

Concordia

FOLLOWING THE XAVERIAN WAY



Pictured: a ground breaking ceremony was had for a new dining hall and kitchen at St. Xavier High School in Bungoma, Kenya.

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Building The Mission

Last Fall, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the construction of a new dining hall and kitchen at St. Xavier High School in Bungoma, Kenya. So far there is a wonderful progress on these facilities despite a few challenges, some caused by heavy rains.

"To say we are thrilled would be an understatement," stated Brother Dan Ssenyomo. "Students are amazed at the progress and love it when the men working allow them to help dispense additional dirt by helping to guide the wheelbarrows across campus. Taking ownership of their dining hall allows the students to feel invested in its progress. We like to refer back to the phrase, 'It takes a village' when we think of the work going into the new dining facility, because without the continued contributions from donors like you and the support and hard work provided from the local members of our community this endeavor would continue to be just a dream."

Construction of New Dining Hall & Kitchen Underway at St. Xavier High School, Bungoma, Kenya

Architects Mr. Kimiti and his construction team joined in the ceremony with enthusiastic attendees exhilarated by what this will mean for not only the Xaverian Brothers and other stake holders, but also for the community at large.

"The dream of having a kitchen and dining hall here that can serve everyone has been a long time coming, we are really happy with all of the support we have received and continue to receive to get here," said Brother Daniel Ongeso, Kenyan regional coordinator.

As 2022 begins and every stone is put in place, Brother Dan Ssenyomo becomes more confident that students will continue to have the opportunity to eat their meals in a place free of dirt and dust and one in which they will be dry during the rainy season.

"We are sure that everyone can look back on their time at school and remember the joy in sharing stories and spending time with classmates in the cafeteria," he said. "Our students are no different. They continue to thrive at school, and we have you to thank for that. Academically, our classrooms are filled with inquisitive and engaged students who love to learn about the world and continue to impress us with their questions and enthusiasm for learning."

None of this would be possible without the longstanding commitment and support from our Associates, Partners in Mission, collaborators, and the generosity from donors.



Students Look to the Future with Tree Planting



Recently, students and staff at St. James Minor Seminary in Lodwar, Kenya planted over 120 seeds in response to the 1 million tree planting initiative by the diocese. They are seeking to help the school with drip irrigation for trees, since they are in a semi-arid area, which may require students to irrigate on occasion.



Bolivian Associates Hold Inspiring Retreat

It had been 24 hours of feverish and emotional activity. A much larger turnout than expected took place on October 2, 2021, when Bolivian Associates held an ‘encuentro’ inviting former students of the Colegio San Francisco Xavier who are interested in maintaining their relationship with the spirit of the Brothers and with one another. 62 people traveled to Carmen Pampa for the uplifting event where many memories of the Brothers were shared and friendships renewed.

“It was very emotional to listen to the first four students of the school: Gastón Valencia, Severo Chambi, Jorge Monje and Rubén Peralta,” said Andres Pardo. “All students agreed how fortunate they were to receive a solid human and academic training at school. Everyone thanked the Brothers for having trained them above all with good principles and values.”

A remembrance of the origins of the school was held the first day. Many were recognized in an explanation of photographs exhibited by Edgar Bonilla. A liturgy was held to remember all Brothers who were in Carmen Pampa and have passed away, as well as students, teachers and those who worked at the school.

A WhatsApp group was formed for the event with the idea that those interested in becoming Xaverian Associates can communicate prior to an acceptance ceremony for new members. The encuentro was a very uplifting and moving event. Associates were thanked, especially Andres Pardo, Edgar Bonilla and Lionel Vidal who made the weekend special for so many. As a result, numerous attendees asked for applications to join the Bolivian Associate Program.



Living & Loving in Haiti

There was only one U.S. flight out, the main road to the capital was blocked, and Brother Bill Griffin had a leg infection in need of medical attention. Living in Haiti for the last 11 years had always been unpredictable, challenging, and adventurous; a thrill Brother Bill had become quite familiar with. In late November 2021, he cruised through a blockade on the back of motorcycle to the airport in Port-au-Prince where he peacefully boarded the last U.S. bound flight.

“It was certainly an adventuresome departure,” Brother Bill laughed, making himself comfortable in the conference room of the Generalate Office in Baltimore several days later. “God’s providence cleared the way and brought me back safely.”

For this 60-year Xaverian Brother, his mission in Haiti began in 2000 when a group of Brothers visited the country for ten days. Impressed by the hospitality and overwhelmed by the needs, Brother Bill joined Brothers Harry Eccles and Mike McCarthy in 2011 to work at an orphanage.



