

HOLY CROSS IN EAST AFRICA

The Development of the Holy Cross Formation Program

An Oral History

Very shortly after he founded the community, Father Basil Moreau, CSC, the founder of Holy Cross, sent missionaries to Africa. However, the community's stay in North Africa, Algeria, was of a short duration.

In 1841 Moreau sent the first missionaries to the United States. Not long after these first brothers and priest arrived, young men showed an interest in joining the community. The French born religious attracted some English speakers especially of Irish descent. Just one year after their arrival when Father Sorin and some of the brothers moved north the community included some Americans who accompanied them while others remained in Vincennes. Holy Cross quickly became multi-cultural. Later in Canada new recruits joined the first Holy Cross religious from France.

With little or no planning and no formal formation program the mixed communities grew. Holy Cross was serving the local church especially in education and welcomed the new members. Holy Cross promoted and assisted the local church by educating those who would later join the diocesan seminaries. When Holy Cross went to Bengal they found some Christian communities but there was no local leadership. Holy Cross provided the leadership and for many decades Holy Cross's role was to try and build up the local church by founding a diocesan high school seminary and later offering major seminary training. Holy Cross did not want or try to recruit candidates for the community. Local circumstances determined the mission and ministry of Holy Cross.

The church and Holy Cross in North America began as a church dependent on France for personnel but quickly became more and more American and Canadian. Political upheavals in France even into the 20th century caused other French religious to cross the Atlantic Ocean.

Later in 1957 it was Holy Cross from the US that founded the first Holy Cross missions in Africa. The Brothers of the Midwest Province sent religious to work in secondary schools and even in minor seminaries. No Holy Cross priests were present in Ghana. The brothers were of great assistance to the local church, and there was no conflict of interest in recruiting seminarian candidates. The brothers very early after their arrival began to accept candidates for the brotherhood.

In 1958 the first Holy Cross priests arrived in East Africa and a year later the first group of brothers. At the time of their arrival there was only one minor seminary for the whole Western region. Holy Cross was assigned to work in the northern half of the diocese while the seminary was in the South. Many high school seminary students had to travel very long distances to reach the seminary. In

1961 the diocese was divided and Holy Cross accepted responsibility for the northern half and its center was Fort Portal.

One of the first moves by the new Bishop of Fort Portal, Vincent J. McCauley, CSC was to found a minor seminary. He called on both the Holy Cross priests and brothers as well as some White Fathers and diocesan clergy to assist in this endeavor. Holy Cross was still new to Uganda. Though the community did not exclude the possibility of one day accepting candidates, the focus and concentration was on increasing the number of religious especially sisters in the diocese and deepening the community's roots in this country and continent. At that time the White Fathers and other missionary communities working in Uganda had not begun programs to recruit local indigenous members. Increasing the number of diocesan clergy was the focus and concentration.

It was only about this time that Holy Cross in Bengal accepted a few candidates.

In 1943 Holy Cross from the USA had gone to Chile to operate a boarding English medium high school. Just a few years later Holy Cross accepted some Chilean candidates. The presence of foreign missionaries alongside diocesan clergy did not seem to be something out of the ordinary, and the community was free to accept applicants. As for East Africa there was a precedent and even an expectation that one day the community might begin a formation program. However, for the present, Holy Cross wanted to develop the different levels of education at both the primary and secondary levels and thus to begin building a broader based society with more and more being educated and from these some future seminarians might be recruited.

In Uganda when Holy Cross arrived there were three regional major seminaries. Each of these seminaries was operated by a missionary congregation. The White Fathers were in the Central and Western Regions, the Verona Fathers in the North, and the Mill Hill Fathers in the East. These missionary congregations each were trying to build up the diocesan clergy. None of these congregations were actively recruiting members for their own community except in exceptional circumstances.

Holy Cross arrived in Uganda before independence. Shortly thereafter there were movements in many African colonies to become independent. Uganda was no exception. During colonial times only two churches were permitted in Uganda – the Anglican Church of Uganda and the Catholic Church. In many ways the colonial power favored the Church of Uganda, and it came to be that most local political leaders were Anglican. In fact some said that the Church of Uganda as Anglican was for the educated and ruling classes whereas the Catholic Church was for the peasants. Once it was decided that there would be independence political parties were formed; unfortunately these two parties were based upon religion. The colonial government decided to have two steps to independence – the first step would lead to internal government following elections. The second step later would lead to a government to take over at independence. The so-called Catholic party was named the Democratic Party and the Church of Uganda party the Uganda People's Congress. In the pre-independence elections for internal rule the Catholic party won. Uganda was divided

not only by religious differences but also by tribal differences. The largest tribe in Uganda was the Baganda centered in the capital area. There was a traditional king in Buganda and in three other tribal areas of the country; the other areas of the country were ruled by traditional chiefs. After the first internal elections the Baganda decided to form their own party the Kabaka Yekka with their king as leader. Thus it happened that there were three parties—the two traditional parties where religion was important and now the third based on a tribal affiliation. In the second elections for independence the UPC and the Kabaka Yekka coalition won and the DP Party became the minority party in Parliament.

