



**Holy Cross Associates**  
with zeal and hope to bring

# **Come Follow Me**

## **Midwest Holy Cross Associates**

### **Initial Formation Process for Associates**

A guide to the application of the constitutions of the  
Congregation of Holy Cross to the personal life of an Associate

The purpose of this guide is not to restrict freedom but to help those wanting to become Associates discover the freedom to love, the quest of the searching heart. Turning everything to love is what this guide hopes to achieve.

It is offered with this hope – that God’s healing love may be evident in your daily life – transforming you into the beautiful creation that you are meant to be.

# Constitution 1: God's Call

## Opening Reflection

*As a Holy Cross Associate,  
you have entered on a journey,  
which will lead to your heart's desire.*

Christ is inviting you to follow Him in a deeper way.

This call began at your Baptism when, like Christ, you became God's Beloved and received the Spirit.

God has led you to discover the footprints of a community of men who walk side by side with each other and with those they serve.

You want to be part of this family and become a witness to the Church and to the world.

You feel that you would like to surrender all to God even though you are hesitant at times.

Like the first disciples, you are ready to be drawn along to an ever-deeper relationship with the support of your fellow Associates.

## **Questions to consider:**

- What is your image of God?
- What is your relationship with Christ? Do you have a desire to deepen that relationship?
- Do you feel you need the support of others to draw closer to Christ?
- Do you have the energy to serve others? How can this community support you?
- What attracts you to the Holy Cross Community?
- What is holding you back from making a commitment to become a Holy Cross Associate?

## Closing Thoughts

*Your journey will take many turns  
and you will be led down many paths.*

*But God will never abandon you.*

*God's love will be your constant companion  
on which you may always rely.*

*If you abide in love*

*you will abide in God*

*and not wander anymore in darkness.*

## Constitution 2: Mission

### Opening Reflection

*Holy Cross is an apostolic community; it does not exist for itself.*

*If it is truly evangelical, it will guide you and free you to serve the people of God.*

*It is itself an active element in bringing about a world of justice, peace and love.*

Dying and rising with Christ, His followers are sent to continue His mission of bringing justice, peace and love in the world.

Our mutual respect and shared undertakings should be a hopeful sign of the kingdom. "See how they love one another."

We go as educators in the faith in word and action to those whose lot we share.

We need to reach out especially to the poor and needy even as they share their gifts with us. As disciples we must have the competence to see and the courage to act.

We need to assist others by recognizing and developing their gifts as we recognize and develop our own.

We are called to cross borders of every kind to know and appreciate the barriers that keep us from loving all our neighbors.

Periodically we review our effectiveness and renew our commitment.

We receive our strength to do great things from the Lord and his Spirit, which is alive in us.

### **Questions to consider:**

- Is God calling you to reach out to others in some form of service?
- Is honoring Christ's mission a part of your spirituality?
- How are you an educator of the faith – either in teaching or giving example or recognizing others' gifts and encouraging them to develop what God has given them?
- Do you feel a part of a Church that crosses borders? Would you like to develop more of a worldview?
- What are the opportunities for doing this in "your world"?
- Do you need the support of community in helping you in your service to others?

### Closing Thoughts

*Always look for what unites and oppose everything that estranges and separates us from one another.*

*In this way you will be sent to work with joy and indestructible hope for the new humanity for which Jesus gave His life.*

*The energy of God's love will accomplish great things in you.*

## Constitution 3: Prayer

### Opening Reflection

*The Lord Jesus will teach you how you should pray. His is the creative Word, which you may receive in the silence of your heart and the fruitful soil of your life. Listen attentively to what He will say; be swift to carry out what He will ask of you. He will lift your efforts into the intimacy of the living God.*

The spirit has made us adopted children in Christ. The same Spirit gives us the desire for prayer.

In prayer we listen to God and converse with Him. In prayer we will be given the understanding of God's designs. We pray with the Church; we pray in community; we pray in solitude.

Before the Lord we learn what is His will for our lives. Without prayer we drift. In prayer God will bless us, lighten our burdens, and befriend our loneliness. The challenges of our lives and ministry draw us into prayer. We pray in community. We find ourselves especially close as a Holy Cross family when we share the Eucharist and pray together.

We especially celebrate our community feasts: Our Lady of Sorrow, the patroness of us all, the feasts of the Sacred Heart, St. Joseph, St. Brother André and Blessed Basil Moreau.

