Hope is on the Horizon for the Mission in Bungoma, Kenya

Preparing for the reopening of St. Xavier High School in Bungoma, Kenya, has been a challenge for both staff and students. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll, yet Brother Dan Ssenyomo, Assistant Headmaster, remains hopeful despite the lack of support for private schools from the Kenyan government. They are striving to align St. Xavier’s with the Ministry of Education’s new health guidelines and working to ensure a safe infrastructure including social distancing. Protocols issued include provision of water stations, sanitizers, and a face mask requirement. The new changes have been coordinated by Principal Mr. Charles Ogutu, and Brothers Dan Ssenyomo, Anthony Dindi, Edmond and Masese, as well as the staff of the St. Xavier community with supervision of the Regional Coordinator, Brother Dan Ongeso.

“We remain hopeful that with the support of the congregation, the region, and God’s providence, we will realize our goals,” said Brother Ongeso.
**Praying Through Lent the Xaverian Way**

For 40 days, all were invited to reflect and pray for the unique mission of the Xaverian Brothers online. Each day, a new reflection was posted covering an aspect of mission, ministry, and education and “revealing the mysterious ways of God” in the Xaverian mission. With St. Joseph guiding the journey, each prayer reflection was posted across the Xaverian Brothers social media channels and archived on the website. Many shared, liked, and commented on the reflections.

“The suffering caused by the pandemic has given us more reasons to seek together consolation in prayer,” stated Brother Daniel Skala, C.F.X., General Superior. “The Fundamental Principles’ remind us to ‘make God’s Word our Home.’ We turn to God in prayerful gratitude for the many ways our mission ‘manifests God’s care and compassionate love’ to our neighbors, near and far.”

“I look forward every day to the Lenten prayers…,” commented Eleanor Sprankle. “... and travel with you to your many missions… we have all grown to ‘fields afar’ from where we started. God bless you and your works.”

To view an archive of the 40 days of Lenten Prayer, visit: [xavb.ro/Lent2021](xavb.ro/Lent2021)

**A Return to Haiti, One Year Later**

Brother Adolph was enjoying a home visit to Congo before the pandemic. Then travel restrictions due to COVID-19 kept him there for almost an entire year. Needless to say, his return to Haiti in February of 2021 was a joyous occasion. Greeted by Brother Vincent upon his arrival in Port-au-Prince, Brother Adolph returned to his beloved ministry at Sant Zaveryen. Through prayer and perseverance, he was able to remain hopeful.

**Sant Students Work to Serve Their Communities**

An exciting new chapter has begun for former Sant student Jackson Merinor, who recently took advantage of an internship at the National Ambulance Center. Merinor appreciates the comradery of his colleagues in his new work environment and the usefulness of the skills he’s learning.

“This initiative may help me be able to come to the aid of a person at risk,” he said.
"You are here because God wants you to be here," affirmed Aaron Bau, a senior at Malden Catholic, addressing the 2021 XBSS Student Leadership virtual retreat. In light of the pandemic, this year's program was adapted to occur over five online sessions spread out over the month of March rather than the usual four day in-person stretch.

"The flexibility of a virtual format gave us the opportunity to bring in more voices from across our network and expand flexibility with the topics we cover," said Benjamin Horgan, XBSS Formation Director and coordinator of the retreat.

While nothing could replace an in-person experience, this year's format allowed students to build relationships with their peers across the network over a longer period of time. 140 students and staff from across the 13 XBSS schools gathered online for the virtual program aimed at reflecting on the mission and charism of the Xaverian Brothers, building collaborative relationships, and empowering students to become faith-filled leaders in their school communities.

Some students shared that the virtual retreat was the best experience they had on Zoom since the start of the pandemic nearly a year ago. Faculty members thanked the XBSS office for providing such a wonderful retreat for students and congratulated the superb work of the planning team.

Having started over 30 years ago under Brother Charles Moran, then Director of Sponsorship, and Michael Welch, then Administrator at Xaverian Brothers High School, this year's program featured a greater focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. Retreatants and leaders kept in vigilant prayer over the month across the network.