Brother Bill Griffin visited Sant Zaveryen before he returned to the U.S. for a home visit.

Left to right: Yvonel, Brother Bill Griffin and Belardet.

In 2015, his mission shifted to St. Gabriel’s School, opened by Pierre Louis, a former student at Sant Zaveryen. The Sant program encourages students to give back to their local community upon graduation. St. Gabriel’s was Pierre’s way of doing exactly that. In 2012, when the school was dedicated as the first institution that resulted from the Sant mission, Brother Bill joined in celebration as students moved into the new school building.

“It was such a marvelous time,” he declared. “When that first class of 20 students graduated, people came from the U.S. to visit, and it was a glorious day I’ll never forget. Only 40% of Haitian students pass their national exams, and all of ours did. I have countless stories, but this was just a magic moment of accomplishment in the Brothers mission in Haiti.”

Originally from Silver Springs, MD, and a 1962 graduate of Our Lady of Good Counsel High School, Brother Bill joined the Brothers at the novitiate in Leonardtown, MD, and has been “living a marvelous life ever since!”

“My mission in Haiti is very simple,” he said. “It’s to be a Brother to our Haitian sisters and brothers, the same as Christ is our brother, and to try to help, serve, and love them. The mission is to give them the lifetime gift of an education and a sense of wonder and dignity of being Christ in our world today.”

Brother Bill hopes all his students can be liberated to live joyfully and abundantly in their humanity, even amid extreme poverty and hardship.

“I want them to discover who they are in Christ, and to be a part of the ministry of God, living and loving in Haiti,” he shared. “It’s a simple but glorious mission, and the Holy Spirit is behind it all. I am simply, in my weak little humanity, part of this great plan that is unfolding in Haiti.”

In recent months, Haiti has undergone a series of challenging events. From the Covid-19 pandemic to a destructive earthquake, a government coup, and a presidential assassination. Trust is scarce and a functioning government remains fragile.

“Haiti needs prayer and public servants willing to lay down their lives and serve for the common good of the nation,” Brother Bill stated. He also mentioned that Haiti needs visitors, volunteers, and missionaries, boasting of Haitian hospitality. He encouraged schools and students to coordinate mission trips, assuring that visitors will benefit tremendously from meeting the Haitian people and witnessing a whole different way of life.

“Not only will it leave an appreciation for what we have available to us in the U.S.,” he said, “but it will also provide the opportunity to see the matchless beauty of Haitian life.”

Many crucial projects enable Haiti to develop for generations to come and are the byproduct of vision, support, and prayer.

“In harmony, small things grow,” Brother Bill stressed the Xaverian Brothers motto. “My hope is that our mission educating will continue to plant seeds that will carry on the mission to care for and give the gift of dynamic faith that’s willing to sacrifice and develop Haiti.”



Pictured above: Sant Students at Christmas. Left to right: Liverson, Marcnor, Yronel, Belardet and Mike.

“ *My hope is that our mission educating will continue to plant seeds that will carry on the mission* ”

Brother Bill hopes that those the Brothers have helped educate, orient and form will stay rooted and committed to Haiti in furtherance of the mission.

“I hope to stay in Haiti as long as I have the health and vitality to do so,” said Brother Bill. “Perhaps another 11 years, God willing.”

Sant student pictured left and below.



XBSS: LIVING THE MISSION



At Malden Catholic, Brother Puccio's Theology class helped put up posters in the main hall that capture the school's theme for the school year... "In Harmony Small Things Grow!"- the motto of the Xaverian Brothers.



Pictured bottom right: Saint Bernard School students proudly display toys collected during their National Honor Society's Christmas toy drive for local children in need.

