Brothers, also decreed equal voice in provincial and general chapters for the priests and the Brothers, but the local level equality never really took hold. Brothers were given control over their schools or houses if they were exclusively teachers, such as at Holy Trinity in Chicago.

The problems of inequality, however, were still not solved. In 1910, a petition for separation was addressed to Rome by 48 Brothers of the American province, led by Brother Paul the Hermit, an assistant general. While the chapter of 1906 had elected a new provincial and decreed remedies, Rome did not approve the chapter's decrees until mid-1909. The superior general, Father Francais, permitted the Brothers to discuss and vote on separation but recommended to Rome that their petition be refused. He said that the step would signal further divisions (between provinces, which already largely ignored one another, and between national groups within provinces) and probably ruin the entire congregation. Rome ordered the remedies suggested by the superior general, and the General Chapter of 1912 recognized that the motives underlying the petition no longer existed.

In this critical period, other problems surfaced. In 1932, three requests for separation were signed by a total of 96 priests of the American province, led by Father Thomas Crumley. The roots of this move go back to 1919, when the constitutions of the congregation were being adapted to the new code of canon law. A number of religious wanted extensive governmental changes introduced before the General Chapter of 1920, and directly petitioned Rome to this effect. They were refused, but certain changes they wanted were partially adopted by the chapter of 1920. For example, delegates to provincial chapters were to vote indiscriminately for priest or Brother delegates instead of only priests voting for priests delegates, and only Brothers for Brother delegates, as the petitioners had asked. In mixed houses, the Brothers usually outnumbered the priests, and in chapters they tended to vote as a block. The priests who ultimately petitioned Rome declared this situation a "domination" of the priests by the Brothers and maintained that it ill befitted the "dignity" of the clerical state. The superior general permitted discussion of the question. Before the General Chapter of 1932, it became clear that, except for some American priests, the congregation was opposed to separation, and the chapter eventually voted in favor of maintaining union (44 for and 7 against, with 2 blank votes). A petition was nevertheless sent to Rome and was rejected. Further attempts on the part of the petitioners in 1937 failed. The chapter had settled the fundamental question of principle: union was to be maintained, but it left to the future a full solution of the cause of the difficulty of 1932.

B. Seeds of Refoundation

Just as primary education was ceasing to be the Brothers major field of work at the turn of the century, the staffing and direction of high schools in the United States became the apostolate by which they would become most closely identified down to the present day. Despite the diversification since Vatican II of apostolates among the Brothers, secondary education still engages the services of more Brothers than any other single apostolate. The seeds of refoundation and revitalization, then, were being nurtured through this critical phase. Vocations to the Brothers began to increase, new secondary schools were founded by the Brothers, and a clear apostolic focus began to emerge. Without these seeds of refoundation the erection of autonomous provinces could never have taken place.

The General Chapter of 1945 inherited the task of trying to settle the disputes of the 1930's. Father Cousineau, Superior General at that time, appointed a committee to study changes. From among several suggestions, a plan for autonomous organization of both societies at the provincial level was eventually adopted by this chapter.

The General Chapter of 1945, restored autonomous government by reorganizing the provinces along societal lines. Provinces were thereafter to be composed exclusively of priests and clerics and exclusively of Brothers. However, some modifications made their way into the decisions of this chapter.

The Sacred Congregation for Religious ordered the establishment of coadjutor Brothers in both priest provinces and in Brother provinces. The juridical definition of a coadjutor Brother, according to the Sacred Congregation for Religious, is this: a lay religious without active or passive voice (may neither vote, nor be voted for) in any congregational matters of government, and one engaged in auxiliary services. Therefore, the Sacred Congregation for Religious introduced a category of religious that had never existed in Holy Cross--religious without the right to vote. It further decreed that provinces of Brothers would have coadjutor Brothers and provinces of priests would have coadjutor Brothers.

When the general administration of Father Thomas Barrosse inquired as to the reason for such a decision, and initiated a search of the archives of the Sacred Congregation, the archives revealed no documentation of the reason for such a modification of the 1945 General Chapter decree--only the record of the modification itself.