We are called to contemplation, to be drawn into His love through meditative prayer. We pray with Scripture, especially when it is used as part of the Associates' monthly gatherings, along with other readings and personal prayers. We need to find time for retreats together and opportunities for private time that takes us from our normal schedule. This helps us put all things in perspective and gives us the energy for our lives and mission as it continues to unfold.

A deep prayer life will bring joy and purpose to all that life offers us.

### **Questions to consider:**

- How would you describe your relationship with God?
- What are the circumstances that lead you to prayer?
- How does your prayer change you?
- Is praying in community a priority? If so, what benefits do you receive?
- How does your prayer help you in your life and ministry?
- Does your prayer ever lead to greater understanding of God's design for your life and your desire to follow God's will?
- How could becoming a Holy Cross Associate affect your prayer life?

### Closing Thoughts

*Don't be afraid to set apart time for your prayer every day. Your zeal for God's work and your availability for your family and companions will grow all the greater for it.*

*Remember that prayer is more powerful than anything you can achieve by your actions.*

*And the Lord says there are evils that can only be cast out by prayer and fasting.*

## Constitution 4: Community

### Opening Reflection

*Let your love for one another, fraternal charity as Father Moreau called it, be the sign that you are Holy Cross. Your hospitality and acceptance of the equality of all, will be a gift to the Church and to the world.*

The family spirit we receive in community is the hallmark of what it means to be a Holy Cross Associate. Our community life in Holy Cross fortifies us by the example and encouragement from our brother and sister associates.

It protects us from being overwhelmed or discouraged in our service or ministry.

We develop companionship in our local chapters as we share our crosses and joys with one another.

If an individual is incapacitated from attending gatherings because of illness or other legitimate reasons, efforts to reach out to him or her with some form of communication or visit should be made.

We pray for each other especially when members are in difficult circumstances. We know that our prayers have a special connection with each person for whom we pray.

Our monthly gatherings are the normal ways we stay in touch with one another, sharing our faith and our lives and providing that family spirit, which is so essential to Holy Cross spirituality.

A local chapter has a coordinator who sees that monthly gatherings and assignments are scheduled. Other roles are designated according to needs, such as communication with the national board.

### **Questions to consider:**

- What does the term “family spirit” mean to you in the context of being the special sign of the Holy Cross Community?
- How can community help you from being overwhelmed or discouraged in your service or ministry?
- What could the relationship with other members of your local chapter offer you? Do you find it difficult to relate to others who have different qualities from you? How could these relationships add to your personal growth?
- How does making your monthly meetings a top priority become a sign of your commitment to the Holy Cross Associates?
- What gifts do you have that could contribute to your local chapter and/or the national organization?

### Closing Thoughts

*Everything in your life can have love as its motive, its end.*

*The commitment that you make to develop community life in Holy Cross is one specific way of embodying your love for God and for God's people.*

## Constitution 5: Commitment

### Opening Reflection

*Following Jesus does not mean slavishly copying His life. It means making His choice of life your own starting from your own potential and in the place where you find yourself.*

*It means living for the values for which Jesus lived and died.*

Holy Cross Associates accept the Lord's call and pledge publically to commit to grow in their spiritual lives, to develop community among themselves and to give service to the Church and the world.

**Spirituality:** Holy Cross Associates use a variety of means to sustain prayer as a vital part of their daily lives on their faith journey. We grow spiritually through retreats, study of the Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross and the writings of Father Moreau.

**Community:** Holy Cross Associates develop a family spirit through community. We share hospitality, hopes, sorrows, joys and social gatherings celebrating Holy Cross feast days and events. It is clear that friendship and love for one another mark our Christian commitment.

**Ministry:** With hope to bring, Holy Cross Associates participate in the mission of Holy Cross through family, parish, church and civic involvement. We strive to share our God-given gifts and our Christian life with those whom we serve.

The process of becoming a Holy Cross Associate may begin in different ways such as: becoming a friend of the Associates by participating in Associate activities, attending the monthly gatherings of a local chapter, becoming familiar with Holy Cross spirituality through Holy Cross ministries, hearing about the Associates from a friend and the media, etc.

A formal commitment is made and renewed each year after reflection to assure that this commitment is an ongoing priority in a person's life.

