

Pilgrimage to Holy Cross

An Associate Formation Program



Process for the Formation of Holy Cross Associates in the Midwest Province

This process begins with a retreat experience in which the group comes together in prayer to further discern their membership in the Associates, to get to know one another and to begin to share their personal stories of what has led them to consider joining the Holy Cross Community as associates.

The next part of the process would be to invite the new members to attend seven monthly meetings on the Constitutions of Holy Cross. The purpose of these meetings is to help the candidates become familiar with the spirituality of a Holy Cross vocation and to provide a environment in which they can share faith and their hopes for spiritual growth in Holy Cross.

After a discerning retreat the new members will be invited to make formal promises in these areas: Prayer and Spiritual Growth, Community and Ministry, both in the setting of a Eucharistic Liturgy at the local level.

Format for Associate Meetings on the Holy Cross Constitutions

The facilitator for these sessions will be decided by the local group. It is hoped that where the associates have already been established, the facilitator(s) will come from those who have already made their promises in Holy Cross. One option would have the facilitator role rotating among members. In new groups the designated leadership should probably conduct the meetings at least until the group has become better acquainted. The facilitator needs to prepare for the session by reviewing the video, making sure that the video equipment is working, preparing for the opening prayer and choosing readers for that portion of the evening.

A Sample Formal Session

The evening begins informally with gathering over some form of refreshment. The formal sessions starts no later than 20 minutes after the designated time of arrival.

Participants should come prepared by having read the constitution being considered.

Begin with a song or reading on the theme for the evening such as community or prayer.

Have a moment of silence so that each individual can connect with their deeper self.

Offer a spontaneous prayer asking a blessing from God on the gathering and for the Spirit's guidance in our sharing.

The facilitator for the evening introduces the theme and the video that will be shown on the specific constitution to be discussed. The purpose of the video is to connect the constitution with the beginnings of the Congregation and the spirit of its founders.

After showing the video, the facilitator mentions one or two aspects from the video that were significant to him or her.

One or two of the provided testimonials should be read aloud by the participants.

Reactions from the group could be asked for.

Time should be given for the Holy Cross Constitution to be read silently. Each member should have a copy of the constitution before them. Ask participants to underline words or phrases that have significance for them. These thoughts should be shared in pairs with the person sitting next to them other than married couples and then summarized in the large group.

The following questions could help deepen the discussion:

What did you most need to hear this evening that will help you personally?

What has been affirmed in you? How has God already been leading you on this spiritual path?

What is most challenging for you with this constitution?
How is God calling you to new growth?

Not all of these questions need to be covered. Stay with what is most meaningful for the group.

Read the closing statement that is provided.

Make any announcements and firm up times for future meetings.

End with a short prayer, praying for the needs of the group.

Statements on The Holy Cross Constitutions

Call: Myra – a Holy Cross Associate, Minneapolis, MN



“God has been calling me all of my life. Since I was a young child , I wanted to serve God in a very special way. God put a wonderful man in my life. We got married and raised four beautiful children. Then God opened another door for me. I discovered the joy of being active in my faith through the charismatic movement. I began to look for a church that I could call home. I searched and searched and never found a caring community . One year I visited my sister in Palm Desert, California and found a warm community and the Holy Cross Associates that welcomed me with open arms. I said to my sister, ‘I want what you have.’ God answered my prayer when the Holy Cross Associates came to Minneapolis. My sister and her husband started a new chapter when they moved back to take care of Dorothy’s aging parents. We had our first meeting in February of ’97. Holy Cross became very special to me. After our Notre Dame conference I decided to make my first promises in Holy Cross. It’s brought me closer to the Lord, strengthened my spirituality and helped to recognize and develop my gifts. I’m not one to take a leadership position. Holy Cross has encouraged me to take on many new roles in my parish. I’m trained as a lay minister. I have conducted prayer services and communion service and was the one who helped bring a liturgy team in our parish community. God’s call is ever present in my life now.”