Almost immediately after independence the two groups in the governing coalition were competing for power. The Constitution for the newly independent country of Uganda allowed for a president and a prime minister; in the coalition the president was the King of Buganda and the Prime Minister was the head of the UPC, Milton Obote. As Prime Minister he was the one who had the most influence in Parliament and in the running of the country on the day to day basis. Obote's aim was to oust the king who was president. One of the things that Obote did was to entice some of the leaders of the Democratic party to cross over and join the UPC. He offered these men choice positions in the ruling government. The Kabaka/president and his party were slowly being marginalized and losing influence and positions within the government. In late 1965 the two groups began fighting and in the end the Kabaka had to flee into exile. Obote consolidated his power, He changed the Constitution several times, conducted sham elections and made himself president as well as leader of the governing coalition.

All these political changes had effects on the Catholic Church and the three traditional religious communities that had worked in Uganda beginning in 1879. The communities intensified their efforts to train diocesan clergy, attract vocations to the diocesan communities of brothers and especially sisters. Holy Cross had arrived less than four years before independence and was trying to establish itself and its role in the midst of the political turmoil. None of these religious communities had time or energy or desire to begin their own vocation programs. Their future in Uganda was not bright. A big factor was the movement by the government to take over the schools founded by the different church communities. The loss of the schools – both primary and secondary – also meant a weakening of influence of the churches and also the fertile ground they represented for developing vocations to the clergy and religious life. The time and climate were not ripe for international communities to invite young people to join their communities.

The Catholic Church was viewed by its opponents as a negative entity both in terms of religion as well as politics. The Anglican community was somewhat ambiguous and divided. Their leaders found that they had less and less influence in the affairs of state.

Obote became more and more an autocratic leader and consolidated his power. He appointed a barely literate Army man, Idi Amin, as head of the military. Obote thought Amin did not represent

a threat to his power. In January, 1971 Obote left Uganda for Singapore to represent his country at the annual Commonwealth meeting of heads of state and government. He completely misjudged Amin. Amin organized a military coup that was almost bloodless. Many Ugandans, very frustrated with Obote, took to the streets to celebrate.

Initially Amin, a Muslim from the North, reached out to the leaders of the Christian communities. However it was not long before his ruthless tactics began to come under criticism.

For some years the Catholic Church in Buganda had had its own Luganda newspaper. Being in the vernacular of the largest and most highly educated ethnic group in the country, it was widely read especially in the area of the capital, Kampala. The editor of the newspaper, Clement Kiggundu, had returned to Uganda from the US where he had followed a rigorous and professional course in journalism. He was a strong supporter of a free press and saw the role of his newspaper to critique the government if he believed its actions were not in keeping with the free democracy values and/or violated religious values.

The country was shocked to learn one morning that he had disappeared. Not long after, his vehicle was found in a forest a few miles from Kampala, and his burned and charred body were found inside. He had been murdered for exposing in his newspaper some of the crimes that seemed to represent attacks on persons who had criticized the government of Amin. The country was stunned. The people knew only one way they could show their outrage. Thousands of people from near and far showed up to attend the priest's funeral. Other incidents of violence and murder and abuse of power continued to happen. In such a climate members of the international communities were focused on trying to carry on their work of evangelization and establishing the Catholic Church more widely in the country. They had neither the time nor the energy to consider initiating programs of religious formation.

In 1970 the bishops of Uganda opened Ggaba National Seminary near Kampala. Along with Katigondo Seminary Ggaba Seminary was meant to replace the major seminaries which had been operated by the three missionary communities of the White Fathers, Mill Hill Fathers and the Verona Fathers. The bishops of Uganda not the religious communities would henceforth be responsible for educating the major seminarians. These seminaries would be national and not regional. The future clergy would be trained to think about the Catholic Church in broader national terms and be exposed to a formation that was Ugandan. This was a major shift and development. The young clergy of the future would have come to know other clergy from every corner and diocese of the country. This development reflected some of the values and perspectives that had arisen during and after Vatican Council II. The faithful and especially the clergy would be given a more "Catholic" view and understanding of their church. The Holy Cross members were well aware that the community had welcomed new members in Bengal and Chile. However, there was no serious discussion of beginning a vocation promotion program. Whenever mention was made of the topic the general reaction was that "the times are not right. We need more experience in Africa and politically speaking this would not be a good time."

Up to this time all the members of Holy Cross ministered in the west of Uganda – first in the Toro (Fort Portal) and Bunyoro (Hoima) kingdoms and, after 1966 when the Hoima Diocese was formed, only in the Fort Portal Diocese (Toro Kingdom primarily).

The 1968 Holy Cross General Chapter passed legislation providing for the election of district superiors by the members of the district. In 1970 the district of Uganda elected for the first time its district superior, Father Robert McMahon, CSC. Father McMahon appointed Father Richard Wunsch, CSC as assistant district superior. Later Father McMahon left Uganda to attend the provincial chapter in the USA. Sometime after the chapter McMahon resigned as district superior and decided not to return to Uganda. The Holy Cross community decided that Father Richard Wunsch, CSC would serve as district superior. He was superior when Amin carried out the coup d'état and made himself President of Uganda.

Father Wunsch had the responsibility and burden of leading the community in the last year of the Obote regime and the first couple years of the Amin regime. During all these years the community had to endure living under the stress caused by the political upheavals.

