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ARE THEY DEAD LETTERS TODAY?
SOME RECURRING THEMES
IN THE LETTERS OF SUPERIORS GENERAL
(1868-1986)

by
Thomas J. Shea, CSC

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Basil Moreau, Founder of Holy Cross, wrote his last circular letter #188 from LeMans, France on June 21, 1866. In this letter he wrote to his Reverend Fathers and Dear Brothers:

"As I thank you for your feast day wishes, I am happy to inform you that His Holiness, after having refused to agree to my resignation which I offered on my arrival at Rome and again at my departure, has since agreed to accept it and to appoint Father Pierre Chappé as Vicar General until the next chapter. You must henceforth obey him as you would me, and to apply to him for all your needs..."

With this letter Holy Cross passed from the foundational period of its history to its developmental stage.

The General Chapter of 1866 elected Father Pierre Dufal, Vicar Apostolic of Dhaka in Bengal, as Superior General. Dufal was not at the chapter that elected him and he tried to decline the election. But Rome insisted in March 1867 and he sailed from Bengal for France in July 1867 arriving at LeMans in late September. Discovering the extent of the financial problems in France and the continued internal disputes there, he left for Rome in January 1868 to offer his resignation. His resignation was finally accepted and he convened an extraordinary general chapter in Rome for July 1868 to elect his successor. At that chapter Edward Sorin was elected third Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross.

EDWARD SORIN (1868-1893)

Edward Sorin had joined Holy Cross after his ordination as a diocesan priest in LeMans in 1838. After a very brief period of formation, Moreau sent him as superior with 6 brothers to open a new mission in the frontier of the United States in the diocese of Vincennes, Indiana. Sorin quickly adapted to his new surroundings and the American way of life. Perhaps because of the different approaches to life in the wilderness of Indiana and in the city of LeMans in France there was continual tension during the years between the Founder and Sorin. During the 1860's Sorin passed to the open opposition to Moreau together with his good friend Louis Champeau and with Victor Drouelle in France. In the election of a superior general in the chapter of 1866 Rome had removed these three names from the list of those eligible for election. This was not the case in the general chapter of 1868 when the internal crisis and financial situation of the congregation in France had gotten even worse. Rome had a poor image of Holy Cross and there was fear that Rome would dissolve the congregation so a strong leader was needed to resolve the problems at hand. Edward Sorin was the man chosen for the task of giving firm, hopeful leadership to the struggling congregation.

Sorin had much hope for the Congregation in the new world in the United States and even in Canada but he did not believe that there was much hope for the congregation in France. However he immediately dedicated much time and energy to work to pay off the enormous debt in France and to strengthen the congregation there where many religious had abandoned Holy Cross after Moreau's resignation. He traveled almost yearly to France and to Rome during his - years as superior general. The decisions that he had to make to resolve the problems in France after the chapter of 1868 widened his rift with Moreau. In his circular letters, he mentioned Moreau only once in a very brief notice of the founders death in his circular letter of January 31, 1873.

Sorin's life and his concerns were for the growth of the Congregation in the New World and for the Sisters of the Holy Cross who were separated from the Marianites by Rome in July 1869. He believed that the future of Holy Cross was there. In his circular letters he spoke mostly of the works of the Congregation in the United States. He rarely mentioned Canada. In his visits to France he spent time at the college in Neuilly outside Paris where his good friend Louis Champeau was the principle. When Champeau died in 1880 Sorin wrote long circular letters praising him. While visiting France, Sorin oversaw the payment of the huge debt there and was concerned about the future of the congregation due to the unstable and anti-clerical political situation. In France the antichurch laws during the 1870's and 1880's caused havoc on the growth and the stability of the religious there. He invited the religious in France in 1880 to come to Notre Dame or Montreal but few of the religious accepted his invitation. He was always concerned about the congregation in his home-land of France but he wrote that the Notre Dame Province is "the most blessed" and he wanted to be remembered there.