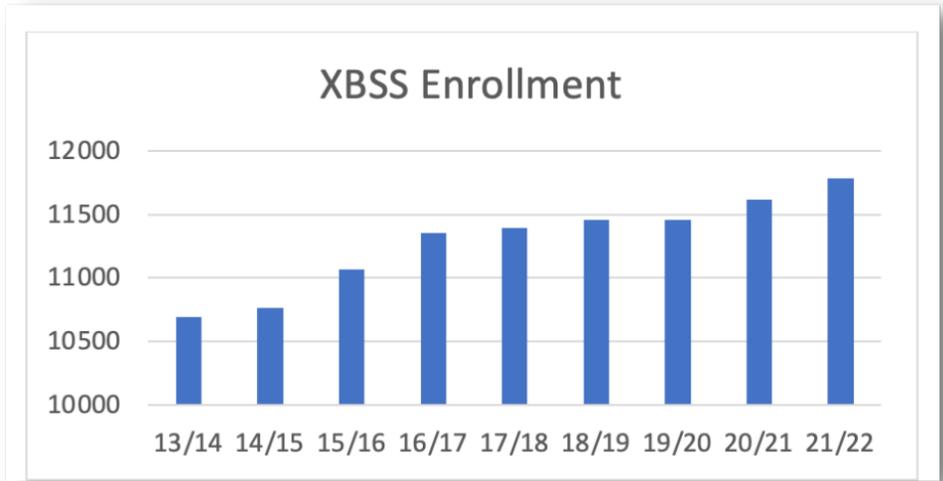


Top left: Xavier High School students help clean up Hammonasset State Park. Bottom left: Nazareth Regional students participate in a Breast Cancer Walk in Coney Island.





Xaverian Brothers
Sponsored Schools



While Catholic school enrollment has waned nationally since 1965, the network of Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools reports continued enrollment growth, among the best in the country. XBSS staff believe the consistent enrollment gains over the past decade have been the result of many variables. A number of schools in the network have responded to local enrollment challenges by adapting and innovating their programs. Several have successfully added new middle school divisions or moved from a single-sex to a co-educational model, all which have strengthened their enrollment outlook. In more recent years, a majority of the schools have experienced enrollment gains not attributed to expanded programs, but simply a stronger response from prospective families to local marketing initiatives. Our Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools offer an unrivaled education that is delivered by a dedicated faculty and staff as well as exceptional leadership from our boards and school administrators.



Connecticut's leader, Gov. Ned Lamont, stands with leaders of tomorrow, Xavier High School students, at the aerospace trade show at the Convention Center in Hartford. The Governor even posted this special tweet.



Our Lady of Good Counsel High School was honored for extraordinary volunteer efforts which benefit people with disabilities. Students and parents received the Youth Volunteer of the Year award from The Arc Montgomery County.



XBHS students participate in a dress down day to raise money to support disaster relief after Hurricane Ida devastated Louisiana.



Mission's Divine Alignment

He believed in his heart that one day those countries would be free from Soviet control and began saying a rosary at 12-years-old; continuing until 1990, when the USSR dissolved, and Lithuania announced its freedom.

When the personal, spiritual, and congregational mission all started to come together for Brother Joseph Glebas, it felt like a divine alignment. For the past 25 years he has ministered full-time in Lithuania, a country with a personal family connection that he felt nudged toward by God, where his missional aspirations inspired the Brothers and paved the way for his presence there.

Brother Joe met the Brothers at Mount Saint Joseph High School, but it was before that, at the St. Alphonsus School in downtown Baltimore where a priest came to share with students about vocation.

“He asked us the question, what does it profit a man to gain the world but to lose his soul?” said Brother Joe. He continued, “That question really struck me at age 13, and at that time I didn’t know that it was the same question St. Ignatius asked Francis Xavier when he invited him to become a Jesuit and a missionary.”

Brother Joe didn’t want to become a priest, but he did feel a divine calling upon his life. When he met the Brothers at Mount Saint Joseph, he knew he could be a teacher and upon graduation, entered the novitiate which was at that time in Leonardtown, MD.

Coming from a Lithuanian family, Brother Joe grew up praying for peace in Eastern Europe.

“I’ll never forget where I was when I heard the news,” Brother Joe exclaimed. “I was in Boston at the time, and when the announcement came and I saw the fulfillment of my prayers, I just said to myself, ‘I’m going.’”

He didn’t know how or when, as he was an only child with his parents getting up in age. He had stopped speaking Lithuanian as a child but resolved each night to relearn. In 1994, Brother Joe’s father passed away, and he joined Brother Arcadius on a visit to Lithuania for tourism. Soon he found himself deeply involved in summer camps, one in which was for university students.

“It was then that I was asked when I was going to stay forever,” Brother Joe laughed. “I could feel it all coming together.”

The Xaverian Brothers congregational aspirations connected with what was going on in Brother Joe’s personal and spiritual life in what he described as nothing short of a divine alignment. He was ready to take the mission to Lithuania. Today, Brother Joe serves student retreat programs and visiting public schools throughout the country where he speaks on vocation, meditation, and prayer.

Recently, at the end of a junior retreat with a Jesuit school, a student sat down next to him and declared, “I’m an atheist. But what you were talking about really inspired me.”



