



HOLY CROSS MONASTERY

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Dear Richmond,

Holy Cross Day, 2022

Happy Feast of the Holy Cross! In June, the Order was able to hold our first in-person Annual Chapter in three years. In addition to business, we spent time in small groups. Our goal was not to solve problems or settle on a way forward as much as to share our thoughts and selves with each other. Intimacy takes effort and is often revealed in moments of risky self-disclosure. Being an international, multi-generational, and multi-cultural community is a blessing and a challenge. Honoring our diversity requires work.

It is in community that our greatest desires are often revealed, and even discovered by ourselves, sometimes in failure or need—always when we are vulnerable, and when we feel known, accepted, and loved. Perhaps the stressful and uncertain times of the past years have assisted us on this path by reducing our illusions of invulnerability.

It's so easy to get stuck in the losses, the past, but this is a new and promising time in the life of our Order. We have worked together to identify how both death and life are at work in our midst. We've unearthed new desires, directions, possibilities, dreams, and we have welcomed new brothers, postulants, aspirants, and associates. By asking what gives us life, we've cultivated an environment that helps root us more deeply in God's presence and promise. God is manifest in the ordinary. God does not hold out for the pure, the spiritual, or the ideal anything. Our God would much rather be in relationship than not, with the wounded lives of ordinary people. Our conversion is not about becoming more spiritual as much as about becoming more human.

God's revelations are always concrete and specific. By exploring where we see emerging signs of life breaking through, we ask how we can attend to them with prayer, support, and resources. By celebrating where the liberating work of the Gospel is already happening in our midst, such as at Holy Cross School and our various ministries, we nourish those works to ensure that they are sustainable.

We're living in a time when fear and polarization encourage us to exclude people. A primary source of our fear is our failure to trust the love of God that infuses all of reality. Look beneath our fear and we will discover what it is we really care about, what we wish to protect: people, places, things, hopes, dreams. The ego moves forward by contraction and self-protection. The soul proceeds by expansion and inclusion. It sees things deeply and broadly and is open to whatever comes its way.

Both Benedict and James Huntington knew how much we need each other to hold and accompany us on this human journey. God invites us into intimate relationship so that we may then live more compassionately with each other. We are grateful for your past companionship and hope we can continue to rely on your generous support, presence, and prayers in this coming year.

May God continue to bless and guide us all as we move forward together.

Faithfully,

Br. Robert James, OHC
Superior