Call: Sister Mary Kay – Superior General for the Marianites of Holy Cross

Before a person can respond to a call, there has to be an attitude of listening. Abraham, Moses and Mary had to be in a listening stance. Before I can respond to a call, there has to be a space in



my life that's not filled with myself and what I want to say and do. For those of us who have been baptized, our parents heard that call. The listening came from somebody else, we received the gift of their response.

It is up to us today to continue to listen to God's call and respond as a Christian.

How is a person called to a religious community? I'll use an image of a garden. In the garden there are many flowers and plants. There are probably one or two flowers that really attract us. The charism of a religious community is like a particular flower or plant in the garden that speaks to our heart more than the others. It opens us up to the others but it is the reason we go into the garden. The charism of a religious congregation helps us to plunge fully into the Gospel message. It may be a particular nuance or challenge we hear. It says to us here I am, you can pick me. You can bring me home.

What is the charism of Holy Cross? Holy Cross is like a tree. Moreau saw the community to be a tree of sisters, brothers, priests with lay associates reaching out like branches in service but nourished from the same source.

Moreau had a special relationship with women. Once when he was going through a dark period, he received a letter from a lay woman friend who gave him some advice. He took it very seriously and his faith and trust returned. He shows us that he could receive mentoring and guidance as well as give it. This is what Holy Cross has to offer. No one group has the whole answer. All of us need to bring our gifts. In Holy Cross we just can not be alone; it's religious, clergy and laity working together. We have to take that very seriously. This is vital. It is Holy Cross's gift for the future of the Church. It's that sense of family that makes Holy Cross unique.

If Holy Cross is going to continue to give its gift to the world, we have to invite people to join us who have a strong sense of family. Not taking family in the sense that everything is perfect. But

in all our struggles with good times and bad times, family is important. We need people who see relationships and family as fundamental to our life. That's what is going to nourish the future of the Congregation. Moreau was a person of relationships. He loved people, he trusted people, he was hurt at times, but it was his relationships that called him to conversion, love and forgiveness.

This is what we need to look for in the people that come to us today. Do they have the kind of values that are learned only through family struggles.

Call: Nate – a novice from the Indiana Priest Province

I had come to Notre Dame University to major in pre-med. I was going to be a doctor. I loved Notre Dame and Notre Dame football. While living there, I noticed the men around me – priests and brothers who were excited about what they were doing. I eventually decided to drop medicine and was looking at other career choices. I continued noticing these men who loved what they were doing. I said to myself, "I also could be happy doing that as a priest." I saw their joy.

What drew me to the Holy Cross Community was the support they gave each other in their ministry. Even when the ministry was different, the support was still there. It's great to have motivation and a support system in troubling times and joyous times as you would in your own family.

I am looking forward to go wherever God takes me. I can be happy in Holy Cross.

Call: Jesus – a novice from the South-West Brothers Province

I was a student at St. Edward's University in Austin Texas operated by Holy Cross Brothers. I needed a place to stay the last six weeks before leaving. The Brothers invited me to stay with them. I had a girl friend at the time but also got to know the Brothers very well. It wasn't until after I left that I reflected on a possible call to Holy Cross as a brother. It was the sharing in community and learning who the Brothers were and what their life was all about that affected me. I had never experienced community life in that way before. I eventually found out that I could fit in. The more time I spent with them, the more natural it seemed.

I have come to realize that God's call was in me even before I had made a firm commitment to my Catholic faith. The more I live in Holy Cross the more I see myself becoming a better person and my love for people continues to grow.

Mission: Heather – President and CEO for Bishop McNamara's High School in Forrestville, MD

Education is one the most critical missions of Holy Cross today. Our mission according to Father Moreau is to educate the heart as well as the mind. We discover that in educating the hearts of our young people we teachers end up educating our own hearts. I believe that we in Holy Cross are called to challenge those networks of power and privilege that prevent our young people from reaching their potential. I believe teachers are called to share the greatest tool they will ever use – their own faith witness.

I am often asked what led me to Holy Cross. I began my teaching career with the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Everything that I thought education should be was practiced there. I met the same environment when I came to Bishop McNamara's with the Eastern Province of Holy Cross Brothers. I met the same purity and passion that I had experienced years before. It was a coming home.