The Brother's Society, given this decree of modification, appealed for an abolition of a class distinction among themselves as teaching Brothers and Brothers engaged in auxiliary services, and this appeal of the Brothers' Society was granted. Therefore, coadjutor Brothers existed in the priests' Society only.

This brought the circumstance within the congregation (which in 1946 had 376 finally professed Brothers and 387 priests) in which the Brothers engaged in manual labor had to choose to remain in a Brother's province, or to choose to transfer to a priests' province. The record of these changes is as follows:

U.S.A.: 107 remained in the Brothers' province
 59 transferred to a priests' province
 3 teaching Brothers requested transfers
 Canada: 57 remained in the Brothers' province
 59 transferred to a priests' province
 5 teaching Brothers requested transfers
 France: Could not be implemented immediately.

In 1947 the Sacred Congregation for Religious upheld the prohibition of transfer between societies, and decreed that members of the Brothers' Society were forbidden to join the Priests' Society, even after receiving a dispensation from their vows and re-applying! The 1950 Constitutions provided that coadjutor Brothers perform auxiliary services in priests' provinces; auxiliary services were understood by the provincials to exclude teaching. The General Chapters of 1951 and 1968, continuing the prohibition of transfers, decreed that a novice for the Brothers' Society could not later become a member of the Priests' Society.

PERIOD V: TWENTIETH CENTURY, PART II

A. Refoundation

After the lengthy critical phase characteristic of the first part of this century, albeit a period in which significant seeds of refoundation took firm root, Holy Cross entered a new phase of revitalization. The phase occurred in the period immediately following the establishment of autonomous provinces, and was concurrent with the huge upswing of priestly and religious vocations to the Church that followed World War II.

The autonomous provinces went their independent ways as per our Holy Cross traditions of very strong provinces. (We had been going our independent ways as provinces since Sorin went to Indiana...Why should that have changed?) The mission and identity were very clear as autonomous provinces. The priests were identified as educators, chaplains, parish ministers, and itinerant preachers; the coadjutor Brothers, as lay religious who performed auxiliary services in apostolates of the priests; and the Brothers' Society Brothers, as teachers, with some also performing auxiliary services in apostolates under the Brothers' direction.

As a Brothers' Society, all our manpower and resources were directed to our schools and our institutions. Secondary education was identified as our primary apostolate, and we opened schools and other educational enterprises (for example, child-care facilities) around the country. This was a definite response to the needs of the Church of that time, especially in light of the elaborate systems of Catholic education being launched, the baby boom contributing to large numbers of Catholic children in need of education, and the Roman Catholic Church's "coming of age" in American society.

Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, the first Brother provincial in Holy Cross, was a shrewd and charismatic leader, who knew how to motivate people and develop a system of Holy Cross education. Our governance as a province was very mechanical and efficient...a "step-into-line-and-move-ahead" format that proved very appropriate for the times.

Our organization was highly centralized, too. There was an elaborate school system, common financial procedures, and other common practices in our schools. There was a unified sense of school government and resources (common curricula, discipline procedures, dress codes); and power flowed from Notre Dame and obviously, Brother Ephrem. We had "our schools," in part because they allowed the religious to better control the educational environment, and served as financial collateral for further institutional expansion.

B. Expansion

Expansion occurred almost immediately. Overflow crowds of people joined us to become Brothers. In 1958, we split into three American Brothers' provinces, that move having been preceded by a vice-province structure initiated by the East and South-West in 1956. We opened new houses of studies (Austin and North Easton), and another novitiate (Valatie). There was a heavy emphasis on preparing to teach, and also a heavy sacrifice demanded of the group: financial debts were shared equally around the country, and many Brothers started their teaching careers without their bachelor's degree, expecting to complete this work during the summer months or at night school along the way. This was an acceptable practice because of the great needs in the apostolates for the teaching Brothers.

A cultural transformation of sorts took place in our religious identity as we became concerned with professionalism. We had a vigorous apostolic experience as teaching Brothers, enjoyed a high visibility, and a deep sense of unity (and even uniformity) in "making it on our own". Our identity was also enhanced by the 1950 Constitutions which were very clear and specific regarding our role in education, and specifying our community structures and common life practices.