Because of the difficulties in the Bengal mission with personnel and the financial difficulties in the Congregation, Sorin asked Rome to let the Congregation withdraw from the mission there in 1872. Rome agreed but in 1888 reminded the congregation that it must beware of the lack of primitive energy that turns to apathy and urged the Congregation to return to Bengal. A group of 3 priests, 6 Brothers and 9 Sisters sailed for Bengal on September 19 1888.

At Notre Dame Sorin had founded the Ave Maria Press in 1865 and in his circular letters encouraged all the members of the congregation to promote the magazine dedicated to Mary. He wrote in his circular letter of December 7, 1885, that "education is the chief object for which our congregation exists." He wrote continually in his circular letters about the problems and growth at Notre Dame. He wrote that teachers are the guardian angels of the students to make them Christians - thus the importance of Catholic education. He insisted that the end of the congregation's ministry in education is the formation of Christian scholars and that it is necessary to cultivate hearts more than brains. He wrote that he had received many requests to staff and open schools but could only respond to half of them because of the lack of vocations. In 1885 there were many laymen both on the farm and teaching at Notre Dame because there were not sufficient vocations even though at the time there were 460 priests and brothers and 650 Sisters of the Holy Cross in the United States. He quoted a visitor to Notre Dame who wrote about what he saw there:

"The Order is not severe. All it requires is good will, good health, and a devotedness to duty. A prominent feature in this young vigorous Order is the union of priests and brothers under a common rule. This is a feature peculiar to this order and gives it a remarkable strength and power for developments."

Sorin wrote often in his letters on the importance for the religious to keep the rule; to foster devotion to the Sacred Heart, the chief patron of the congregation, and to Mary and Joseph; to avoid all unnecessary expense; to avoid travel and vacations with family; and to promote vocations. He addressed all his letters to "Dear Fathers and Beloved Children" on stationary with the letterhead of "the Congregation of the Holy Cross".

GILBERT FRANCAIS (1893-1926)

Gilbert Francais, who had joined the French Province of Holy Cross in 1867 and who had studied at the Holy Cross International House of Studies in Rome was principal at the College in Neuilly near Paris when he was elected Coadjutor Superior General to Sorin with the right of secession at the general chapter of 1892 with 19 of the 21 votes. He became superior general at the death of Sorin on October 31 1893. His first concern as superior general was the importance of providing quality education for all the religious. He took the initiative in 1895 to establish a house of studies for the brothers and a house of studies for the seminarians at the Catholic University in Washington, DC and in Rome. He wanted both brothers and priests to apply for advanced studies. He strengthened the vocation and the formation of the brothers at a time when some thought that they were a dying breed in the United States due to the fact that the sisters congregations were being sought for the parish grade schools since they were cheaper labor. Francais said that the apostolate of the high school would be the special apostolate for the brothers. He felt that it was essential and indispensable that the Brothers have knowledge of religion that is certain, well ordered and developed. He wrote that God must be #1 in our lives as religious and we must put our talents at his service. We must not be in a hurry with the process of formation. We must go slowly. It is our religious duty to reform ourselves again and again and to transform ourselves continually. The older we grow, the greater becomes our obligation to do so. We ought not to forget that there are 3 stages of formation - novitiate, scholasticate, and all of life. Adore Jesus present in us. Give our whole selves to him. Make time for God. All this is essential to our religious life. Make time for a Holy hour each week and for thanksgiving and visits to the Blessed Sacrament each day. It is essential to develop our body, mind and spirit but most especially the spirit. In community watch our tongues, pray, be kind, see God in others, sacrifice, use time well. live weariness well, seek solitude and silence, avoid criticism and gossip, read serious and historical books, put our faith in Jesus. Do not doubt that we have been called by Jesus. Spend time with Jesus and Mary. Begin again and again always when we fail to love. Love one another. That is how to live religious life in Holy Cross.