"God puts people on your path for a reason," Nick DeSousa, a Malden Catholic alum and retreat speaker shared with students via Zoom. "You are here for a reason."

Chad Puclowski, an adult leader from Xaverian Brothers High School concurred. "God has called each of you to be here," he said.

Modified for cyberspace, Deacon Greg Thompson, a long-time presenter on the XBSS retreats, led funny icebreaker activities for students as they acquainted themselves with the digital format.

Dr. Shari Berga of Our Lady of Good Counsel High School and Mr. Steve Ruemenapp of St. John's Prep led students in a series of reflections and activities that raised a collective awareness of those experiencing injustice and guided the retreatants on ways to respond as a Xaverian community.

Students developed prayer services and presentations as seniors from last year ministered to the juniors.

Each school was asked to develop a leadership project for their school group to take back and implement in their community with the aim of enhancing their school's Xaverian-Catholic identity. At the retreat's conclusion, students presented their proposed leadership projects to their peers via Zoom.

New friendships were forged, and connections were made, albeit digitally, but with a newfound appreciation, excitement and enthusiasm to one day meet face-to-face.

"You were called to be here," said Mike Driscoll, an adult leader from St. John's Prep. "There is a purpose, I assure you."
Nazareth Regional Creates Brother Matthew Burke Scholarship

In the early years of Nazareth Regional High School in Brooklyn, one man made a big difference in the lives of the students. That difference came from Brother Matthew Burke. His legacy as a teacher and principal inspired a number of alumni, led by Denis Wuestman, ’73, to create and support a scholarship fund in his honor.

Brother Matthew, who passed away in November at 82, selflessly and passionately committed himself to his students and colleagues while contributing greatly to their personal development and education. The scholarship in his name provides financial assistance to two students annually who display the Xaverian values and principles Brother Matthew himself espoused.

While many would have liked to see the scholarship come to fruition while he was alive, his passing inspired more involvement, starting with ten alumni who gave large gifts and then expanded to all alumni of Brother Matthew’s era. The fund has already raised over $20,000 in gifts and pledges, and donors are committed to continuing their contributions yearly to ensure the scholarships funding.

“I want to give something back to serve our community,” he said.

Wuestman expressed how fortunate he was to stay in touch with Brother Matthew.

“The impact he has had on our alumni lives on through their passion for Nazareth, and their remembrance of all that he gave them.”

Brother Matthew Burke, C.F.X.

The impact he has had on our alumni lives on through their passion for Nazareth, and their remembrance of all that he gave them.

Sant Student Seeks to Employ His Community

Former Sant Zaveryen student Louigene Clédisonne, who recently entered a period of transition following graduation from university, is aspiring to become a business owner not just for himself, but as a means to help the people of his local community find stable employment.

“I want to give something back to serve our community,” he said.

Clédisonne and a friend recently began work with an educational program helping children in need. He also designed a solar cooker to teach people in the region how to use solar energy for cooking.

“People appreciated this,” Clédisonne said. “In the future, it can help protect the environment.”

Wuestman expressed how fortunate he was to stay in touch with Brother Matthew.

“In 2017, Brother Matthew shared a speech he gave at the 50th reunion of the Nazareth graduating class of ’67,” he said. In it he reflected on his life as a young teacher as well as his observations as Nazareth matured as a community and school. His words inspired me.”
As a congregation dedicated to the ministry of Christian education, the Xaverian Brothers joined with the Catholic Bishops and many religious orders to pledge public support for the Tyler Clementi Foundation.

Founded by the Clementi family to prevent bullying through inclusion and the assertion of dignity and acceptance as a way to honor the memory of their son Tyler, whose 2010 death became a global news story highlighting the impact and consequences of bullying, the foundation has sparked dialogue amongst parents, teachers, and students across the U.S. Tyler’s story linked broader issues impacting youth and families, such as LGBTQ+ inequality, safety in schools, youth in crisis, higher education support systems and cyberbullying.