Teachers are allowed to grow and enrich themselves. Unless we can find our true selves, we will have little to share with our students.

We serve primarily Afro-American students at our school. Forty-four percent are receiving some form of financial aid. Ninety-eight percent of our students are accepted into college. If you would walk down the halls of our school, the students would say that we care for one another. Hospitality, inclusiveness, respect and outreach are the characteristics of a Holy Cross school. This same philosophy is true for all Holy Cross schools.

Project Pride involves taking twenty-five students who would not have met our admission criterion and involve them in a special mentoring program so that they can succeed.

We invite our students into our home for dinner. Moreau says that we cannot share with our students what we do not have ourselves. We feel that we as persons are the most powerful message we have to give them.

This is a critical time in our Holy Cross schools. I'm in the last generation in which we probably have brothers as mentors. The new generation of teachers will be receiving the mentoring from lay people who have caught the Holy Cross spirit. The laity is our future. Laity need to be brought into the Congregation in ways that are life affirming – ways that allow us to offer the gifts we have to give. Moreau says there is no single person that creates a beautiful edifice. Rather it takes many minds and hearts. Holy Cross celebrates this diversity. We are about a powerful union and communion of talents and gifts. As I am welcomed into Holy Cross with my gifts so I can be welcoming to my teachers in the same way.

Mission: Brother Carl – Palm Desert, CA

In Holy Cross there are many ways, to be educators in the faith. I began my ministry in Catholic schools, but later was led to serve



students and parents in the public school system. Still later I became involved in bringing youth ministry to parishes on the diocesan level and designing a program to train lay people in youth catechesis. During this period, I discovered how important it was to minister to the spiritual needs of the ministers as well as to continue to nourish my own spiritual needs. This led me to develop programs in spirituality to ever larger groups of people. I am currently involved in an interfaith organization which seeks to bring greater understanding and spiritual growth to people from different races, cultures and religions. Holy Cross has led me and supported me in my ministry to ever widening circles of inclusiveness.

Prayer: Debbie – Holy Cross Associate, Palm Desert, CA

I am a convert and my prayer life became active when I joined Holy Cross as an associate. My prayer life developed by going to classes on spirituality, attending Holy Cross retreats and meetings. So much of my prayer is listening. I've learned contemplative prayer in Holy Cross. I use Thomas Keating's method of Centering Prayer which involves using a sacred word or phrase as we sit in silence for about twenty minutes. For me this means letting go and a deeper surrender. I then am able to open myself up to God. I'm an introvert – a private person and my prayer times are very sacred times for me. I love my quiet time in the morning. I sometimes experience the awe of being in the present moment. I have prayers that I have written. I have my intentions. When things get strained or when I'm frustrated, I become silent. I go to my center and that's where I get my answers. I get a word or feeling which carries me through. There is so much chaos going on in the outer world. Prayer becomes very important. I even pray at stop lights especially when traffic is bad.

Our meetings and retreats are special times for community prayer. For me the sharing of our lives is a special kind of prayer in which I meet Christ in my sisters and brothers. Another form of

prayer I've learned in Holy Cross at our last conference at Notre Dame is the rosary. Now I pray the rosary at special times with other associates.

Of course the Mass is the center of our life as Catholics. A real understanding of its significance in my life is continually being revealed to me.

I am a prayer companion. This is one of our joint ministries in our Palm Desert chapter. The main focus is to pray with people who have undergone a crisis or traumatic experience in their lives. I have a prayer partner, Marsella, who is 96 years old. She has shingles and has just lost her daughter who was 75. Her husband is still alive but has Alzheimer's. We pray together. She loves to talk and tell me her experiences. I listen. This is a healing prayer for both of us.

Prayer: Brother Roy - Holy Trinity High School, Chicago, IL



When we pray in community what is significant to me is that I can draw upon the strength of others. And there is a sense of oneness that we have at prayer knowing that we are all trying to be faithful to God. When I lived at Columba Hall, there were men like Marcelinus, Anselm and Finbar who seemed to be at home with God and with themselves. They were a great inspiration for me.