On January 12, 1899 Francais wrote a beautiful letter on Dujarie and Moreau on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the founder. Around that same time Rome reminded the chapter of 1898 that the mission in Bengal was the "Raison d'etre" of Holy Cross, (that is to say that it owed its approval as a congregation by Rome to the fact of accepting the mission in

Bengal.) Thus the Chapter reinstalled the fourth vow to identify those who had a vocation to Bengal and established a mission seminary in Rome. The political situation in France at the time dispersed many religious to the United States, Canada and Bengal. Gilbert Francais however stayed at Angers in France to accompany the elderly religious there. The General Chapter of 1906 regulated the relations between the societies of the priests and brothers. At this chapter the brothers of their own volition ceded any rights that they might have to be provincials in the congregation. It also moved the responsibility for the mission in Bengal from the French province to the provinces of the United States and Canada. Francais wrote in his circular letter of 1906: "Bengal is the preeminent work of Holy Cross."

During the first decade of the twentieth century Francais wrote some beautiful circular letters on the themes of vocations, the duties of superiors, work, and the apostolic and missionary spirit in the congregation. Francais reminded the community of the importance of living our religious life if we wanted success in our apostolate. Religious life is like a tree with its roots in its traditions and its growth above the ground. He cautioned the religious against falling into old ruts. He was also concerned about the lack of vocations. After the Chapter of 1906 he wrote to Rome asking for a clarification on the obligation of the vow of poverty in Holy Cross since he felt that in the Congregation we were not living the vow as stated in our constitutions.

On January 24, 1913 Pope Pius X wrote to Francais: "Remember that for the sake of the mission in Bengal your institute with its constitutions and rules were approved." Bengal continued to be the chief mission of Holy Cross. The General Chapter of 1920 decreed that each house of the congregation should have a promoter for the Bengal mission and approved a Vicar for the Bengal mission with all the rights of a provincial. The religious working in Bengal would be allowed to visit their home province every 12 years and if they were teachers every 7 years.

Shortly before the general chapter of 1920 there was a lot of discontent in the United States Province. Some priests and brothers wanted a change in the Constitutions on the form of electing delegates to the provincial and general chapters. Since only the priests could be provincials and since provincials were appointed, the priests felt that they did not have enough elected delegates at chapters. Rome had forbidden any talk or meetings on the subject until the next general chapter. The chapter of 1920 implemented a new system of electing delegates ad experimentum for 10 years. It also celebrated on July 15, 1820 the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Brothers of St. Joseph by Jacque Dujarie. It established 4 years of biblical studies for all the brothers after their novitiate and noted that the brothers' vocation should be seen as complimentary and not inferior to the parish priest.

Francais insisted on the need that all religious should fortify their studies and to dedicate time in their busy lives for meditation and a weekly holy hour. He wrote about the importance of poverty, apostolic zeal, the weekly Holy Hour and studies as essential to religious life-especially poverty as the most essential. He felt that obedience was the sap of life in a congregation. He also wrote that the congregation had to return to its original *raison d'être*, that there is genuine unity in variety and active variety in unity. Tradition is not petrified but is a vigorous force, supple in its vigor and capable of adapting itself to new needs. He felt that there was a great need

for home missions and to evangelize outside the classroom, that there should be a missionary spirit in each province, and that our apostolate should be in hidden away and abandoned places. What attracts vocations is sacrifice. Francais asked the Congregation to decentralize and not to put all in one place like Notre Dame and Montreal.

In the general chapter of 1920 Francais asked for a coadjutor to help him because of failing health. Andrew Morrissey, Provincial in the United States Province, was elected as his coadjutor but died shortly afterwards during a visit to Bengal. Francais wrote his last circular letter on June 26, 1926.

JAMES DONAHUE (1926-1938)

James Donahue was elected superior general at the general chapter of 1926 when Francais retired due to poor health. That same general chapter limited the term of superior general to 12 years.

Donahue's first decision was to visit all the houses of the congregation to listen to the opinions of the religious around the continued discontent with the form of electing delegates to the general and provincial chapters which had begun back before the chapter of 1920 and was still not satisfactory to a lot of the membership. During his visit to all the houses, Donahue saw growth and prestige and prosperity everywhere. He felt however that there was a need in the congregation both personally and as a community for a "spirit of the cross." He urged specialization in studies to respond to the needs of a changing world. He also insisted on the importance of personal holiness since that is our reason to be as religious of Holy Cross.