In 1972 Father William Blum, CSC returned from his studies in Rome. Father Blum was the first Holy Cross priest assigned to work outside the Diocese of Fort Portal. Upon his arrival he immediately took up his duties teaching Moral Theology at Ggaba National Seminary. The teaching staff included diocesan priests and members of the White Fathers, the Mill Hill Fathers, the Verona Fathers and later a member of the DeMontfort Fathers. The mixed faculty of diocesan clergy, members of non-religious missionary communities as well as vowed religious missionaries gave a witness to the students of the many ways priests could serve the Church. Most of the seminarians had grown up in rural settings and had experienced only one or two types of ministry for priests. Even though all the seminarians had joined the seminary with the intention of becoming diocesan priests, a few students became interested in knowing more about the different religious communities they had known at the seminary or had come to know about in their reading of religious histories and publications.

The questions of the students prompted some of the priests and brothers on the teaching staff to think more deeply about their own communities and their policies regarding recruiting vocations not only in their home countries but also in the missionary countries where they were living and ministering.

Blum reflected on Holy Cross and its history and practice in Bengal and elsewhere. He also inquired from members of other communities about their policies. Later he circulated a paper inviting the members of Holy Cross to reflect on the possibility of developing a program to accept Ugandan seminarians. Though a couple members looked favorably upon the idea/proposal the general reaction was lukewarm or even negative.

One of the commonest reasons given for not attempting to open the doors to Ugandans was the unstable political situation and perhaps our tenuous future in the country. People began thinking more deeply about our own Holy Cross presence and future in Uganda.

At the end of 1972 the Holy Cross community gathered for the district chapter. Concomitant with this gathering was the resignation by Bishop Vincent J. McCauley, CSC as the Bishop of Fort Portal and his being replaced by Bishop Serapio Magambo. From now on the Holy Cross brothers and priests would not be working under a Holy Cross bishop but a diocesan one. The Holy Cross community would be facing a new reality and challenge.

It had now been over 14 years since the first Holy Cross missionaries had arrived in Uganda. At the chapter something unexpected and surprising – at least to some of the members of the district – happened. Someone proposed that we consider a planned withdrawal from Uganda over a period of years. Some felt we had accomplished the goals that had brought us to Uganda, namely to help with the establishment of a local church. The diocese now had one of its own as Bishop. The Holy Cross men who wanted the community to withdraw thought that it was fitting that we should move on. They believed that our continued presence might hinder rather than help the development of the Church in this area. The idea was talked about formally and informally for a couple days. Then, as the end of the chapter was approaching, a member proposed a resolution that the community develop a plan for a phased withdrawal. In the vote which followed the resolution passed by a comfortable majority. It was clearly the mind of the chapter delegates that Holy Cross would withdraw from Uganda. With the passage of this resolution the idea of Holy Cross developing a vocation recruitment program was clearly rejected. At the same chapter Father Jack Keefe, CSC was elected as the new district superior.

Resolutions of a district chapter have to be approved by the Provincial of the Province to which the district belongs. Uganda was a district of the Indiana Province. Father Howard Kenna, CSC, the provincial, did not accept the resolution. He brought it before the subsequent Provincial Chapter which also did not accept it. Father Kenna did inform all the members of the district who wished to leave Uganda and return to the USA that they were free to do so. However, for now he said the Province would continue its corporate commitment to serve in Uganda for as long as the Diocese of Fort Portal would wish us to continue and the Ugandan government would permit us to remain. During the ensuing three years several members of the district returned to the USA. The members who remained developed means to cope with the insecurities and difficulties caused by the political situation. Also the members became accustomed to minister under the leadership of a African bishop. Only a couple seminarians were ordained as diocesan priests but the number of seminarians for the diocese increased. The seminarians helped in their own and other parishes; this was a good experience not only for the students but also the members of Holy Cross who became more accustomed to living and ministering with the up-coming generation of Ugandan priests. Holy Cross priests could more easily imagine how it might be in practice to have a mixed community of Americans and Ugandans. Holy Cross priests could more easily imagine how it might be in practice to have a mixed community of Americans and Ugandans. At a couple

community meetings a couple papers invited the members to think more about having African members; however, the idea was never supported formally by a majority vote.

The next chapter was to be after Christmas, 1975. The community decided to have a consultation guided by a questionnaire to be completed by all would be present at the chapter. There was a shared feeling that once again Holy Cross in Uganda had to make a decision about its future in Uganda.

The questionnaire was tabulated and then its results were presented at the Chapter. The basic question asked, “Do you believe CSC should seek to establish a permanent presence in Uganda?” This was the core question – everything else depended on the answer to this question. The results were surprising. There was unanimous positive support for this proposition.

Other decisions flowed from this answer. To have a permanent presence we had to promote local vocations. However, one also had to consider that it could happen that the Holy Cross expatriate members might be forced to leave Uganda. What would happen to the younger members in formation if this were to happen? The solution to this question was that we needed a presence in another African country nearby. That meant we would have to find another place to minister besides Uganda. The Chapter mandated that as soon as its proposals were approved by the provincial a process should be begun to look for a diocese in another country that would welcome us and accept that we promote local vocations there.

Holy Cross had not tried to attract American personnel to work in Uganda after the 1973 Chapter had voted to phase out even though that decision had been nullified. The '76 Chapter voted to once again invite American Holy Cross religious to come and work in Uganda. All the decisions of the '76 Chapter were approved by the provincial who succeeded Father H. Kenna, CSC; he also presented them to the Provincial Chapter of that year, and it also approved them. The Indiana Province had decided at its highest level to support the efforts of the District of Uganda to establish a permanent presence in East Africa, to promote vocations and to seek a place outside Uganda to found a new mission. The Chapter also changed the name of the District. Instead of being called the District of Uganda from now on it would be called the District of East Africa. The District Chapter also reelected its District Superior.