A private prayer that I have found helpful in recent years is: "All gifts are from God; all is gift." Sometimes I use the rosary beads to repeat my mantra. I also reflect on Scriptures. Some of my favorite quotes are: "Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God." *Micah* and St. Paul's idea that the Lord is helping us reach perfection through our weakness.

Over the years my prayer has become less formal. I think I am more relaxed with the Lord and with myself. I try to listen to what

the Lord wants me to do - calls me to do each day. I'm open to receive the gifts to accomplish these things.

Spiritually I think I am less judgmental of people as the result of prayer. I am more open to listen to people and to realize that we all have our struggles in our efforts to be faithful to our God.

Prayer: Nate

Our prayers are the essential building blocks for our life. For me, I love to walk and see God in nature. This morning I saw a beautiful sunrise. It was a great way for me to connect with my image of God and to feel God's love the moment the sun broke on the horizon.

Prayer is the fuel for our lives. It's what makes me go. It's what makes me do things. If I didn't pray I wouldn't have any energy to do ministry. I'd be kind of swept along in the cultural tides or not be able to live the religious life the way I think it needs to be lived.

Community: Don and Dorothy Rien - Holy Cross Associates, Minneapolis, MN



When we moved from Palm Desert to Minneapolis, we wanted to bring the sense of community that we had experienced there to our new home. As our new group was established, we found that in many incidents we are closer than our natural family. We can share at a deeper level at times.

We come from all walks of life and yet we are accepting of one another and allow each person to be who they are. We don't ask them to change. They just have to desire to grow spiritually.

Joining Holy Cross has challenged us to get outside ourselves. We are able to talk about our relationship with Christ to one another. Our sense of family has broadened. We are not just in relationship with people at our local level but with Holy Cross around the world. We were able to join the Brothers at Notre Dame for chapter meetings in which our form of associates was accepted and approved by the Province. We participated in meetings in Chicago to establish guidelines and prepare for our international conference at Notre Dame. It has been a journey that has broadened our horizons and given us a global perspective of community as part of the Holy Cross family.

Community: Sister Terry – Cornwall, ON Canada

I've been fortunate because I experience community at three levels. In my local community I live with another sister. The two of us live in what we call a cooperative housing project in which people from all walks of life and religious backgrounds come together and share life in a cooperative setting.

Another level of community I belong to is a church choir that travels around the country. We have many years of sharing prayer, sharing social times and trips together. This enables me to share my Holy Cross spirituality with other lay members of my church.

Being a Sister of Holy Cross, I find that my Holy Cross spirituality enables me to participate in many different forms of community, taking the spirit of our founders to many places in my life.

Commitment: Ed and Mary - Holy Cross Associates

Chicago, IL

Ed: I was a Brother in the Congregation in the late 50's and early 60's. I studied the constitutions and the lives of Father Dujarie



and Father Moreau. In recent years when I heard of the associates I returned to Holy Cross and brought my wife with me to continue to develop the spirituality that I had learned about years before. With greater understanding of the constitutions and spirituality of Holy Cross, I saw great value as a lay person to make commitment to Holy Cross.



Mary: Making a formal commitment to Holy Cross was pretty much a natural progression. Several years ago Brother Bob Fillmore and Brother John Tryon introduced the concept to us. We formed a group that is still growing. When we get together we support one another, we help one another, we share with one another. Meeting with people who have spiritual growth as one of their priorities makes a difference. Then being introduced to all of the Holy Cross Brothers that we have met in their works and endeavors has really been inspirational. These are some of the rewards for me as I commit myself to Holy Cross.

When we attend our biannual conferences, it gives us a regeneration of our spirits to continue this commitment and spread it through the country and world. Ed has committed himself to be national coordinator which keeps him involved in this movement which is just beginning to take hold in the international community.

Formation and Transformation:

Oscar and Bridget - Palm Desert, CA



Bridget: I was finishing up my Master's degree at Ohio State and attended an international job fair for teachers. I was offered a position in El Salvador and I accepted. I lived there for two years. During this time I met Oscar.