Our vigorous apostolic spirit and the call of the Church to "tithe" personnel for the overseas missions led to the establishment of new foundations in Brazil (1951), Ghana (1957), Liberia (1962), Uganda (1959), and Tanzania, as well as the bolstering of our long-term presence in Bangladesh. Our houses of formation in the 1950's and early 1960's were bursting with novices and scholastics.

C. Stabilization

A stabilization period became evident in the 1960's; we were committed to preserving and passing on our traditions of quality service to God's people, especially in our institutional apostolates. Province properties accumulated, with provincial houses, novitiates, scholasticates, a Brothers' infirmary, and a Brothers' Center being constructed. The "ends" of the congregation, so clearly stated in our 1950 Constitutions as ecclesiastical ministry, Christian instruction and education, foreign missions, and auxiliary services, were easily recognized as the definable ministries of the overwhelming majority of Holy Cross members, especially in the Brothers' Society.

The world about us was beginning to experience a cultural transformation, however, and that transformation was brought home to us rather quickly by Vatican Council II. The College of Bishops called the Church to look beyond our "ghetto mentality"; it called the Church to be inserted into the modern world, and to respond to the needs and longings of that world. This new vision of the Church as the People of God demanded a radical renewal of religious life, an enfranchisement of the laity, and required a quantum leap in the vision of all Catholics. We in Holy Cross entered this period with our characteristic vigor, and the General Chapter of 1968 approved an interim constitution conformable to the vision and reforms instituted by Vatican II.

D. Breakdown

There was a price to be paid for such rapid and all encompassing reforms, however, and that price was reflected in an "Identity Crisis." Who were we as Holy Cross, as religious, and as religious Brothers in this new Church? Such questions were prompted by the almost instantaneous loss of symbols that were associated with our special life: the common dress, specific and legalistic constitutions, and common prayers specific to Holy Cross. Apostolic activity became diversified in response to a broader vision of needs, and the phenomena of individual apostolates, small community living, and living apart from community residences were no longer rare exceptions. There was a drastic drop in the number of candidates and novices entering Holy Cross, and a large number of professed religious departed from the community ranks.

The cultural transformations which affected our life as Catholics, as Holy Cross religious, and as religious Brothers in Holy Cross can be easily traced. Sacrosanctam Concilium (1963), the Vatican II decree calling for a vast restoration of liturgical practice, had an immediate and traumatic effect on all Catholics. Perfectae Caritatis (1965) decreed the renewal of religious life in the Church, with a special emphasis on returning to the spirit and charism of the Founder. Renovationis Causam (1969) outlined a renewal of religious formation in communities, and vastly transformed the root experiences characteristic of our initiation into religious life. Some of our numbers welcomed the reforms with open arms; others felt that their world, Church, and spirituality fell apart, and all were forced to question our religious identity.

Concurrent phenomena in society and the congregation affected our vision of ourselves. The 1960's saw the end of the Colonial Era in the developing countries, and a consequent rise in nationalism. Foreign missionaries were often finding themselves ranked with the colonials. Nationalization of the hierarchies and Church institutions abruptly transformed our role in the missions to one of support and cooperation with inexperienced indigenous leadership. Governmental instability and corruption in the newly independent nations compounded the situation for the long-term missionaries who had know and experienced other ways. The Church's entire mission effort was called into question, and our Holy Cross life and contribution to the missions were similarly affected.

In 1960 there were four novitiate houses in the United States; Jordan Minnesota, and Bennington, Vermont, for the Priests' Society novices (seminarians and coadjutor Brother); Rolling Prairie, Indiana, and Valatie, New York, for Brothers' Society novices. Ten years later, in 1970, there was a single United States novitiate for both Priests' Society and Brothers' Society novices at Bennington. This change reflected two major circumstances, one practical and one philosophical: (1) the drastic decrease in numbers of novices in both societies; and (2) a clarity of understanding that we as Holy Cross members are, first of all, called as religious, and then secondarily, as cleric or lay. Hence, a common initiation into the religious life and the Holy Cross constitutions was philosophically and theologically sound. One might ask whether the bulk of the membership of Holy Cross, formed in separate single-society novitiates attached to the homogeneous provinces, appreciated or understood the second philosophical reason, given the first logistical reason. Nevertheless, such a root transformation in our initiation experience in Holy Cross again raised the question of our identity.