After the Provincial Chapter it became the task of the district superior and Council to plan the implementation of the chapter's decisions.

Two major tasks needed to be undertaken. One was to plan a formation program, and the other was to search for a location in another country. Some Brothers of Holy Cross, who were working in Uganda, attended the chapter of the priests. The Brothers also were interested in beginning a formation program. However, the Brothers would not begin such a program unless the priests would also begin a program. The priests and brothers had had discussions about doing a joint formation program. A committee was formed to plan a formation program; it was a mixed committee of priests and brothers.

As for looking for a new mission location a couple guidelines or points were agreed upon as necessary. One was in regard to language. The community did not want to locate in an area where a tribal language would be used in ministry. Such language limited the possibility of assigning personnel because they would not be able to use the language in another location. Fortunately Swahili was used in Kenya and Tanzania along with English. The other countries bordering Uganda did not use English but rather French and in certain sectors Swahili. Also it was determined that Holy Cross should seek to have a parish assigned to it. The purpose of this desire was pastoral. A parish allows for a grass-roots experience of the people and culture; it includes persons of all ages and can have a school or schools attached to it. A parish could also provide a location where young religious could gain pastoral experience of Holy Cross community life and ministry.

Letters were written to several bishops in Kenya and Tanzania. The Nairobi Archdiocese was growing rapidly, and the Archbishop was actively recruiting religious communities to come to Nairobi and assist in parishes. Several meetings were held with the Archbishop. His preference was that Holy Cross take full responsibility for a parish and not come to assist in a parish under the administration of another community. The Archbishop wanted the expatriate communities to take over existing or to found new parishes in the urban areas; the diocesan clergy would cover the rural areas of the diocese where Kikuyu was sometimes used. After some discussions the Archbishop showed the Holy Cross superior and the two religious who were to go to Kenya three sites. Two of these sites involved forming new parishes by dividing or separating areas of existing parishes. The third option was to found a completely new parish in an estate which was just then being planned and developed.

Frs. James Rahilly and William Blum were the ones assigned to go to Nairobi.

About the time Blum and Rahilly were moving into their rented rooms at Dandora, Phase I, Plot 852, the first inquiry by an African interested in joining Holy Cross was received. The inquirer was a diocesan priest ordained in 1972 for the Diocese of Mbarara, the diocese which had been divided in 1961 to create the Fort Portal Diocese. The priest, Father John Bashobora, while still a seminarian, had inquired about joining Holy Cross. He had been told that Holy Cross did not yet have a plan to accept local vocations but that sometime in the future the community might initiate such a program. Before he was ordained a deacon Father Bashobora informed his Bishop that he had an interest in Holy Cross and still hoped to join the community someday. The Bishop told him that he would give him permission if he ever had the opportunity to join Holy Cross.

After receiving Father John's application and a letter from the Bishop the district council decided to accept John as a candidate. The plan was that he would spend about one year living and working with community members and then go for a novitiate year. Initially John resided in the Fort Portal area for about six months and then went to Dandora to live with Blum, Rahilly and Fr. James Shilts, a priest from the USA who come to spend a sabbatical year in Africa. In the meantime the community had rented another room in Plot 852 so there was room for another resident.

Fr. John was an energetic and out-going person. He felt comfortable with the residents of Dandora and quickly picked up Swahili. The district was now faced with the question of a novitiate for John. The district was not in a position to establish its own novitiate at that time and did not believe it would be helpful for John's formation for him to be the sole novice. Two possibilities seemed available – one was the novitiate in Colorado, US and another was in India where English was the house and district/province language. After some negotiations with India and the provincial administration it was decided to send John to Bangalore, India for his novitiate. Amongst the novices John would be different in that he was already an ordained priest. He was not only open to the idea but welcomed it.

John liked India very much. As he had done in Dandora he quickly made contacts and friends with people in Bangalore. Over a period of time his “outside activities” seemed to conflict with his being more focused on the issues of community and religious life. Sadly as he was nearing the end of the year he was not recommended for profession of vows in the Holy Cross.

John remained in India for a time before returning to his home diocese; his stay in India had helped John grow a lot spiritually; he was a transformed man when he returned home. Back home he became very active in some apostolic movements and retreat and spiritual movements not only in Mbarara but also outside his diocese and even in Kenya. John's stay in Holy Cross and India especially was the occasion for many spiritual and apostolic blessings for him.

John's coming to the community prompted the community to work to develop a formation program to be carried out within the district. The Brothers (Eastern Province) had come to Uganda just a year after the first priests arrived. They taught in St. Leo's Secondary School for Boys in Kyegobe, Fort Portal, St. Augustine's Teacher Training College at Butiti near the parish and St. Mary's Minor High School Seminary at Virika, Fort Portal.

The pre-novitiate programs of the brothers and priests differed according to the academic backgrounds of the applicants. The Brothers established a house at Virika. The students in the brothers' house did some studies related to religious life within the house and also engaged in some forms of apostolic service and ministry. Brother Bill Zaydak, CSC was in charge. The young men desiring to join Holy Cross as seminarians came from diverse backgrounds.