Oscar: When I met Bridget, I had a real transformation. She changed my life forever. We became engaged and were married in my country. We then moved to Guatemala because I had a job transfer. Later we decided to move to the States. That was another big decision for me. God played an important role in my life and I kept asking if this was the right move. Years later I can say that I am happy to be here.

Bridget: Another transformation—this is happening to us right now—is that we are expecting a child. We have been married for six years now and so this will be a big change in our lives.

Oscar: We have been in the formation group of the Holy Cross Associates for about a year now. We have an extended spiritual family here. Wonderful things have been happening. We are able to share the good things and difficult things that we are going through. Our community here helps us to get closer to God. There is an age difference with most of the other members, but it has not been a barrier. We have learned from the experience of the other members. It has been very enriching.

Bridget: I am learning more about my faith and about the heritage and mission of the Holy Cross Community.

Oscar: When you start thinking about your community, you really start living. I can see myself changing as I get out of my own world. By living in community you grow so much. A lot of our problems take care of themselves when you trust in God. By joining Holy Cross you can make a difference. You learn to live God's message with concrete action.

Bridget: The Holy Cross Associates is a spiritual support group that helps me in my ministry of teaching high school. Sometimes I get so busy with other things that I forget to take care of myself. Self care is an important part of any ministry.

Oscar: We are a spiritual family. We need and nurture each other. By giving my time to the community I know that great trans-

formations will take place in Holy Cross here, in the country and in the world. I can see Holy Cross coming to my homeland in El Salvador one day.

Formation and Transformation: Brother Joel

Formation Advisor for the Southwest Brothers Province



There are three elements of formation. The first is to know oneself. If you believe that you are created in God's image and likeness, then God is within you. So begin with yourself. How is God calling you? What are your gifts? How are you responding to that call? Contemporary formation explores the dynamics of self knowledge in a variety of ways.

Father Moreau says if you want to be a good teacher, know yourself. Father Dujarie was concerned about knowing the unique gifts of each Brother.

The second characteristic of formation would be to know Holy Cross. There has to be a fit there. There has to be a match. In what ways is Holy Cross calling me? In what ways is it pushing me to go beyond the boundaries that I have set up for myself - it's like looking over a fence at places I have not seen yet.

The third characteristic is to know the Lord. None of this makes any sense unless we know the Lord. It is the Lord who is going to bring this call forward as I become aware of my unique gifts and begin to use them as my response.

When I look at women and men professed and lay who are interested in being a part of Holy Cross, I think of these three realities fitting together.

Transformation in Holy Cross will involve knowing one another and supporting one another. People in Holy Cross have to see the connection between what priests are doing, what religious are doing and what lay people are doing. We need also to continue to

nurture our relationship with the Lord from the different perspectives of the lay experience, the sisters' experience, the brothers' experience, and the priests' experience. This will enable us to share the charism of Holy Cross with the Church and for Christ's mission in the world.

The Cross, Our Hope: Larry - Holy Cross Associate

Palm Desert, CA



In the earlier part of my life I was married and had three children. They were 9 months old, two years old and four years old when my wife died in a car accident. I felt abandoned by God. I visited my brother in California and started a new life with my three kids.

Because of this tragedy, I grew closer to God and grew in so many ways. God gave me the grace and the courage to do things that I never thought I could do. God helped me be loving to those who have also experienced tragedy.

I have so much to be grateful for. Each day is a blessing. Each hour I see the presence of God. Through Him, with Him and in Him, I can live my life. The Holy Cross Associates help me to deal with the ups and downs of my life because now it is my spiritual family. We all have our crosses to bear but what a wonderful thing it is to share our crosses with our brothers and sisters. You can't bear your burden alone. I thank God I have a Holy Cross family.

I take communion to the people in a convalescent home. It is hard to see patients who are suffering. These are lonely people but it is a blessing to see them making the most of what they have. It is a blessing to be with them in this difficult time of their lives.

I receive the joy of knowing that I am a part of the Holy Cross family, part of the parish, part of the Church. It is a blessing to experience so much love and to be a part of it. The greatest gift a person can have is to love and be loved in return. This is the gift of life.