“We read in our ‘Fundamental Principles,’ that our Founder, Theodore Ryken, sought to form a community to manifest “God’s care and compassionate love to those who suffer from want, neglect, and injustice,” wrote Brother Daniel, C.F.X., General Superior. He continued, “Our work to make Ryken’s vision a reality calls us to stand up for LGBTQ+ youth and against any form of harassment and bullying.”

A statement from the Catholic Bishops called for help, support, and defense of LGBTQ+ youth and affirmed the God-given dignity of all human life, opposing all forms of violence, bullying, and harassment.

Brian Sullivan, a TV producer and adjunct instructor in Tampa, FL tweeted, “As a proud graduate of a Xaverian school, I approve!”

---

Nazareth Principal Wins Prestigious National Award

Ms. Provi Quiles, Principal at Nazareth Regional High School in Brooklyn, has won the Lead, Learn, Proclaim Award from the National Catholic Education Association [NCEA]. The award recognizes individuals whose “dedication, faith, knowledge and skills fulfill the mission of Catholic education.”

In addition to a cash prize, Provi was honored at the NCEA National Convention (held virtually this year) in April. She is just one of three administrators nationwide to be honored in 2021. Kathy Mears, interim President/CEO of NCEA, delivered the exciting news over a Zoom call with Provi and 150+ staff and students at the school. Provi advanced to the “finalist” stage after NCEA reviewed a nominating video created on her behalf. She was interviewed by NCEA staff before being named an award winner.

Congrats to Provi and her team for the tremendous mission-driven leadership they manifest daily at Nazareth. They represent our Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School network so well!

---

Pictured right: Ms. Provi Quiles upon hearing the announcement of her award at Nazareth Regional High School in Brooklyn, NY.
A new chapter has begun for the Brothers of the Ryken House community in Louisville, KY. Treyton Oak Towers, a senior living community in the heart of the city, will serve as the new home for the Brothers as the moving process begins this Spring.

“Ryken House served us well these 40 years,” said Brother Cornelius Hubbuch, C.F.X., whose leadership helped establish the renovated Brothers residence on the campus of St. Xavier High School in 1981. “Many Brothers have been cared for and blessed by Brothers who, over these years, have agreed to be the director of Ryken House. Although not formerly trained for ministry to the elderly, they fraternally served the Brothers, and we owe them much gratitude for their selfless service.”

Brothers Peter Campbell, Gery Rooney, and Borgia Brigandi also helped in the establishment of Ryken House. Like Xaverian House in Danvers, MA, Ryken House provided a place for community support, encouragement, medical care and a myriad of opportunities and ministries for the Brothers to continue volunteering in service to the larger community and one another, based on one’s ability.

“I have been blessed to live here for the last two years,” said Brother Kenney Gorman. “This has been a wonderful community of Brothers encouraging and supporting one another.”

Ryken House Director, Brother Peter Campbell, C.F.X., and medical support, Nancy Zeman, RN, have provided excellent care and supervision to assist the Brothers to live healthy and embrace life positively.

Ministries both old and new will continue at the new facilities at Treyton Oak, which provides a continuum of care and will avoid further moves when a higher level of nursing care is needed. The community is described as warm, tight-knit and welcoming. The towers are located ten minutes from St. Xavier High School near the old St. Xavier’s Broadway site in downtown Louisville and boasts sweeping views of the city skyline. There are a wide range of activities unavailable at Ryken House.

“Our senior Brothers will continue to receive good care and live the Xaverian mission in the name of the Gospel,” said General Superior, Brother Daniel Skala, C.F.X.

The Brothers kindly ask for prayers as they undertake this new initiative.
Benjamin Horgan’s Xaverian education at St. John’s High School in Shrewsbury, MA, forever changed the trajectory of his life.

“What I received there was so much more than a strong curricular program,” he said. “It was a wholistic formation experience.”

There he felt his faith fully integrated into who he was and credits the experience to his calling, which eventually led to his coming onboard with the Xaverian Brothers in 2018 as the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools (XBSS) Formation Director.