The General Chapter of 1926 reestablished the Province of France that had been dispersed at the beginning of the century by anti church laws. The chapter decided to buy back the Solitude in LeMans in memory of the founder, Basil Moreau. In 1931 Donahue repurchased the Church in LeMans also as a testimony to Moreau. He felt that there was much misunderstanding in the congregation about our founding. He called for a return to knowledge and devotion to Moreau and his spirit of union as the principal characteristic of Holy Cross. In 1937 there was a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Holy Cross in LeMans with the rededication of the church that Moreau had built. The rededicated church was to be a symbol of Holy Cross as an international community with its roots in LeMans.

The Chapter of 1932 voted by a decisive majority in favor of the union of the two societies in Holy Cross and approved a new voting system for delegates to chapters to prevent the domination of one society over the other thus resolving the discontent that dated back to 1919 and also voted to uphold parity on both the general and provincial levels of government. The Holy Hour, a long tradition in Holy Cross was also to be continued in all the houses

Despite the economic depression of those years, there was a great growth in Holy Cross. The Congregation opened novitiates and new missions in Poland and in the eastern part of the United States. Donahue wanted the United States Province to decentralize from Notre Dame. In 1937 there were 1030 religious in the congregation in perpetual vows with 207 in temporary vows and

139 novices. 69 of these religious ministered in Bengal which in the chapter of 1926 had been divided into two vicariates - Dhaka under the United States province and Chittagong under the Canadian Province. Donahue reminded the community that its *raison d'être* was (1) personal sanctification. (2) missions in rural and neglected places and (3) education. In this spirit he invited the United States Province to consider new missions among the black and Hispanic populations and to poor and abandoned children.

ALBERT F. COUSINEAU (1938-1950)

Albert F. Cousineau was elected superior general at the general chapter of 1938. He was the first Canadian born superior general. At the time of his election the political situation in Europe was causing problems for the houses there. All the religious in the newly opened French province were called to military service. The recently opened parish and novitiate in Poland were closed. The students in the international house of studies in Rome were recalled. Eustace Gagnon, a Holy Cross priest, and Brother Charles Edward were held in German concentration camps in France. Cousineau wanted to move the general administration to Rome but because of the political situation and eventual war that was impossible. But he did move it from Notre Dame where it was located for years in a small apartment of the community residence first to Washington DC in 1940 and then to New York City in 1945. He invited the Marianite Sisters to staff the general administration's headquarters in both places. Despite the world situation Cousineau visited Bengal, Poland and France in 1939.

Cousineau opened the cause for Brother Andre in Montreal in 1940, three years after Andre's death. He wrote on the importance of devotion to Joseph and also of devotion to the Sacred Heart which is a symbol for love in our religious lives. He too insisted that our *raison d'être* was the mission in Bengal when he announced that a novitiate would be opened there in 1938 after the congregation had given many years to developing the local church vocations. During the war 15 Holy Cross religious (5 brothers, 5 sisters and 5 priests) were detained as prisoners of war in the Philippines on their way to Bengal.

In November 1942 Cousineau called on the congregation to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Notre Dame now with 3000 students remembering both Sorin and Moreau. In his circular letter #12 he wrote: "Moreau's sincere and generous good will frequently brought him into conflict with the ordinary prudence considered practical." The founding of Notre Dame by Sorin, 3 teaching brothers and 3 coadjutor brothers (a farmer, a tailor and a carpenter) was a result of obedience and faith in the providence of God by all concerned. In 1943 after having published the circular letters of Moreau, he wrote about the 2 societies in Holy Cross:

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"A society of priests learned in the sacred and profane sciences and capable of improving the level of teaching in seminaries and colleges... and to go out as missionaries to aid the pastors of souls by preaching retreats or giving missions when requested by them" (Moreau). "A society of brothers of which the members would aid the pastors as sacristans, choir-masters or teachers in their schools" (Dujarie).

During the early 1940's Cousineau opened new foundations in Latin America-in Chile, Haiti and Brazil. Cousineau wrote of these new endeavors of the Canadian and American Provinces: "Hopeful that soon priests and brothers of other provinces will be active in the vast continent of South America where our assistance is needed and greatly desired." During this same period two new vice provinces were established in Canada - the Acadian and the English-Canadian.