At this point, it seems to me that three major phenomena focus the identity issue: 1) Brothers becoming priests in Holy Cross; 2) The evolution of the coadjutor Brothers; 3) The possibility of a Brother as Superior General.

1) Brothers becoming priests in Holy Cross.

At several places in this paper, I highlight various chapter decrees (and later statutes) prohibiting Brothers from becoming priests in the Congregation. From the beginning these regulations were intended to assure that young Brothers who did not yet have a full understanding of their vocation would not be recruited by an over-zealous priest who did not understand the Brothers' vocation--and probably not his own religious vocation either. The wisdom of Father Moreau, in this regard, extended to giving practical guidance in an imperfect world; his use of the two-society concept and the legal guarantees of the Fundamental Pact between the Brothers of St. Joseph and the Auxiliary Priests (1837) are further examples of this wisdom in practice.

As the decree of inter-society confidence grew, however, the Brothers themselves (although wanting to keep control of such transfers from the Brothers' Society to the priests) pushed to have this restriction made more flexible, not wanting Holy Cross to lose good men who, after serious consideration, thought they had a vocation to be priests in Holy Cross.

In light of this inter-societal confidence, at least among general chapter delegates in 1974, the prohibition against Brothers becoming priests in the Congregation--in effect for 106 years since the General Chapter of 1868--was overturned. Statute 133 was revised to read as follows:

Anyone admitted to the novitiate as a candidate for one of the two societies may not later become a member of the other society without the agreement of both interested provincials, with the consent of their counselors, and the permission of the superior general with the consent of the general assistants.

The General Chapter of 1980, in an appendix, spelled out in detail the procedures for carrying out the societal transfer allowed by the new statute 133.

This statute revision, while in theory allowing the transfer from one society to the other in either direction, had the primary effect of allowing Brothers in the Brothers Society to seek priestly ordination and still remain in the Congregation of Holy Cross; a number of Brothers sought transfer in view of ordination. Some among the membership considered the revision of Statute 133 to undermine the "stability" of the Brothers vocation and pose a threat to the identity of the Brothers of Holy Cross.

2) The Evolution of the Coadjutor Brothers.

With the call of Vatican II for the development of lay ministries in the Church, the role of lay religious (Sisters and Brothers) likewise expanded to ministries beyond the more traditional apostolates. For Brothers engaged in auxiliary services, for example, opportunities to pursue ministries other than those traditional services were allowed. Therefore, a number of Brothers, previously engaged in auxiliary services, commenced training for apostolates in teaching, counseling, drama, administration, nursing, pastoral ministry, etc.

This phenomenon was observed among the coadjutor Brothers, too. However, coadjutor Brothers in Holy Cross, as indicated by the 1950 Constitutions (Const. V), were to engage in auxiliary services in the apostolates of the Priests' Society, and this was understood by the provincials to exclude teaching. Now, several coadjutor Brothers were engaged in teaching, school administration, pastoral ministry, etc., and the opportunity to move into new apostolates, and to receive the training required, was open to coadjutor Brothers. Our post-Vatican II understandings would consider this situation to be a natural evolution in concept and practice, yet this evolution raised anew the question of identity, namely: "What, again, was the difference between Brothers of the Brothers' Society and Brothers of the Priests' Society in Holy Cross?"

The decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life (Perfectae Caritatis, 1965), among its many recommendations, contains in paragraph 15 a directive that, in my opinion, profoundly affected the identity of the religious Brothers in Holy Cross. I quote:

...That all the members be more closely knit by the bond of brotherly love, those who are called lay-Brothers, assistants (coadjutors), or some similar name should be drawn closely into the life and work of the community....

Monasteries of men and communities which are not exclusively lay can, according to their nature and constitutions, admit clerics and lay persons on an equal footing and with equal rights and obligations, excepting those which flow from sacred orders.