“I was ecstatic,” he said. “I was excited to return to the network that initially formed me and my vocation.”

A native of Grafton, MA, Ben graduated from St. John’s in 2005 and had the privilege of attending the school’s first Global Encounter Program to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. There he witnessed firsthand the realities of poverty, a different culture, and reckoned with his own privilege. The experience challenged him to put faith into action and inspired return to the reservation following graduation to work at the Red Cloud Indian School, a Jesuit Catholic High School. Ben went on to earn a BA in Religion and Philosophy from Bates College and a MTS from Loyola University Maryland and served as the Director of Ignatian Mission and Identity at Loyola Blakefield in Towson, MD from 2011-2018.

“My Xaverian education and experience working with the Brothers taught me the importance of relationships,” he stated.

Ben felt especially blessed to have Brother Plunket Doherty in class.

“He was tough, but there was never a doubt he cared for his students,” he said. “His ministry of presence is a valuable lesson that I carry with me into my work. Showing up and being present helps build enduring personal relationships that The Fundamental Principles and Xaverian Brothers call us to cultivate.”

Ben believes that through those relationships, the love of Christ is put into action.

“When we know each other and have a foundation of trust, we can do incredible things,” he said.

The ingenuity of the Xaverian Brothers and the trust they have for their Partners in Mission to carry on their mission has been a humbling experience for Ben who sees this trust as empowering; helping explain the success of the XBSS schools while many Catholic schools have struggled in recent decades.

“The Brothers, especially within their work in education, were ahead of the curve in many areas from their academic curriculum to their governance structures,” he said. “They were not afraid to take risks in the name of mission, and that has paid dividends in the strength of our network.”

Ben lives in Baltimore with his wife Hillary and one-year-old daughter, Finley, and is pursuing his Doctorate of Education from Creighton University. He loves cooking, collecting vinyl records, and spending time with loved ones. His position as Formation Director complements his experiences, gifts, and talents where he continues to learn and grow.

“I am grateful for my time prior to the pandemic, traveling to each school and building relationships with administrators, faculty, and students,” he said. “Our network is filled with incredibly gifted individuals who are committed to Xaverian education, and I love connecting educators from across our network to further our mission and meet the needs of the students in our care.”
2020 Ryken Award winners

Each year, the Theodore James Ryken Award is presented to a member of the faculty, staff or administration of each of the 13 Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools who exhibits a commitment to the Founder’s vision. They are recognized as committed and dedicated individuals who proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They also spiritually nurture members of the school community; are committed to academic excellence; recognize the talents of individuals; know the importance of educating the whole person; and strive to fulfill the Gospel call to peace and justice.

Beth Pattavina
Xavier High School

Christopher Gando
Nazareth High School

Kim Norris
St. Mary’s Ryken

Patrick Gittings
Our Lady of Good Counsel

Dianne Mulligan
Saint John’s High School

James Pelosi
Malden Catholic

Rosanna Vessels
St. Xavier High School

Robert Peace
Mount Saint Joseph

Jessica Ruggiero
Lowell Catholic

Robert Bernard
Saint Bernard School
Call
FULFILLED

“Brother, it is through your life of gospel witness lived in common with your brothers that God desires to manifest his care and compassionate love to those who are separated and estranged, not only from their neighbors, but also from their own uniqueness: to those who suffer from want, neglect and injustice: the poor, the weak, and the oppressed of this world.”

The impact of these words focused the next stage of his life: devotion to the poor and marginalized. Harry became a pioneer in the newly created program of the Diocese of Richmond to host volunteer communities in areas of need in Virginia. For ten years Harry lived with and mentored groups of recent college graduates, volunteering a year of ministry service in rural Virginia.

In 1989, Harry responded to the invitation to begin a ministerial outreach in Haiti. With Brother John Mahoney, and sometime later Brother Peter Mahoney, Harry moved to Pandyassou, Haiti. He eagerly accepted groups of college graduates from the states who wished to serve the Haitian people under the guidance of the Xaverian Volunteer Program.