Cousineau guided the Congregation through the years of restructuring. The General Chapter of 1945 postponed for one year due to the war, reaffirmed Moreau's vision of unity between the 2 societies of Holy Cross by establishing homogeneous provinces for priests and brothers united by a general administration free from provincialisms. The Chapter affirmed Dujarie as the founder of the Brothers of St. Joseph, Moreau as the founder of the Province of France, Sorin as founder of the United States Province, and Verité as founder in Canada and Bengal. It established that new vice provinces would be subject to the general administration. The chapter called for collaboration between the provinces and to avoid all provincialism by insisting on autonomy in unity. An offer for a new mission in Kwangsi, China was rejected by the Chapter because of the continuing needs of the Bengal mission. Pope Pius XII blessed the autonomous provinces and asked the congregation to strengthen its interior life and to introduce the cause of the founder. In 1946 at the invitation of the Mother Generals of the three congregations of the Holy Cross Sisters, Cousineau traveled to LeMans to begin the process of sainthood for Basil Moreau.

In 1947 the congregation celebrated the 100 years of Holy Cross in Canada remembering the founders there - Verité in 1847 and Reze in 1849. Cousineau wrote about dedicating the province of Canada where the Oratory is located to Joseph, the Province of France to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the United States Province where Patrick Peyton had begun his Family Rosary Crusade to Mary.

After the chapter of 1945 Rome forbade the passing from the Brothers Society to the Priest Society and established coadjutor brothers in the priests' society. An international house for studies was established in LeMans and Paris. Invitations were received to open missions in Australia, Japan, the Philippines, Palestine and Argentina. The Eastern Vice province in the United States was established in 1948. All the provinces were developing and progressing well. The English Canadian Province opened a retreat house in England near Liverpool together with the Marianites. This house was to serve as a house for postulant's vocations from Ireland and England.

Cousineau wrote often on poverty. He felt that it was not lived in Holy Cross. He also reminded the community that saving others through zeal depends on sanctifying ourselves as religious by transforming ourselves into Christ. He insisted on the importance of nurturing the interior life, prayer, keeping the rule, following the founder, spiritual exercises and devotion to the Holy Family as a source of our unity in Holy Cross. He reminded the congregation that the foreign missions especially in Bengal were #1 among our works, and then came the Oratory, Family Rosary, and Ministry to Blacks and Hispanics, social catholic action, work with delinquent boys, the press, and teaching and preparation for it. He called on all to thank God for the marvelous development of the homogeneous provinces as a return to Moreau's vision of 2 societies united by one general administration. The Congregation in 1949 numbered 1152 members in the priests'

society including 140 coadjutor brothers and 961 members in the brothers' society - a total of 2113 religious of Holy Cross.

CHRISTOPHER O'TOOLE (1950-1962)

Christopher O'Toole was elected superior general at the general chapter of 1950 which revised the constitutions. Pope Pius XII asked the capitulants to strengthen the interior life of the congregation. He said that individual holiness comes through fidelity- to the rule. He asked the congregation to foster catholic action as an antidote to communism. The Chapter prohibited personal television sets in rooms. It affirmed Moreau as the true founder of Holy Cross in the strict sense of the word who had united two groups in Holy Cross. Dujarie is the founder of the Brothers of St. Joseph who were united by Moreau to his group of auxiliary priests to form the new association of Holy Cross. Sorin and Verité are founders in the United States and in Canada respectively only in the broad sense of the term. O'Toole considered devotion to the mystical body of Christ as a source of unity in Holy Cross. He encouraged the ministry of catholic social action and the press. He announced that the family rosary crusade was now international with crusades in Argentina, Africa and England and he praised the mission band ministry in Chicago, in Texas and in the Eastern part of the United States. He reintroduced perpetual adoration in Holy Cross to pray to avoid another world war and to combat communism. The Brothers opened an international school for English speaking boys in Rome and the general administration finally moved from New York City to Rome in order to be with other religious communities and to be free of provincialism. An international house of studies was also built along side the new generalate on land bought by James Donahue back in 1931.