The effect of this directive was consequential. In its implementation the General Chapter of 1974 enfranchised the coadjutor Brothers in the Priests' Society, allowing active voice and limited passive voice (i.e. in the Priests' Society, superiors must be priests; Statute 90). This enactment raised a number of complex issues which came to be characterized as the "coadjutor question." Attempting to deal with these issues led to a "Gentleman's Agreement," a hotly debated compromise approach initiated by the priests and accepted by both priests and Brothers at the 1974 General Chapter. While it seemed the best thing to do at the time, the perceived effects of the "Agreement" discouraged recruitment of coadjutor Brothers in the priests provinces, and encouraged collaboration among the provinces of priests and provinces of Brothers. In the long-run, this particular "compromise" proved to be an unsatisfactory solution to the issues.

3) The Possibility of a Brother as Superior General.

The 1974 chapter specified that, on the General Level, the First Assistant General would be a Brother (Statute 71, Statute 68). This chapter also directed the provincial chapters to "examine and give their opinion on a revision of Statute 68 so as to make Brothers as well as priests eligible for the office of superior general" (Decree of the General Chapter of 1974, #3). In light of that consultation, the General Chapter of 1980 decreed that:

The office of superior general is to be opened to all finally professed members of the congregation by revising Statute 68. The chapter mandates the general administration to seek a way to do this before the general chapter of 1986, requesting a dispensation if necessary, without prejudice to the rights the congregation enjoys at present in the areas of formation and jurisdiction... (decree of the General Chapter of 1980, #4).

Father Barrosse's administration attempted to implement this decree without success. With the promulgation of the Revised Code of Canon Law in 1983, another question arose in the ongoing struggle to realize the identity of the Religious Brother in the Holy Cross charism. The code retained the classification of religious communities as either clerical or lay (canon 588). Would the Vatican approve a definitive Constitution for Holy Cross that included a provision opening the office of Superior General to all finally professed members of the Congregation (i.e. priests and Brothers) since we were a congregation with a significant number of clerics?

As the Chapter of 1986 approached, a major issue loomed large: With the evolution of the apostolate of the coadjutor Brothers, the enfranchisement of the coadjutor Brothers and the declaration that the office of superior general be open to all finally professed religious, one needed to ask again: What is the identity of the religious Brother in Holy Cross? And further, what now is the actual difference between Brothers who are members of the Brothers' Society and Brothers who are members of the Priests' Society? Are the Brother members of one society more or less Holy Cross Brothers than the Brothers who are members of the other society? Clearly, the chapter needed to find what structure for the Brothers in Holy Cross best expressed the Holy Cross charism.

E. Critical Period

While any of the aforementioned major questions could arbitrarily have initiated a "critical period" according to the classifications I have chosen in presenting this paper, the General Chapter of 1986 provided a ready focal point. The membership context itself is worthy of note: as of January 1985 there were 1822 members in Holy Cross: 1002 in the Priests' Society (including about 90 coadjutor Brothers) and 820 in the Brothers' Society...a point where Holy Cross was in numbers half clerical religious and half lay religious.

Two major questions remained unsolved. First, while the Provincial Chapters of 1979 and the General Chapter of 1980 affirmed that the office of Superior General be opened to all finally professed religious, the Congregation for Religious had reacted negatively to several formal requests to implement this recommendation. In his memo of April 15, 1986, just prior to the Chapter, Father Barrosse indicated that:

I discussed the matter at length with Archbishop Fagiolo (secretary of the Congregation for Religious), who told me that at this time we shall have to elect a priest superior general, that we should put into our Constitutions the structures (including eligibility for the office of superior general) which we honestly consider to be in accord with our charism and patrimony, and that any eventual changes in the text we submit for approval would be worked out in dialogue with the Congregation for Religious. He said, he hoped that no such changes would be necessary. (Memo of April 15, 1986 to each General Chapter Capitulant from the Superior General).

Secondly, on the question of the coadjutor religious, the Provincial Chapters of 1985 were split in their recommendations. Two examples illustrate the point:

From the South-West Brothers' Province:

The Provincial is asked to forward the following statement to the Superior General as input for the General Chapter of 1986.

