

FOLLOWING THE XAVERIAN WAY

Concordia



Students at Complexe Scolaire Rijken in Kipushi with General Superior Brother Daniel Skala (center) and Brother Jean Paul (two from center left) and Brother Vital (center right).

Bringing Hope to the Congo

The Xaverian Brothers are heeding Pope Francis' call to protect all of God's creation. In his Encyclical Letter Laudato Si, On the Care For Our Common Home, Pope Francis implores us to recognize the environmental crisis that plagues our world. He points "to the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet..." He asks each of us to recognize the part we play. He urges everyone to engage in change swiftly and with intention in the care and healing of our world.

An example of the transformative efforts undertaken by our Brothers can be found in the recent project to bring clean water, electricity and internet access to three schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo (also known as DRC or simply the Congo.)

Prior to the completion of this project, none of the three schools and their surrounding communities in Likasi, Kipushi and Kasenga had access to running water or full electricity. The women and children walked miles both ways down dirt roads daily to locate clean, potable water for their families. Only to return home exhausted after carrying the water in jugs, balanced on the top of their heads.

As Pope Francis shares in his encyclical, "Fresh drinking water is an issue of primary importance since it is indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Sources of fresh water are necessary for health care, agriculture, and industry...Water poverty especially affects Africa where large sectors of the population have no access to safe drinking water or experience droughts which impede agricultural production."



Brother Germain was instrumental in making these projects happen. He coordinated with contractors and traveled back and forth between locations to oversee the projects.

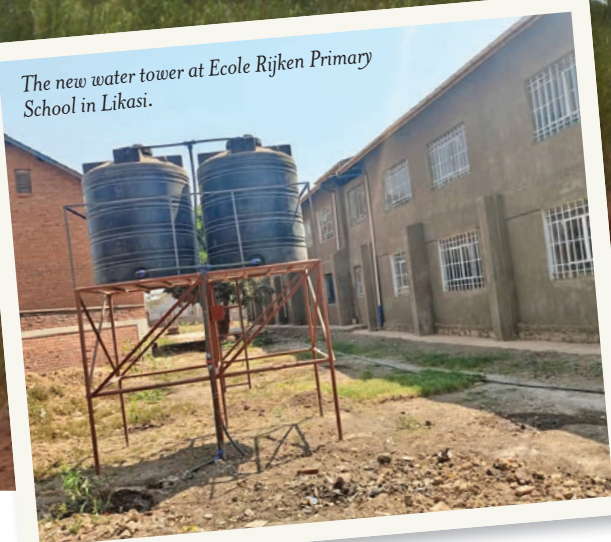
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Students at Ecole Cisaniko School in Kasenga getting clean water from the new well.



The new water tower at Ecole Rijken Primary School in Likasi.



The road to Kasenga, a remote village on the boarder of DR Congo and Zambia.

"WE DO NOT LIVE IN ISOLATION...WE ARE ALL CONNECTED. I HAVE BEEN GIVEN MUCH IN MY LIFE. IT IS MY TURN TO HELP THOSE LESS FORTUNATE. THIS IS MY WAY OF GIVING DRINK TO THE THIRSTY."

The people in these communities are the poorest of the poor among us. They have done the least to damage the environment but suffer the most from its steady decline. Therefore, our charism to serve the least among us drives us to do whatever we can to improve the lives of those we serve in the Congo.

Thanks to a committed benefactor and member of the Class of '62 at St. John's High School in Shrewsbury, MA, clean water is now flowing, lights are on and our students have access to information and news of the world around them.

His single gift of \$36,000 has created a ripple effect of change that

extends outward from each school to our students and then further to family and friends living in the communities nearby.

When asked why he supported this project he replied, "We do not live in isolation...we are all connected. I have been given much in my life. It is my turn to help those less fortunate. This is my way of giving drink to the thirsty."

By simply tripling the numbers below, you gain some idea of just how many people have benefitted from one man's generosity:

- Ecole Rijken Primary School in Likasi is the newest of the three schools with 545 students currently enrolled.

- Kipushi's *Complexe Scolaire Rijken* serves as both an elementary and secondary school with a combined total of 750 students enrolled.
- Kasenga's *Ecole Cisaniko School*, is the largest of the three with 1,230 students enrolled.

In years past, we've shared news of our Congo missions highlighting our efforts to help the poor and marginalized from this area of the world. In fact, for over 90 years we've brought the Gospel message to tens of thousands in the Congo. And, today, with the help of a generous benefactor, children and families living near three of our schools in Likasi, Kipushi, Kasenga have clean water to drink, light to read by and access to the outside world through the internet.