Bengal celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1952. 172 priests, 90 brothers and 70 sisters of Holy Cross had served there and now there were native vocations for Holy Cross. O'Toole wrote that Holy Cross needed to attend blacks and Mexicans in the United States and that the religious themselves were the best vocation advertisement. He introduced the cause of Moreau in Rome and invited the community to celebrate the 50 years of the Oratory in Montreal.

The General Chapter of 1956 divided the United States Province of Brothers into 3 provinces- 50% in the Midwest province and 25% in both the new Southwest and Eastern provinces. It recognized that Holy Cross was 22nd in size among clerical religious institutes and 67th in size among all religious congregations at that time. In 1957 the Congregation celebrated the 100th anniversary of Roman approval.

The Midwest province of brothers opened a mission in Ghana in West Africa in 1957 and the Indiana province and the Eastern Brothers opened missions in Uganda in 1958 and in 1960 respectively. O'Toole encouraged the special training of candidates for the missions giving them an appreciation for the particular mode of life and the national customs of the people to be served. Holy Cross needed to adapt to the language and cultures of the people we serve. He felt that the congregation needed to grow in its missionary vocation which also offered the possibility, of collaboration among all the provinces in Holy Cross and to grow out of our insular attitudes. He wrote that we need to be forward looking-the Church of the future. He urged the

community not to hold on to tradition for the sake of tradition. Discovering something more hopeful for our spiritual life is the best tradition because it is alive.

O'Toole reminded the congregation of the spirit of union. Generous obedience is owed to this union on the general level with the same constitutions and general administration. Collaboration is called for on the provincial and local level. Love is the sign of unity on the personal level. He asked the general chapter of 1962 to look at the life style in the congregation especially with regard to poverty (television in private rooms, travel, clothes, etc.)

GERMAIN-MARIE LALANDE (1962-1974)

Germain-Marie Lalande, elected at the General Chapter of 1962, was invited to participate in the second Vatican Council by Pope John XXIII. During the years of the council his circular letters were few and far between but in them he tried to imbue in the religious the importance of the Council for the Church and for Religious Life. He called the religious of Holy Cross to be the vanguards of living Vatican II. In the mission he wrote, be ecumenical, be auxiliaries with specialized ministries; inculturate - do not stay French, Canadian, or American; respect and trust the charisma of lay people, collaborate with them in a spirit of brotherhood rather than paternalism; live our Holy Cross tradition in a dynamic and progressive sense. We need to form our young religious to be adults and not to remain as children by forming them in personal and community responsibilities. We need to take time with the Lord in meditation, convert our hearts to the spirit of the gospel, discover the presence of the spirit in the world, discover that we are all God's people and serve others as brothers, and to do with others and not for others. See the spirit in others who are different from us and who live with us daily. Lalande called for a careful preparation for the general chapter of 1968 during which the congregation would reform its constitutions according to the decrees of the Second Vatican Council and to make Holy Cross truly auxiliaries in the Church. 31% of the 2966 religious in 1967 responded to the general consultation on the new constitutions. In February 1967 Lalande convoked a meeting of the major superiors in Rome declaring that the congregation was in a "state of chapter." He wrote that religious life means faith in God and in Jesus as the absolute in our lives. It is a journey of risk and adventure in a love relationship with God. Our vocation is a gift from God and a call to be always ready for a new start, a new beginning. To foster our religious vocation he saw the importance of vital local communities. He believed that our apostolate shapes our community life and our prayer life.

The General Chapter of 1968 gave the Congregation a new set of constitutions *ad experimentum*. The new constitutions invited the congregation to live subsidiarity in local government with respect for the diversity of gifts; to live the dynamic and evolutionary character of renewal; to proclaim the gospel in a complex world, to a new sense of belonging and to a changing form of prayer life. And all this called for frank and fearless and at times brutal dialogue. The Chapter also called for looking at the coadjutor brothers in the priests' society imposed by Rome after the general chapter of 1945 and the relationship between the 2 societies in Holy Cross; the election

of provincials by provincial chapters, and the role of the general administration in keeping the congregation from falling into provincialism.