A common feature of the first seminarians to apply is that they had already been students in a diocesan seminary. The Holy Cross community was sensitive to the dioceses and did not try to recruit seminarians in such seminaries. Some of these students wished to join Holy Cross. The students were told that they would have to stay outside the seminary for one year before applying to Holy Cross.

About the time John Bashobora (1980-81) went to India a former seminarian of the Diocese of Kakamega (later Bungoma) wrote to Holy Cross inquiring about joining. He was Frederic Oguba of Port Victoria. He had been in the national diocesan philosophy seminary near Bungoma. Once

Fred was accepted he spent about a year at a couple Holy Cross parish communities. A priest was to be his formator in view of preparing him for the novitiate.

When it came time for him to go for the novitiate year different possibilities were considered. Father Paul Marceau, CSC, the novice director in Colorado, was prepared to welcome him as long as he was assured that any recommendation of the novitiate staff regarding first profession would be honored by the district. Fred went to the USA in 1983-84 and was welcomed as the first novice from Africa to come to Cascade, Colorado.

At the same time the committee to plan a formation program for East Africa was busy. The committee drew up a program and the district council approved their recommendation. First of all it was decided that there would be one novitiate for brother and priest novices. Father George Lucas and Brother Tadeus Las were assigned to be the novitiate staff with another religious from Fort Portal to assist part-time. The community house at Lake Saka, 5 miles from Fort Portal town, was to be the location of the novitiate. The house would continue to host some community events and welcome guests insofar as this did not interfere with the novitiate program.

As the committee planned the novitiate program they also considered possible pre-novitiate and post-novitiate programs. The Consolata Fathers had a philosophy seminary (pre-novitiate) in Langata, Nairobi. They were open to accepting students of other communities. Holy Cross decided that sending our pre-novitiate students to the Consolata Seminary would be the best option for Holy Cross. It was also decided that the students would reside in Holy Cross Parish in the Dandora housing estate in Nairobi. Here they would be able to participate in parish activities and have an experience of living and sharing a life not unlike that of the thousands of people already living in the estate. Phases II-VI of the estate were slowly being developed, and there were rental opportunities for a residence. Bill Zadak and Tom McDermott were placed in charge of this formation house. The distance from Dandora to Langata was considerable. One of the formators would usually drive the students for class in the mornings and help bring them home where feasible; otherwise the students would rely on public transportation to return home.

The first novitiate class of three novices gathered at Saka in 1984 with Lucas and Las as the formators. About the same time a formation house in Dandora opened under McDermott. Fred Oguba, newly professed Colorado, returned and resided in the Dandora house along with five candidates. In the following year there were two professed seminarians studying theology (where?) and four candidates. One of these latter had been professed as an Apostle of Jesus but left that religious community and joined Holy Cross; he was a student in theology (Wababa).

In 1985 Brother John Flood replaced Br. Tadeus Las on the novitiate staff. The staff welcomed three novices that year. As the community began its novitiate at Saka and opened the formation house in Dandora discussions were being held about where the students would study theology. For a number of years the Consolata Fathers and the Holy Ghost Spiritan Fathers (communities which

had already begun formation programs for theology) had sent their seminarians to St. Thomas Aquinas National Seminary in Langata for their theological studies. At the same time the number of diocesan seminarians was growing year-by-year. Early in the 1980s the bishops of Kenya had informed the religious communities that St. Thomas could not continue indefinitely to accept religious seminarians. The Consolata Fathers decided that the time was right for them to build a seminary for theology somewhat similar to the one that they had for philosophy. They designed a structure and began building this structure in 1985. They built two major structures – one a residence for their seminarians in theology and a separate building to house offices, classrooms, library and other rooms needed for an academic program. They informed the other religious communities of their plan and informed them that they would welcome their seminarians in theology as they had done for the students of philosophy.

The Consolata community followed a rather traditional model of administration and seminary education. Their chapters and superiors appointed the administration and teaching staff (faculty) and approved the curriculum. In doing this they took upon themselves not only a heavy responsibility but in some cases a burden especially in providing trained staff. They were prepared and willing to provide this service.

At that point the only other community that had students who were already or soon would be ready to study theology were the Spiritan Fathers (CSSp). Other communities such as Holy Cross were just now developing their programs for the seminarians and young brothers preparing for and following their novitiate programs. Not too many years before this time the Jesuit Fathers from all the sub-Saharan countries had developed their program for their African members. They had decided to bring together in one program the seminarians who done their secondary studies in French or English. All would do their studies of philosophy in French in the Congo (Zaire). For theology they established an English medium theological college in Nairobi; they gave it a Swahili name-*Hekima* (Wisdom) College. This college was located a few miles from Langata. The Jesuits were open to welcoming a small number of qualified students from other communities. Soon after Hekima College opened Holy Cross sent a few of its student including some Americans seminarians, who interrupted their regular theological course in the USA to live and study abroad for approximately 18 months. Hekima College, though helpful, could not serve as a theological center for religious seminarians.

About this time the Consolata Fathers elected a new regional superior for Kenya, Fr. Mario Barbero, IMC, who had been teaching Sacred Scripture at St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary. Barbero was elected after the new Consolata theology seminary buildings were under construction. He had known some of the difficulties that having one's own seminary imposed upon a religious community. He believed that there might be the possibility of founding a seminary following a different structural model. He invited the superiors of the religious communities in Kenya who were planning and initiating programs of formation in the country to meet and discuss how they might jointly take responsibility for such a seminary.