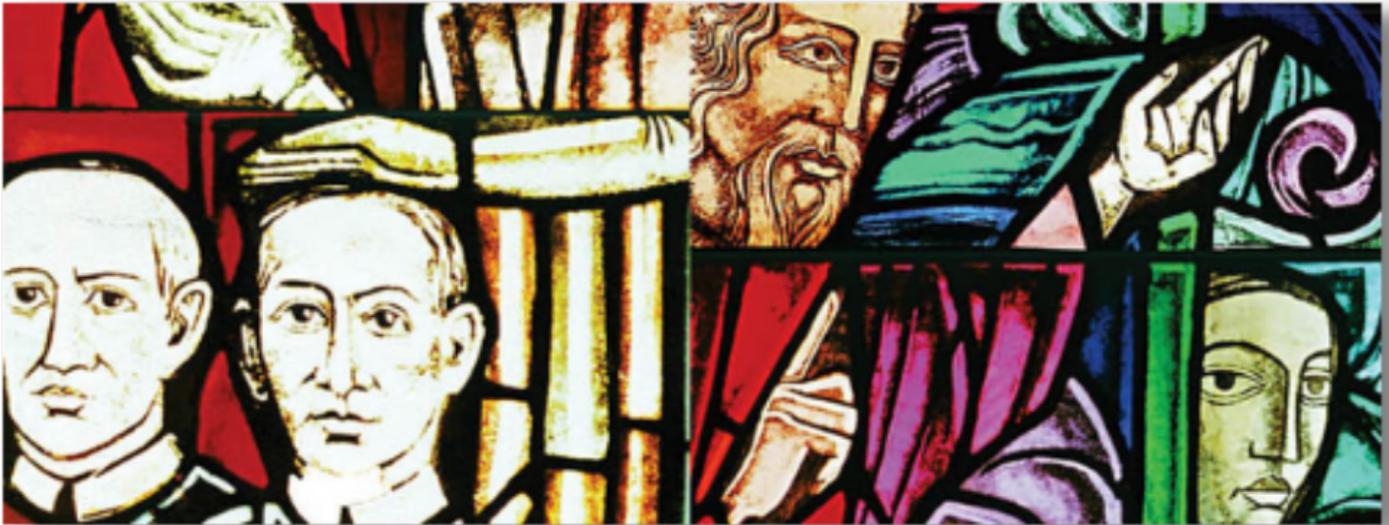
Pictured above: Brother Joseph Glebas ministering to students in Lithuania.

Brother Joe felt God ministering to him in that moment, as he knew the student gave himself in ways of service with a heart of compassion.

“Deep down, I knew he wasn’t really an atheist,” Brother Joe said. “And I pray that he realizes that someday, too.”

Brother Joe asks you to join him in prayer for the youth of Lithuania, that they would be inspired by the Holy Spirit and find God everywhere. He also asks that we pray this same prayer for ourselves.

Spirituality Course Deepens Xaverian Identity



“I thought before that I knew a good deal about the Xaverian Brothers’ charism, but this course allowed me to learn a lot more,” said Michael Shippie, World Language Teacher at Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood, MA.

Michael was one of many who took advantage of the ‘Mission and Spirituality: A Xaverian Journey’ course offered by STM Online: Crossroads at Boston College, last Fall. The six-week online program provided a new opportunity for mission and spiritual formation for Xaverian partners in mission and was designed specifically for those within the Xaverian Brothers communities and ministries.

“The opportunity to dialogue and interact with other members of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School network made the experience all the richer and made me feel pretty fortunate to be a member of our edifying community,” Michael added.

The \$60 course explored Xaverian history, charism, values and calls through weekly readings, videos by Xaverian Brothers and XBSS leaders, and asynchronous online conversations with course participants.

Designed by Dr. Carolyn Herman, Ph.D., Director of Staff Formation at Xaverian Brothers High School, and veteran facilitator for Boston College Crossroads, in conjunction with Ben Horgan, XBSS Formation Director, the course was featured last Fall and this Winter as an easy and affordable option to deepen Xaverian formation.

“As much as I enjoyed the course, I can only imagine how beneficial this would have been to my formation as a Xaverian educator earlier in my career,” stated James Conley, Director of Campus Ministry at Xaverian Brothers High School. After taking the course, Joseph MacKinnon, a ’84 graduate and Social Studies Department Chairperson at XBHS shared his gratitude to the Brothers and lay people who worked for many years beside them.

Participants read from the ‘Fundamental Principles’ and Partners in Mission documents and watched video reflections from both Brothers and Lay Partners in Mission from across the network. Developed and facilitated by Xaverian educators to support participant formation, the course provided an opportunity to connect and network with colleagues from across XBSS, the Xaverian Brothers Congregation, and Xaverian Associations.

Back by popular demand, a second offering of the course was held from January 5 through February 15, 2022. Stay tuned for more opportunities as they become available.



