

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

*Please support the work of our retired Brothers this Advent season.*

*Brothers Richard, Placide Ngoie, and Victor Kazadi during a visit that Richard made to the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

### DEAR FRIENDS:

I am writing during this Christmastime to ask for your generous support for our retired Brothers. No longer compensated for their full time service as teachers, counselors, or administrators, these Brothers remain committed to and engaged in ministry with poor communities, marginalized persons, and the aged and infirm within the Congregation.



*Much of Brother Richard's ministry involved the formation of young Brothers both in the US and in Africa. Here he is wearing our white mission habit while serving in Congo in the 80's.*

Brother Richard Mazza is one such brother, who in retirement has focused his ministry on compassionate presence to the dying and their family members, formation of our New England Associates and our Brothers around the world, and serving the mission of our Sponsored Schools when he was part of the XBSS Team.

Brother Richard has been moved in his ministries by a gratitude and love for the Congregation and his Brothers. His "happy life" with the Brothers began in Utica, New York, where he was born and raised. Brother Richard met the Xaverian Brothers his senior year at Notre Dame High School. Initially reluctant to attend the newly formed all-boys school, he was immediately impressed by the welcoming speech of the principal, Brother Hilary Murphy, and quickly began to feel relaxed around the Brothers he had as teachers. "While reflecting back on this major event," Brother Richard shares, "perhaps the biggest change was that every evening, instead of going out with my friends, I studied and did my homework. A Huge Change!!!" At the end of the year, Richard and his



Brother Richard (right) with Mrs. Carolyn and Mr. Richard Frost at a recent Ryken Society Luncheon in Boston, MA.

best friend took qualifying exams for entrance into the Congregation.

Brother Richard's life in the community, which has included assignments at St. John's High School, Xaverian Brothers High School, and St. John's Prep, has been an affirmation of the line from our *Fundamental Principles*: "You will find your fraternal love and friendship within the community one of the chief joys with which the Lord blesses you, and a most powerful means of evangelization." Throughout his life, he has been a compassionate presence to many Brothers with very serious end of life needs and issues. Now, in these latter years of his life, when faced with critical and life threatening health issues of his own, Brother Richard says, "the prayers, kindnesses, and support of many brothers and friends are not only memorable but also very real and very generous." So, in spite of the difficulties that come with age, Brother Richard lives in hope. "Hope is a passion for life!," he says, quoting Paul Ricoeur.

In his many years of work with our Sponsored Schools, Brother Richard knows that hope is present among our students and continues to ignite their imagination and energy, just as he was attracted to the Brothers decades ago. At a recent Parents' Council meeting in Massachusetts, Brother Richard listened to a mother whose son has been inspired by our *Fundamental Principles*. With appreciation, the mother quoted a favorite line of her son's: "If you allow yourself to be formed by God through the common, ordinary, unspectacular flow of everyday life, you will gradually experience a liberation and a freedom never before imagined." Brother Richard received her appreciation with gratitude. His life as a Brother has been humbly dedicated to cultivating and serving this kind of spiritual inspiration and connection.

And so, it is vitally important to have your support this Advent Season for our retired Brothers, as they serve those in need and share the wisdom that animates our mission.

In Christ,

*Brother Daniel*

BROTHER DANIEL SKALA, CFX

*General Superior*

P.S. The good work of our retired Brothers is not possible without you. We hope you can make a contribution before the New Year.