Now instead of having one community own and operate and be responsible for the seminary he suggested a different model involving not only joint contributions such as for staff but even going further and having a joint corporate ownership and responsibility. All the communities who wished to join would not only own but also contribute to the planning, operation, staffing and overall direction of the new foundation.

Father Mario was aware that in the USA in a few places such as Washington, DC, Chicago and Berkeley different religious groups had developed some structures where there was joint responsibility.

Barbero asked if there were any communities who would like to investigate what kind of joint venture could be developed to serve the educational needs of the religious communities in Kenya. As it turned out there were five communities in Kenya at that time who were very attracted by Barbero's proposal; besides the Consolata and Spiritans there were the Holy Cross, Benedictines and Camillian Fathers.

Over about a three-year period the superiors of these communities would gather to discuss the proposed venture and then return to their communities to discuss the ideas with the leadership and others in their communities. After their consultations with their own communities it quickly became apparent that all the communities supported the idea and wanted to move forward.

The central and most obvious question was what to do about the Consolata building now under construction. At first, some members of the Consolata community were not in favor of the proposed arrangement. They preferred their own community retain the building and operate the seminary as they had done for some years with their philosophy seminary. In time Father Barbero was able to convince the Consolata leadership that the new arrangement would be better not only for the other communities but also for Consolata.

A plan was discussed to separate the land and the new academic building area from the rest of the Consolata property intended for residential needs. In the end the Consolata Fathers proposed a price for the building to the other communities. The communities decided to form a corporation in which each community would hold a share in the ownership. It was decided that each community would pay approximately \$180,000 to become a shareholder. Each community then had to decide if it wished to become a shareholder. In the meantime a legal document of sale and new ownership for the building under construction and its land had to be drawn up in accordance with Kenyan law.

While the financial arrangements were being worked out an *ad hoc* committee then began planning for the new seminary. One of the first things that was decided was that the new institution would not be open solely for seminarians but that courses for brothers and sisters and perhaps even for laypersons working for the church would be offered. The leaders proposed a name for the

institution – Theological Centre for Religious – a name that sought to express the intention that courses would not be limited to seminarians. Notice was also given to other communities of these latest developments. It was stated that other communities could still choose to become corporate members. When in fact other communities later joined they paid the current equivalent value of \$180,000. These new funds were to be used for future capital expenses. By 1985 the agreement had been finalized and the communities contributed their shares.

A survey was made to determine how many students were to enroll in the first few years. It was decided to follow a two semester academic year beginning in August and ending in May. Plans were made to welcome a first-year class in August, 1986. The committee also requested the communities to nominate members who could serve on the teaching staff. They also planned a governing board and administration staff. Initially the Centre would have a Rector, an academic Dean and a financial administrator.

Another need was to develop a library. Requests were made of the members to contribute books or suggest possible sources and donors; once legal requirements were carried out the superiors worked to develop a draft constitution. In this document the superiors agreed that each corporate member would have one vote on the governing board. By good fortune there was an Australian Passionist priest, who had finished his term as superior. He was willing to serve as the first director. Up to this point the superiors had worked as a group but now they had a person employed full-time for the Centre. He was able to coordinate committee activities concerning staff, students, library, etc. Also plans for furnishing the buildings had to be drawn up; the Rector of the Spiritan Seminary, which was very close to the center, agreed to serve as the Academic Dean and an OFM Franciscan agreed to serve as financial administrator.

At one point the rector made an overseas trip to acquaint church authorities and officials in Rome and elsewhere with the plan for the new center. He also made contacts with some funding agencies which might be approached for assistance. One very fruitful contact he made was with the Viatorian Fathers outside of Chicago. They had recently decided to close their own theological seminary and associate with a theological union or consortium. They had a fairly large theological library which they did not want to break up. They were looking for a new seminary in the developing world that would be in need of a library. After some discussions they decided to donate their old library to the TCR. Numerous arrangements had to be made to pack and ship this library to Nairobi. It was nearly a couple years before the books finally arrived. Lots of preparations for their arrival had to be made in Nairobi before they came.

About a year or so before the TCR opened the Salesians of Don Bosco opened a parish and made preparations for a trade school and an international scholastic to be located in the Karen area not far from Langata. They decided to join the consortium. Also the Marist Brothers opened an

international house of theological studies just about two miles from TCR. Their academic program was more geared for formators; they did not join the TCR.

In August, 1986 the TCR welcomed its first student class for Theology One. There were 18 students from the three communities of the Consolata, Spiritans and Salesians of Don Bosco. Courses were offered in Scripture, Systematic Theology, Moral Theology, Church History and Liturgy. The building begun by the Consolata community was only partially completed. Basically the TCR used two or three classrooms – one for class – one for library and office – and one for break room.