Father Dujarie founded the Brothers of St. Joseph to work in union with priests and sisters. Father Moreau joined the auxiliary priests and the Brothers of St. Joseph in founding a single congregation. Until the General Chapter of 1945, initiating autonomous provinces, all brother-candidates were incorporated into the Brothers' Society. After the General Chapter of 1945, the Congregation of Religious intervened, initiating membership of brothers in the Priests' Society.

Because this structure seems to confuse the public identity of the brothers in either society as well as act as an obstacle to full collaboration between the societies, the South-West Provincial Chapter encourages the General Chapter of 1986 to work toward integration of the two groups of brothers in Holy Cross.

Respecting the personal history of the individual coadjutor brothers, this chapter recommends that, in any such integration, although these brothers may continue in the Priests' Society all future brother-candidates would be incorporated into the Brothers' Society.

From the Eastern Priests' Province:

The chapter endorses the vocation of the brother in the Priests' Society.

The chapter endorses resuming acceptance of brother candidates in the Priests' Society.

The chapter endorses our continuing collaboration with the Brothers' Society.

The council of the Congregation proposed that the General Chapter of 1986 deal primarily with the approval of the Constitutions as its agenda and that any related issues be dealt with in that context. In his circular letter no. 24, Father Barrosse outlined the founders vision and the history of collaboration among the Societies of Holy Cross (priests, brothers, sisters) and, in light of this background, posed a number of questions to ask ourselves and issues to address. He closed the letter with a reflection on discernment and a prayer that both before the General Chapter and during its sessions it would be the sincere desire of all involved to engage in true discernment of God's designs on our future.

The Chapter prepared a Constitution text that was presented for approbation to the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes on November 15, 1986. The Constitutions established that all lay religious would belong to the Brothers' Society and all clerical religious belong to the Priests' Society. Provinces would be designated as either homogeneous or mixed: that is composed of members of one society, priests or brothers, or of both societies. It opened all leadership in mixed provinces (vice-provinces, districts) and the office of Superior General, to all finally professed members of the Congregation. According to membership statistics published in letter # 5 of Superior General Claude Grou, the Congregation included 1897 professed religious in September 1987. This new societal breakdown counted 905 members belonging to the Brothers' Society and 992 to the priests' Society.

On April 26, 1988, the long-awaited reply was received but was not a simple unconditional yes to the text. The only important point where there was a disagreement with the proposed text was the question of a Brother superior general. The Congregation for Religious insisted that the office of Superior General be reserved to a priest, and that the vicar be a Brother.

Positive breakthroughs in the approval according to Superior General Claude Grou included an acknowledgement by an official Roman Congregation of the unique nature of our Congregation--that is, not designated as clerical yet losing none of the rights and privileges accorded clerical congregations, and the possibility for Brothers to be major superiors on every level except that of Superior General.

The Superior General asked for a broad consultation on the matter of accepting the approved text. On October 20, 1988, Father Grou indicated by memo:

We have just received word that the text of our constitutions has been approved by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. The official date of the approbation is noted as September 15, 1988. When the members of the general council came back from the provincial chapters in the month of August we carefully considered the responses we had received up till that time from the community on the questions surrounding the approbation of our constitutions. Two things seemed clear to us. First, there is a strong desire from all sides in the community that we continue to strive after a full expression of the type of equality between the members of the two societies that was proposed in the text presented at the end of the general chapter. Secondly, the majority of the religious agreed that we should go ahead with the approval of the constitutions even if the desired equality is not fully expressed, provided that it is quite clear that we accept this restriction only as a step towards a text that will eventually embody our ideal fully.

The critical times continue. On January 6, 1989, a letter was sent to the General Council registering distress with the news that the possibility of a Brother being Superior General had been removed from the Constitutions. The letter was signed by sixty-seven Brothers, all of the signers members of one of the four homogeneous Brothers provinces in the Congregation. I quote from the letter to document the concerns:

From our perspective, the Congregation has bartered away the equality of membership in Holy Cross which was envisioned by the 1986 General Chapter. It has given in on a principle upon which it should have stood firm.