Frank Demuyck Honored by Diocese of Bruges and Association of Catholic Schools



Pictured: Brother Roger Demon & Mr. Frank Demuyck

Last Fall, Mr. Frank Demuyck, a longtime board member of SFX Bruges, was honored by the Diocese of Bruges and the Association of Catholic Schools for his nearly 25 years of service to Catholic education in Flanders. Frank was honored at a celebration on October 22.

Brother Roger Demon was present to help honor Mr. Demuyck. As a token of appreciation from the Diocese of Bruges, he was presented with a small but very beautiful statue of Saint Donatianus, the patron saint of Bruges. As part of the celebration there was also a musical interlude by a classical pianist and guitarist. In Frank's remarks at the end of the festivity he spoke gratefully for the contribution of the Xaverian Brothers to Catholic education in Flanders and the sale of our land in Sint-Michiels so that Catholic higher education could return to Flanders.

Frank remains a wonderful friend to the Brothers in Bruges and is known and appreciated by the Brothers in the U.S. and Congo as well.

2021 Advent Booklet TESTIMONIALS

"These reflections challenged me to seek God in a new way. I was inspired by the diversity of voices and perspectives"

- Josh Kinney, XB Director of Communications

The 2021 Xaverian Brothers Advent booklet is available to read online at: xavb.ro/Advent2021



"A powerful one!"

- Mr. Hodson, Campus Minister, XBHS



"We're so thankful for all of these contributions"

- Vincent Maligno, Associate



BROTHER THOMAS P. LYDON, C.F.X.
(BROTHER CEPHAS)

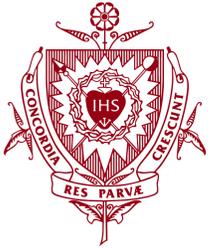
The life of Brother Thomas Lydon shows us a man who was eager to do whatever was necessary to further God's kingdom in the world. The example of Brothers at Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx invited Tom to leave his family and friends as a young teenager to travel to St. Joseph Juniorate in Peabody, MA, to prepare to join the Brothers in the traditional ministry of education. There, in the novitiate and college years, Tom had to struggle to become the best teacher he could. He may have reflected on the words of our Founder, Theodore James Ryken, who observed that "...nothing special is achieved without much labor, effort and zeal." These qualities were hallmarks in his life. Tom was an energetic, hardworking and popular teacher, prefect and coach who served as a model for young men in a half-dozen schools of someone who put his heart and soul into being a Brother for them.

Tom was demanding of his students and athletes, and even more so of himself. Tom had to discover that "God's ways are not (our) ways." He had to leave the classroom ministry which had attracted him and where his zeal had produced so much good. God's personal call to Tom had changed and he "stood ready" to be available in the new world of a treasurer's office. Staff members at St. Joseph Regional in Montvale, NJ, and, especially at Malden Catholic, were privileged to know a Brother who was careful, hardworking and always ready to be of service to them. After six busy years of service in the MC business office, God asked him to be available for a different ministry, one that would separate him from Xaverian community life. Tom was ready to move back to New York where his loving family needed him to assist in the medical care of his brother, Jim.

When he returned after a year to Malden Catholic where his position had been filled, Tom "stood ready" to find God's will somewhere else. The zeal of young Brother Cephas in the classroom and on the football field surfaced in his amazing volunteer years helping in the bookstore, in attendance-taking, custodial work and landscaping. His signature hard work in the building or outside in oppressive heat or numbing cold endeared him to adults and students who were attracted to God's goodness shining through the "...common, ordinary, unspectacular flow of everyday life."

Physical weakness and increasing confusion caused Tom to have to move to Xaverian House and commute to Malden Catholic with Brother Thomas Fahey for a couple of years. His fulltime retirement invited Tom to "stand ready" to answer the hardest call. Although he helped with weekend dishwashing, Tom became increasingly needy of assistance from nurse Robin Rowell, Brothers and staff members. He was known for his lifelong zeal and dedication to duty. As at Malden Catholic, Tom's combination of goodness and sincerity provided the opportunity for all to see Christ in Tom's weakness and to experience an enlargement of the heart by watching and assisting him.

Tom's year or so in nursing homes was necessary so that the twenty-four hour care he required could be provided. For awhile, his confusion could be somewhat controlled. For the last month or so, in the calm of his sleep, Tom was preparing for that invitation to "stand ready" to go home to God, who welcomed him on Dec. 10, 2021, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord."



XAVERIAN BROTHERS

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Baltimore, MD 21229

Join us on social media for

40 Days of Lenten Prayer

Starting Ash Wednesday,
March 2, 2022

XAVERIAN BROTHERS
IN HARMONY SMALL THINGS GROW

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