After the Chapter of 1968, Lalande dedicated his years to implementing the new constitutions and dialoguing with the membership in his circular letters and in his visits. He invited the community to a more active participation in liturgy and to renew religious life as an active community, to avoid monotony and routine in prayer, to visit the Blessed Sacrament and to do particular examen and spiritual reading each day. He saw all this as an opportunity to strengthen our interior life with God. He asked superiors to listen to their councilors, to keep minutes of their meetings, and to keep house chronicles for community history. He wrote that a superior ministers as a father or mother in a family. His motivation should be love. The best way to minister is by giving example himself. A superior is not above the common life. He asked them to be kind especially to the sick, the retired and the wayward. Do not let one cantankerous religious control the whole house. Rebuke with love, listen to both sides, encourage and affirm, and lead others to God. To the religious, he wrote: Avoid your self will. Avoid criticism of your superiors. Lalande reminded all the religious that the reason for our vows is the Lord's calling "Come follow me". Avoid the status quo which kills progress. Avoid corporate hardening of the arteries. Avoid ministry only to the elite. Develop a spirit of prayer and simplicity of life. Educate the whole person in your ministry.

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In his circular letter #10 Lalande recounted the history of Holy Cross to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founders death in 1973 and he invited all the religious to celebrate this anniversary with joy and hope together with the Holy Cross Sisters wherever possible. He also organized another lengthy consultation of the community to prepare for the general chapter of 1974. Between 1968 and 1974 he convoked almost annual meetings to consult with the proklincials and to listen to their opinions. He believed that there was a great need in Holy Cross for spiritual renovation.

THOMAS O. BARROSSE (1974-1986)

Thomas O. Barrosse was a biblical scholar. At the time of his election as Superior General in the chapter of 1974 he was master of novices for all the provinces of priests and brothers in the United States. He had been part of the team that wrote the new constitutions for the 1968 general chapter. The Chapter of 1974 established the Council of the Congregation-an annual meeting of the provincials with the general administration begun by Lalande-as a permanent structure in the congregation. It also spoke of the importance of the local chapter for community life. Despite the abandonment of the Congregation by more than 300 religious after Vatican II, the chapter felt that the 1968 constitutions had been received well by the membership.

Barrosse wrote most of his circular letters around themes for community reflection. In his circular letter on Prayer he raised the questions "Why do we pray together?", "Why do we pray?" In his letter on Apostolic Poverty he asked "Do we take it seriously?" On Freedom, Obedience and Religious Life he questioned "Why am I a religious of Holy Cross?" In his letter on Hunger and Thirst for Justice he asked "Are we standing with the poor and the oppressed?" In other letters he reminded the religious that community is the acceptance of one another in our diversity,

that there is the one mission of Jesus but many ministries, that as religious we are prophets by profession, called to live an option for the poor and a radical evangelical life, and to trust in God's providence which is our only hope. In his circular letter on Holy Cross Today in 1986 he asked "What does God want of Holy Cross today?" He invited Holy Cross to face the challenges of today in 1985 as an apostolic religious community numbering 909 priests, 88 Coadjutor brothers, 810 Brothers, 355 Marianites, 889 Sisters of the Holy Cross, and 1509 Sisters of Holy Cross.

CONCLUSION

Walking through the circular letters of the Superiors General does not give us all the information about our historical development throughout the years but it does give us some indication of recurring themes in our history:

1. The *raison d'être* of Holy Cross, our apostolic mission as a congregation, inseparably connected with the mission in Bengal, a place no other community would accept, a place where there is no prestige.
2. The creativity of structures in the community to respond to new apostolic needs within the vision of Moreau of two societies (three counting the Sisters) autonomous but united in collaboration.
3. The continual call to live poverty (The option for the poor).
4. The need to foster an interior life, a relationship with God., as the primary responsibility for the religious of Holy Cross - spending time in prayer (Holy Hour, meditation, etc.) and also the need to be well prepared for our ministry to others.
5. Vocations will take care of themselves if we are living a religious life worthy to be followed.

Are these dead letters today? These letters are our lived tradition and history in Holy Cross. They are the memory of where we come from and where we want to go.