For the library some communities and/or individuals donated or loaned most of the books. Some others were ordered and purchased according to the requests of the teaching staff. Work continued on the building and grounds and by the end of the first year most of the facility was ready for use. Plans were made for the arrival of the books from the library of the Viatorians in Chicago, USA. It was decided to follow the Library of Congress classification system following the system already used in the Viatorian Library. Lists and/or card catalogs from the Viatorians were sent by air to Nairobi and the beginning of a library staff was assembled. Orders for printed catalog cards from the L of C were made. This allowed for author, title and subject cards as well as an office file of holdings to be begun. The arrival of the shipment of books was a day for celebration. The TCR now had a basic library. Lots of work in time was needed to ready the books for circulation, but ways were found to prioritize the processing according to the present class needs.

Later in the first year the Governing Board (members superiors) decided to replace the temporary Rector and Dean with more permanent appointments; the financial officer continued in office.

Each year TCR welcomed a new class. At the same time more and more member communities began sending students and some other communities decided to become corporate members. Many of these communities purchased land plots in the Langata area and constructed formation residences. Besides the increase in the number of staff, students and member communities, the student population became more and more diverse. Before long TCR not only had students from East Africa and other African nations, but also students from other continents including Asia, Europe and the Americas come to study at TCR.

At one of its staff/faculty meetings one professor proposed that the TCR adopt an African name. After various meetings it was finally decided to name the TCR Tangaza College with the subtitle, Theological Center for Religious. These titles have remained with the institution up to this day.

In an appendix we will list the numbers of faculty, staff, students, employees and religious communities that joined Tangaza over the years such that the student population grew from 18 seminarian theology students to the present day enrollment of over 2000 students. In keeping with the intention of the founders to offer theological courses for lay religious men and women Tangaza

early on began a bachelor level program in religious studies that would prepare the students to teach religion courses in high schools. In addition to the theological courses for seminarians and the religious studies courses for future high school teachers Tangaza developed special institutes for higher education in theology.

One of the most significant of these institutes was the Maryknoll Institute of African Studies in the late 80s. Initially the Institute offered courses during the “summer months” when the regular programs of study were not in session. Many other developments have taken place since. The history of Tangaza has been covered in other publications – some of which are indicated in the Appendix. The scope of this paper is the development of the Holy Cross Formation program in East Africa.

As stated above the initial residence in Nairobi for students in philosophy and theology was located in Dandora. Over the years it became more and more difficult to commute to Langata. As a result it was decided to look for a place closer in distance and time to Tangaza and Consolata. An apartment complex on Ngong Road was rented, and the students lived there for a few years while a more permanent site was sought. Holy Cross had rented a house in Southlands where two members associated with Tangaza and one with Holy Cross Family Ministries resided. Eventually a plot at the edge of this estate and overlooking Kibera Valley was found. Obtaining permission to purchase and eventually build a residence took a very long time and more than once it appeared the project would fall through; however, in the end it succeeded and so the McCauley House of Formation was erected on this site. Some years later Holy Cross was forced to abandon this site. Eventually a plan developed to purchase three acres of land in the Langata area from the Kiltegan Fathers and not far from Tangaza. As this paper is being written plans and permissions for water and for building a new formation house for temporarily professed religious are being worked on. The formation house in Nairobi originally housed philosophy pre-novitiate students studying at Consolata as well as the first CSC theology students who studied at Hekima College (these students were from the USA along with one African seminarian) and eventually the professed students studying theology at Tangaza.

Two major changes occurred in the district only a year and a half after Tangaza opened. In 1988 the priests’ District of East Africa and the Brothers of the Eastern Province, who had also begun a formation program, as noted above, with the encouragement of their provincials (Brother Paul Rahaim, CSC played a key role) decided to form something that was a new entity in the Congregation at that time. The two groups decided to join together and form one “mixed” district dependent upon the two founding provinces. For many years after the District of East Africa was the only “mixed” entity involving one of the brothers’ provinces. (The priests’ provinces had had brother members ever since the founding of autonomous provinces in 1946).

From now on priests and brothers would live and work together not only in formation houses and activities but in all of their religious and apostolic endeavors.

Another development took place. At the same chapters where the brothers and priests decided to form a joint district, another topic was considered. Father Bill Blum had not only worked on the planning committee for the TCR but also had been a member of the teaching staff. In the second year of the TCR he took over the office of Academic Dean. He had first-hand knowledge of the thinking behind the founding of the TCR and about a year and a half experience of its operation. He was interested in developing something similar to TCR in Uganda for the shared academic formation of students of religious communities following their philosophical studies. In Uganda during the earlier years before the founding of Ggaba and Kaitgondo seminaries as national institutions under the Uganda Episcopal Conference, each of the three large missionary groups had had their own regional seminaries for both philosophy and theology. One effect of such an arrangement was that there was not a national sense of identity amongst the diocesan seminarians and clergy. For the most part they knew only the clergy from their own region.

Up until the founding of the national seminaries the White Fathers, Mill Hill Fathers and Verona (Comboni) had not developed formation programs for African and other students wishing to join their communities. In recent years they had begun their initial efforts to found their own formation programs. None of these programs were located in Uganda though some Ugandan students did join them and then went outside Uganda for their formation. Such an arrangement had some drawbacks. The White Fathers had founded a philosophical center in Tanzania and the Spiritan community one in Tanzania while the Consolata had their philosophy centre in Langata, Kenya. All of these institutions were primarily focused on forming students for their own communities. The Verona Fathers founded a house for theology students in Kampala and their students were enrolled in Ggaba National Seminary. Few, if any, of these students were Africans. The Mill Hill Fathers were still in the planning stage of establishing a formation program. They intended to send their theology students to Mill Hill, London but had no firm program for philosophy. Some students interested in joining them had already done philosophy in a diocesan or other seminary. Holy Cross and some of these other communities were not keen on sending their newest recruits outside Uganda to begin their formation program, but there was no alternative available in Uganda.