We are particularly concerned that Holy Cross is allowing the Vatican to define the terms of the discussion. In his October 20 letter to the Provincials and District Superiors, Claude Grou says that Archbishop Fagiolo "answered that this concept cannot be accepted yet." The Archbishop said this despite the fact that Holy Cross has been in dialogue with the Vatican about the ability of a Brother to function as superior general for twenty years, since the legislation of the 1968 General Chapter. CRIS again says that a Brother as superior general "cannot be accepted," and Holy Cross has to adjust.

We expect you as members of the General Council to explore some creative alternatives to the situation which CRIS has imposed. Now, more than ever, we Brothers need to discuss our identity, define ourselves, and not allow ourselves to be defined as second class citizens.

As one option, the possibility of establishing the Brothers as a separate congregation within the family of Holy Cross might be investigated. Some members might consider this option drastic, but we have historical precedent for this in the separation of the Sisters in 1857. We believe that investigating such a separation releases untapped creativity to envision alternatives to the present impasse.

As another option, we suggest that possible responses to the present situation be part of the study of the Lay Society which is to take place in the near future.

And so, the quest of the religious Brothers in Holy Cross to discuss their identity, to define themselves, and to avoid being defined solely by others continues. It is a quest that is constitutive to the nature and identity of Holy Cross itself.

As we begin anew this dialogue to seek ways for us to participate equally in the life of Holy Cross and the Church, we pray for fortitude, creativity, and openness to the prophetic call of the Spirit. Let us continue to pray for one another at this challenging moment in our collective history.

John R. Paige, C.S.C.
June 18, 1989
Holy Cross History Conference
Stonehill College
North Easton, MA

APPENDIX: MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

I. Brothers of St. Joseph

1828 105 Brothers 50 houses/schools
1835 60 Brothers/9 novices

II. Association of Holy Cross

1837 50 Brothers 10 Auxl priests
1840 86 Brothers 15 priests 39 houses
1857 322 Brothers 72 priests

III. Congregation of Holy Cross: U.S.A.

1845 (Indiana) 30 Brothers 4 priests
1854 (Indiana) 67 Brothers 23 priests 22 houses
1842 - 1893: 100 foundations opened; 60⁺ foundations closed.

IV. & V. Twentieth Century, Part I & Part II

1907 40 teaching Brothers.....out of 210 CSC religious

		Perpetually Professed	Temporarily Professed	Novices	Total	Grand Total
**						
1932	Priests	406	114	63	583	
	Brothers	454	83	46	583	1166
1938	Priests	590	75	67	732	
	Brothers	565	128	76	769	1501
1946	Priests	692	139	82	913	
	Coadjutor Bros.	96	17	8	121	1821
	Brothers	612	136	39	787	
1950	Priests	806	144	86	1036	
	Coadjutor Bros.	98	24	11	133	2153
	Brothers	663	228	93	984	
1956	Priests	976	167	89	1232	
	Coadjutors	121	26	9	156	2592
	Brothers	890	200	114	1204	
1962	Priests	1106	205	86	1397	
	Coadjutors	132	30	12	174	3046
	Brothers	1102	283	90	1475	
1964	Priests	1150	204	72	1427	
	Coadjutors	144	27	11	182	3140
	Brothers	1149	265	118	1532	
1966	Priests	1142	197	36	1375	
	Coadjutors	139	27	4	170	3058
	Brothers	1132	300	81	1513	
1968	Priests	1157	144	36	1337	
	Coadjutors	115	20	4	139	2857
	Brothers	1116	233	32	1381	
1974	Priests	1032	65	25	1122	
	Coadjutors	115	3	1	119	2308
	Brothers	971	75	21	1067	
1980	Priests	972	66	21	1059	
	Coadjutors	94	0	1	95	2089
	Brothers	875	45	15	935	
1985	Priests	909	86	45	1040	
	Coadjutors	88	0	0	88	1989
	Brothers	810	39	12	861	

** Statistics published in CL # 13 & CL # 25 of Superior Genl T. Barrosse CSC

*** Statistics published in CL # 5 of Superior Genl Claude Grou CSC

*** 1987 priests 922 total:
Brothers 905 1897