These steps forward bring us closer to achieving Pope Francis' invitation to see that we are all connected and that "concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society."



Brothers Jackson Ondiebo Omwanda, Michael Museka Mbayi, Modeste Kisala Cabala, Séraphin Kiyana Mukomanga, Crispin Ilunga Kalume, Stephano Matara Saitoti

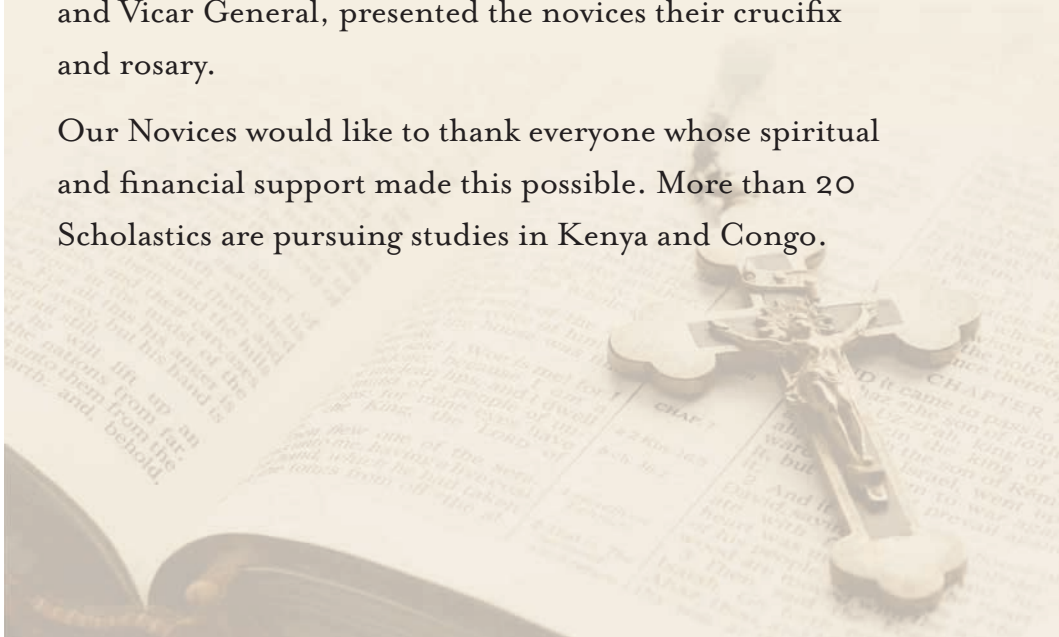
Our Future Looks Bright...Six Novices Receive the Habit.

On December 6th Novices Jackson, Michael, Modeste, Séraphin, Crispin, and Stephano received their habit at the Novitiate in Kipushi, Congo. Bishop Gaston Ruwezi celebrated the liturgy and blessed the habits prior to the investiture. Brother Patrick Fumbisha, the Novicemaster and Vicar General, presented the novices their crucifix and rosary.

Our Novices would like to thank everyone whose spiritual and financial support made this possible. More than 20 Scholastics are pursuing studies in Kenya and Congo.



Students at Complexe Scolaire Rijken in Kipushi working at computers.



Establish A Legacy of Giving...

Many of you are faithful and generous supporters of the Xaverian Brothers. We thank you for your friendship and we invite you to ensure that your legacy of giving continues by remembering us in your estate plans. When you do, you become a member of the **Xaverian Brothers Concordia Society**.

Whether you have included or would like to include the Brothers in your estate plans, please contact Stephanie Stricker at 410-646-6777 or sstricker@xaverianbrothers.org, for information on the benefits and ways of doing so.



Concordia SOCIETY

The Charism Commission Would Like to Hear From You

This winter, the Congregation launched a Commission to explore our Xaverian charism. This group, composed of diverse members of Xaverian Brothers, Associates, and lay Partners in Mission, is charged with engaging our global Xaverian family, friends like you, to reflect upon and articulate the lived experience of Xaverian charism today.

In the coming months, the regional coordinators of Brothers, Associates, and our school leaders will provide meaningful opportunities for you to engage in this process. You can participate today by prayerfully completing this reflection guide and survey. Your thoughtful responses will support the Charism Commission in developing a narrative of the lived experience of being Xaverian today.



We invite you to watch a video prepared to inaugurate our period of reflection at:
xavb.ro/ccbrodan
or scan the QR code.



Take our survey at:
xavb.ro/ccsurvey
or scan the QR code.





“Wisdom belongs to the aged, and understanding to the old.” (Job 12:12)

Brother Robert Green, CFX with St. John's Prep and XBHS 7th graders in the Xaverian House Chapel.