Blum proposed to the Chapter that discussions with other religious communities in Uganda who had or planned to have formation programs for Ugandans be held. The focus of the discussions was to see if there would be any interest in trying to develop in Uganda an institution for the study of philosophy. The institution would be open to all communities who wished to join. The set-up of Tangaza/TCR would be proposed as a possible model for such a new institution. The Chapter accepted the proposal and mandated Blum to make initial contacts with the other communities who provincial or district headquarters were in Uganda.

Before returning to his residence in Dandora, Nairobi Blum made contacts with most of the other communities. At first hearing there was general agreement and support for such a project. The superior of the White Fathers personally liked and supported the idea but thought his community might find it difficult to have a philosophy center for their Ugandan students since already they had a program not far from Mwanza in Tanzania. He wanted to be included in any meetings and discussions so that he could keep his own superiors apprised of what was happening. The other communities promised to bring the ideas before their superiors in broader communities.

It was not long before it became evident that all of the communities and even the Apostles of Jesus wished to follow up on the idea. A meeting was held where the superiors or their representatives shared the thoughts and positions on the topic. There was a desire to develop the idea further.

One of the topics discussed was where to locate such a center if one were to be founded. The general feeling and desire was to locate the place in the center of the country but not in the Kampala area. One area that was thought might be good was Jinja; another area was Tororo or a place north or south of Kampala some distance. It was decided to approach the bishops of these areas in an informal way to get their first reactions. The Bishop of Jinja belonged to the Mill Hill community so he, perhaps more than those of a diocesan background, could appreciate and understand some of the particular needs that religious communities have in operating formation programs. The Bishop also had a particularly personal reason for enthusiastically supporting the idea. He had a sizable piece of land which he was more than willing to make available to any such academic institution which would serve the needs of the Church. Also there was sufficient land available for any religious institutes which wanted to build residences for their students. To see this land developed and used for purposes of evangelization by the Church was important and pleasing to him.

An unexpected development occurred. The Evangelizing Sisters of Mary, a missionary group of African sisters founded by the Verona Bishop Mazzoldi and Father John Marengoni had built a house for formation on the same hill where the Bishop of Jinja had his office and residence. The sisters were not in need of the house. The Bishop informed the religious superiors of the communities considering founding a house for philosophy about the sisters' property. Discussions were held and it became apparent that the facility had all the rooms and space that might be needed for the academic programs as well as for the accommodation needs of the students of some of the interested communities. The superiors the various communities, after receiving encouragement from their own communities, developed a plan to open the philosophical center as soon as the communities were ready to begin. Meetings were held and decisions about teaching staff, curriculum, accommodation and dining, etc. were made. As it turned out the first students were welcomed in August, 1989. The students of some of the communities resided on the site and others commuted. Once a decision to locate the philosophical center in the Jinja area had been decided Holy Cross approached the Bishop and requested that the community be entrusted with a parish. Holy Cross wanted to have roots in the local diocese and community and to locate their house of formation close to the parish. The Bishop created a new parish called Bugembe which included

territories broken off from other parishes but principally from the Cathedral parish. The location was ideal in that it was not far from where the proposed philosophy center would be located. Initially Holy Cross rented some rooms to serve their needs to provide a residence for a formation community. Since the majority of the applicants to Holy Cross were Ugandan having the initial formation community located in Uganda served the community's interests best. Once the philosophical center opened in the sisters' property, plans for the permanent center began to be drawn up; it would be built on the vacant land already belonging to the diocese. A couple communities requested plots from the Bishop where they could build their residences for their students.

In many ways the organization of the center was not unlike what had been done at Tangaza/TCR. Initially Comboni/Verona, Mill Hill, Benedictines and Holy Cross joined the consortium. After a year or so the White Fathers also decided to join. Initially the Apostles of Jesus participated by sending students to the center. However, they eventually decided to withdraw; it would seem that one of their reasons for withdrawing was financial; however, they may have decided as well that they preferred to operate their own educational center.

Up to this point we have seen some of the first steps taken by Holy Cross in developing its own formation program. Slowly a full program was developed. With the founding of Andre House on property adjacent to Bugembe Parish the location of the pre-novitiate program for all future members of Holy Cross was established. The novitiate program at Lake Saka slowly grew in numbers and Holy Cross post-novitiate formation grew and advanced at Tangaza and at the various residence locations.

The new housing estate was called Dandora. (more details on p. 11 of the author's notes-possible endnote).

To be an endnote or appendix: (Paul Kollman, Douglas MacDougall, Bob Dowd, James Burasa, Fulgens Katende, OLM Associates)

(later developments) 1) building and opening PCJ 2) other communities and locations 3) appendices: students, staff, communities 4) open to sisters and CSC brothers 5) relations with the diocese.

To be an endnote or appendix:

Confidential: One story that is not recorded publicly is that the newly re-elected district superior had second thoughts after the chapter and requested the provincial to not accept the chapter's resolutions especially those about vocation recruitment and the founding of the new mission. This matter or fact, if it be so, will have to be confirmed by later historians.