When a new orphanage was built in the town of Hinche, Harry relocated to Maison Fortune for the rest of his time in Haiti.

In this new setting of over a hundred boys, Harry was the English teacher to the older young men.

Harry shared his English teaching expertise at the Catholic high school in town, as well as at the minor seminary in the countryside. He was the evangelizer par excellence, rejoicing in the good news of Jesus and always used the New Testament as his text.

Always the missionary, each month Harry would travel to Port au Prince to accompany the dozen young men living at the Sant Zaeryien, completing their university studies with the help of the congregation. He once again would help develop community, encourage them in their studies and always hold them accountable to their budgets! Thanks to his faithful service and the generosity of the congregation, Haiti is now gifted with doctors, teachers, accountants and spiritually and socially sensitive citizens whose task is transforming Haiti to a more just and educated country.

Harry joined the Ryken House community in 2014 and enjoyed some years of retirement with many of the Brothers he had served with over the years.

When his health began to fail, he transferred to the Nazareth Home, where he enjoyed the best of attention and partook in the spiritual and social activities offered there.

He was the missionary evangelizer to the very end and lived his deepest desire: to be bread that is broken as nourishment for others.

May he rest forever in the arms of his loving God.
Brother John Shaughnessy entered eternal life on February 12, 2021 at the Rehab Center at Nazareth Home in Louisville, KY. He died from complications of pneumonia and sepsis after a recent surgery.

“This is in all living things a hidden wholeness.”
—Thomas Merton

John was an extremely private and independent person. As a result, uncovering his ‘hidden wholeness’ is challenging. At the same time, we know John’s ‘hidden wholeness’ has touched many lives.

Throughout people’s lives certain qualities, talents and behaviors stand out as their particular signatures. John has a very unique signature. Foremost he was a life-long and energetic learner. His intellectual curiosity impelled him to pursue a very full professional life. John’s energy and curiosity inspired his mission in life. He wanted to make a difference. And he did. He contributed greatly to the learning and growth of many students through his work as an educator. John’s mission would eventually focus his talents on helping the poor and immigrants.

John was born on July 9, 1944. He is the son of Celia (Parks) and J. Gerard Shaughnessy. Both parents are deceased. John is survived by his sisters Ann and Katie and his brother, David. His sister Celia pre-deceased him. He grew up in Jamaica Plain, MA.

John was attracted to the Xaverian vocation during his time as a student at Mission High School in Roxbury. John entered Saint Joseph Novitiate in Newton Highlands, MA on July 8, 1962. He received the Xaverian habit and religious name ‘Gerard’ on September 8, 1962.

Upon completion of the novitiate, John spent four years at Xaverian College in Silver Spring, MD. He earned his BA in French Literature in 1968 from the Catholic University of America. His first mission was St. Joseph Regional High School, Montvale, NJ. During this time, he earned a Certificat d’Études from the University of Maine and his MAT in French from Fairleigh-Dickinson University in 1970.

John’s commitment to education is clear. In 1973 he accepted the position of Assistant Principal at St. Pius X Regional High School in Piscataway, NJ. While at St. Pius X, he earned his Doctorate in Administration and Supervision from Rutgers University in 1979. His time at St. Pius X was special. John often talked fondly of the community of four Xaverians, the 12 Sisters of Mercy, three diocesan priests and many lay colleagues who made up the community, as well as the Italian neighbors who would invite the Brothers to Sunday dinner.

From 1988 until he retired 2002, John taught in the Education Department at Spalding University in Louisville, KY. By 1998, he had earned the position of full Professor responsible for coordinating all Graduate Programs as well as the Supervision of the doctoral students as they prepared their dissertations. During his tenure at Spalding, John’s energy and curiosity would provide his students with the latest in educational theory and best practices.

After retiring from Spalding, John received permission to minister in Mexico where he spent about 11 years teaching English to poor people who needed the language to secure employment in tourist hotels. Upon returning to the States, John would continue his commitment to the poor by joining the Sisters of Charity’s ministry outreach to Hispanic immigrants where he taught English as a second language and helped counsel individuals.