**Concluding Readings
For Holy Cross Associates Formation Sessions**

Call

In Jesus of Nazareth
One person shows
How completely we can belong to God;
How much freedom and humanity
How much courage and love one can possess
When one has been found by God
And has surrendered to God's will.
In Jesus there is also a future for you
As you follow His path through sin and death
Forward to fellowship and love
Unfailing glory and life.

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.

It means you too are called to realize
Your own lovableness.
While many families fall short in giving
Their children a true understanding of their
Own giftedness,
God's love expressed in Jesus
Restores your knowledge
Of your own divine origin
And your capacity for divine love
As a child of God.

So keep Jesus Christ before your eyes.
Don't hesitate to go anywhere He leads you;
Don't stay where you are and don't look back,
But look forward with eagerness
To what lies ahead.

Mission

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 and active element
In bringing about a world of justice
Peace and love.

In ministry and work
You proclaim in word and deed
Christ's Gospel of freedom
Justice and love.
You are free to do the work you want to do.
You can live as an associate
In every kind of work.

Discover for yourself
What seems the most fruitful field for you.
Be enterprising and creative.
God blesses the risks
Undertaken as a response to the
Promptings of the Spirit.
Adequate preparation and study
Will help you to become effective
In whatever you undertake.

The love of Christ will not let you rest.
Your work is no escape into activity,
But a sharing in the building up
Of the Body of Christ
You can do this only on the basis
Of an intimate union with God.

Prayer

The Lord Jesus will teach you
How you should pray.
He 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.
You have been promised His Spirit
Who will lift your efforts
Into the intimacy of the living God.

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.

Community

The community is the first place
Where you will make God's reign incarnate.
It is one of the countless points
Where God's new people assemble in peace,
In reconciliation, justice and joy,
In praise of God and service to the world
A people who receives its vitality from the Lord.

Accept with gratitude
The companions God gives you
To go with you on the way.
Your task is to serve and build up one another
As members of one body.

Be thankful for the variety of gifts
And the difference of personality.
When you put your own potential
And insights at the service of your
Sisters and brothers,
Your unity will grow stronger and richer,
And together you will create that spaciousness
Which finds room for everyone.

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 the world.

Everything in your life
Can have love as its motive, its end.
The promise that you will make to develop
Community life in Holy Cross,
Is one specific way of embodying
Your love for God and for God's people.

Commitment

God's Spirit will bring you to simplicity
In an undivided dedication to God and neighbor in Holy Cross.
God gives you no program
But the chance of turning yourself towards love
Hour by hour.

And so the spiritual life is not a burden
But a liberating vocation. ———
It is much more a matter of simplifying
A life not taken up with complicated strategies
And performances.

Every day look at the way you are living
In the light of God's Word.
Let it warm you when you are cold,
Encourage you when you are disappointed.
You must not only be a hearer of the Word.
You must bring it to fulfillment.
Happy are you if you meditate on it
Daily in your heart.
You will be like a tree by the running water
Whose branches will stay fresh and green,
And they will keep bringing forth new fruit.

Formations and Transformation

The spiritual life
Is life that springs from the
Divine energy with 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.



So don't carry on the futile battle against yourself,
Don't divide yourself into good and evil.
Turn your attention to the Lord instead
And be deeply receptive.
Grow in self knowledge and accept your self
In God's light and God's unconditional love.

You will surely have realized ——
That you cannot become a spiritual person
Without an interior discipline
In your dealings with the world.
Be discerning in your choices.
Guard against anything that will undermine
Your spiritual strength and lessen your chances
Of loving one another

Be open to the new growth the Spirit
Will give you through the letting go of the old
And the receiving of the new.
Each stage of life has its own gifts and challenges
Be open to all of the new possibilities that life provides.
You will discover at each stage the greater significance
Of your original call.

The Cross, Our hope

The Cross and anchor
You receive as the symbol of your commitment
Will also be a sign of hope and consolation
In painful moments of growth
And a sign of God's enduring love
Which will eventually bring the joy of new life.



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