### **Questions to consider:**

- Is making a continued commitment to something, difficult for you?
- Are you willing to explore the Holy Cross Associates to see if God might be calling you to be a part of this spiritual family?
- Are you involved in some way in the threefold aspects of the commitment that Holy Cross Associates make?
- Which aspect of this commitment would be an area of growth for you?

### Closing Thoughts

*So keep Jesus Christ before your eyes.*

*Don't hesitate to go where He leads you; don't stay where you are and don't look back, But look forward with eagerness to what lies ahead.*

# Constitution 6: Formation and Transformation

## Opening Reflection

*The spiritual life is life that springs from the divine energy within you.*

*This spirit will bear fruit of simplicity and goodness, modesty and joy, courage and gentleness.*

*The Spirit will give you interior freedom and make your love full of compassion.*

*You will continue to grow into God's likeness.*

Jesus spent time forming His disciples to the point when they too could be sent on His mission.

We too are people in need of life-long formation for his service. As part of our commitment to the Holy Cross Associates we need to undergo conversion of our habits, our character, our attitudes and desires. From our Baptism we have received the seeds of everything that we need to be the person God calls us to be. We respond to God's gifts by gradually activating this grace, forming ourselves into the living likeness of Jesus Christ. "It is no longer I that live but Christ lives within me." Our life as an Associate is meant to be joyful, and so it is an experience to which we would happily invite others. Candidates who want to join our association deserve from us the cultivation of a maturity in faith, generosity and an ability to be in community with others. This occurs mainly through the example we give them. The process of initiation begins with an interview followed by a formation, which takes into consideration the candidate's maturity in the Catholic faith, familiarity with Holy Cross spirituality, education and ministerial experience. The time of his or her formal commitment will be determined by these factors along with his or her wholehearted decision to join us. Since formation is a life-long process, Associates must seek commissioning and training for their pastoral ministry from their parish and diocese. Associates are encouraged to receive updates in spirituality and theology through periodic retreats, lectures and conferences sponsored by the local chapters, the regional and national organization, as well as other local parish and diocesan offerings and to have access to offerings of the Holy Cross Communities. Some of the best formation and transformation occurs in the failures and crises that we have had. We learn from our experiences, seeking forgiveness and forgiving others, relying on God's grace to move us to a new level of relationship with Him, Christ, Mary and the saints. We will let the Constitutions be our guide as we continue our journey into the heart of God.

## **Questions to consider:**

- Who commissions me to do official ministry within a parish or diocese?
- Will becoming an Associate help my personal and spiritual growth? What would I like to see happen?
- Am I willing to enter the process of becoming a Holy Cross Associate?
- How do I want to participate in the threefold aspect of an Associate's commitment?
- How have I grown through the failures and crises in my life?

## Closing Thoughts

*God's Spirit will bring you to simplicity in an undivided dedication to God and neighbor.*

*God gives you the chance of turning yourself towards love hour by hour.*

**NOTE: Constitution 7 deals with the organizational structure and governance within the Congregation of Holy Cross and pertains only to the vowed members of the congregation.**

## **Constitution 8: The Cross, Our Hope (Ave Crux, Spes Unica)**

### *Opening Reflection*

*You are called to follow Jesus closely.*

*His story of acceptance and rejection, joy and sorrow,  
suffering, death and resurrection will also be your story.*

Jesus loves us and gave His Life for us. As his followers we are called to take up our cross and follow Him. Father Moreau says that our cross is our only hope and with this hope we have hope to bring to others. The cross touches all aspects of our lives. By accepting it we identify with those who are suffering and offer them our compassion. To accept the cross means to stand by our commitment in times of joy and sorrow and in the daily routines of life.

Resurrection for us can be a daily event.

Mary stood by the cross. As our mother, she models this daily acceptance and the hope that springs from it.

Those who have gone before carried many burdens. They did not trudge, they strode. Their lives encourage us to carry on after them.

### **Questions to consider:**

- What brings you hope even in the midst of suffering?
- Have you experienced new life after having experienced a dark period in your life?
- How have your relationships in family and community helped you through a crisis?
- Do you have a special devotion to Mary? Describe how her life affects your response to the Cross?
- After having gone through an initial journey with the Holy Cross Constitutions, what are your thoughts and feelings?

### *Closing Thoughts*

*So never let yourself lose heart, but go on seeking God in everything and everybody.*

*They are all pledges that you will finally meet your God.*

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