We join in blessing John’s life recalling the words of our Fundamental Principles that remind each of us that we are a unique expression of God’s love meant to be shared as God’s healing touch of love to all whom we meet in life. We bless John for having shared God’s love through his journey as a Xaverian Brother. May he enjoy Christ’s peace.
Brother Charles Cully, C.F.X.

Brother Charles Cully was born in Brooklyn on April 26, 1944, to Peter and Katherine (O’Donnell) Cully. Both his parents were from Ireland. He is the youngest of three sons. His oldest brother, Peter, died in 1995 from cancer. Charlie is survived by Brother Thomas Cully, CFX (Russell) who entered the Congregation in 1956.

In 1950, Charlie met the Xaverian Brothers for the first time as a student at Saint Teresa’s Elementary School in Brooklyn. Charlie was in the first class at the newly opened Xaverian High School (1957). His experience of the talent, enthusiasm and energy of the Brothers as well as their complete dedication to the students would impact Charlie. The Brothers assigned to open the school were outstanding individuals. They would greatly influence Charlie’s call to follow in Jesus’ footsteps as a Xaverian. Charlie, along with eleven of his classmates, would enter Sacred Heart Novitiate in Leonardtown, Maryland, on July 8, 1961.

On September 8, 1961, Charlie received the habit of the Xaverian Brothers. He was to be known in religious life as ‘Brother Hugh.’ Charlie made his first profession on September 8, 1963.

Upon completing the novitiate, Charlie earned his BA in Physics from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. His first mission was Saint Joseph Preparatory School in Bardstown, Kentucky where he taught physics and math.

Charlie would remain in Kentucky until 1997. He was assigned to Flaget Memorial High School from 1968 to 1974 when the school closed. From 1974 through 1997 Charlie continued to teach physics and math at Trinity High School.

He also coached soccer and track. In his time at Trinity, Charlie was involved with the student retreat program.

In 1997, he moved to Baltimore and started teaching and coaching at Mount Saint Joseph High School. In recent years he worked as an assistant in the Athletic Department.

In talking about our mission to bring about the Kingdom of God as followers of Jesus, Desmond Tutu gives practical yet inspirational advice when he says,

*Do your little bit of good where you are; it is those little bits of good put together that overwhelms the world.*

Charlie did a lot of ‘little bits of good wherever he was.’ He shared his personal gifts. He was humble and unassuming. He was also a very bright individual; a voracious reader who was interested in both science and literature. Charlie was a quiet and simple man. He didn’t need titles, position or prestige. He was content with ‘the common, ordinary and unspectacular.’ Nothing seemed to upset him. One of his signatures was his frequent whistling or humming a tune. Kids readily picked up on this habit. Charlie lived in the ‘now.’ As a result, he was present to others.

Not one to emote, yet deeply emotional, Charlie’s life was marked by two loves. Love of his family and love of the Xaverian Brothers. His love of family, of course, included the family members who remain in Donegal. Charlie’s Irish heritage had a strong influence on him and he enjoyed his many visits ‘home’ to Ireland.

Charlie’s compassion, care and dedication to our elderly Brothers was always evident in the many ‘little bits of good’ he did for them. Charlie would do things for the Brothers without drawing attention to himself. In his own unique and quiet way Charlie shows us what it means to be a son of Ryken and a disciple of Jesus.

We give thanks for the little bits of good he did for so many. May Charlie enjoy the peace Christ promises us.
Building Continues in Kipushi, Congo, Classrooms Complete

The classrooms for the new Xaverian technical school in Kipushi, Congo have been completed, with only finishing touches left. The company has already begun construction of the administrative block, sanitary block, and the Brothers’ residence. “We thank the congregation for the financial support for the realization of this project,” said Brother Joseph Kibambe Ngoie, the Regional Director. “The Brothers are very pleased with the work and parents are already eager to register their children for this new school, even though it’s not yet open.”