Senior Brothers in MA host 7th Graders in a day of reflection

Seventh graders from St. John's Preparatory School and Xaverian Brothers High School had the good fortune to attend a program with the Brothers at Xaverian House. In an effort to share our rich history, Brother David Mahoney hosted a visit to the cemetery, and Brother Robert Green explained the Xaverian habit and told some stories using historic moments depicted in the stained-glass windows in the Chapel at Xaverian House.



Brother David Mahoney, CFX in the Brothers' Cemetery speaking with St. John's Prep and XBHS 7th graders.

So many blessings to count...XBSS Celebrate Founder's Week



During Founder's Week, November 26th (the anniversary of the death of the Founder, Theodore James Ryken) and December 3rd (Feast of St. Francis Xavier,) our Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools take the opportunity to celebrate our unique history and ministry. These annual celebrations provide an opportunity for spiritual growth and a renewed commitment to our Xaverian mission and legacy!

This year, XBSS students spent time learning more about Theodore Ryken, the Xaverian Brothers, and the charism and values that animate life in our schools. In several of our school communities, the Xaverian Brothers participated in activities



with the students on campus such as guided discussions and reflection among other fun activities.

Events like these go far in helping all who participate to possess a deeper understanding of the Xaverian Way — what it truly means to “share the love of God with the world through their giftedness.”

St. John's Prep concluded Founder's Week with the Build-A-Bed service initiative. Each year, students gather in Memorial Gym to construct bed frames to be donated to the Mass Coalition for the Homeless. This year, 70 Middle and High School students participated in the project.



In recognition of Founder's Week, Malden Catholic students wrote appreciation letters to the Xaverian Brothers, created Xaverian themed homeroom posters, and engaged in several other activities.

Dire Situation in Haiti, Brothers Advised to Leave Country

The political and economic turmoil in Haiti continue to cause much suffering for the Haitian people. Recently, the Croix-des-Bouquets neighborhood, where the Brothers and students resided, was taken over by gangs. They were left with no other choice but to leave. The students are at home with their parents or other relatives, doing their best to continue with their studies online for now.

In early December, after having difficulty making travel arrangements, Brothers Vincent and Adolph were able to make the trip back to Congo since they were advised to leave the country until it is safe for them to return. In the meantime, the Missionhurst community in Haiti will oversee the students' educational journey and our Brothers will maintain contact with them via email and phone calls.

The Xaverian Brothers remain committed to the success of our students and will continue to provide support to cover their education, meals, and housing expenses. Please continue to pray for the young men in our program and all the people of Haiti during this very difficult time.

Sant Students with Brother Vincent Ilunga (l to r: Guensly Pierre Louis, Figaro Cantave, Brother Vincent Ilunga, Marcnor Antenor Blanc, Stanley Louissaint, and Livenson Louima)



When the Holy Spirit Calls, We listen.

Since the 1990's, the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools have used the language of "call" to describe how the Holy Spirit is calling institutions to live out the charism. One of the six calls challenges our schools to build diverse and inclusive communities that encourage enduring personal relationships through an understanding of culture and perspectives.

In responding to this call, St. Xavier High School in Louisville has established a robust collaboration with St. Xavier School in Bungoma, Kenya. The two schools have initiated monthly, virtual meetings which afford students, separated by more than 7,000 miles, a chance to learn about each other's culture. Students on both sides of the computer are excited to share information about their class schedules, extracurricular interests, talents and hobbies, and their plans for after high school.

St. Xavier's Black Student Union group in Louisville is highly engaged in this collaboration, as they see the opportunity to help keep the Xaverian mission alive and grow their own personal understanding of Kenyan culture.

Dr. Kendra Nolan, math teacher and moderator of the Black Student Union [BSU] at St. Xavier in Louisville reports, "BSU students have been positively exposed to horizons beyond Kentucky and the United States. BSU students have been shown just a glimpse of their heritage and they are eager to learn more."

Beyond the students, the educators of both institutions are collaborating across curricular areas, freely sharing ideas, notes, and assignments. This exchange of knowledge benefits the students at both schools. In early November 2023, Brother Raphael Wanjala, Director at St. Xavier in Bungoma, visited St. Xavier High School in Louisville, further strengthening the bond between the two schools.



Brother Raphael speaking to one of the classes at St. Xavier, Louisville during his visit this past fall.



St. Xavier, Louisville students participating in a video call with St. Xavier, Bungoma students.

Call Fulfilled

As 2023 ended, we said farewell to several of our Brothers. As you read the rich history of their lives and the impact they had on our community, please remember them in your daily prayers as you and your loved ones remain in ours.



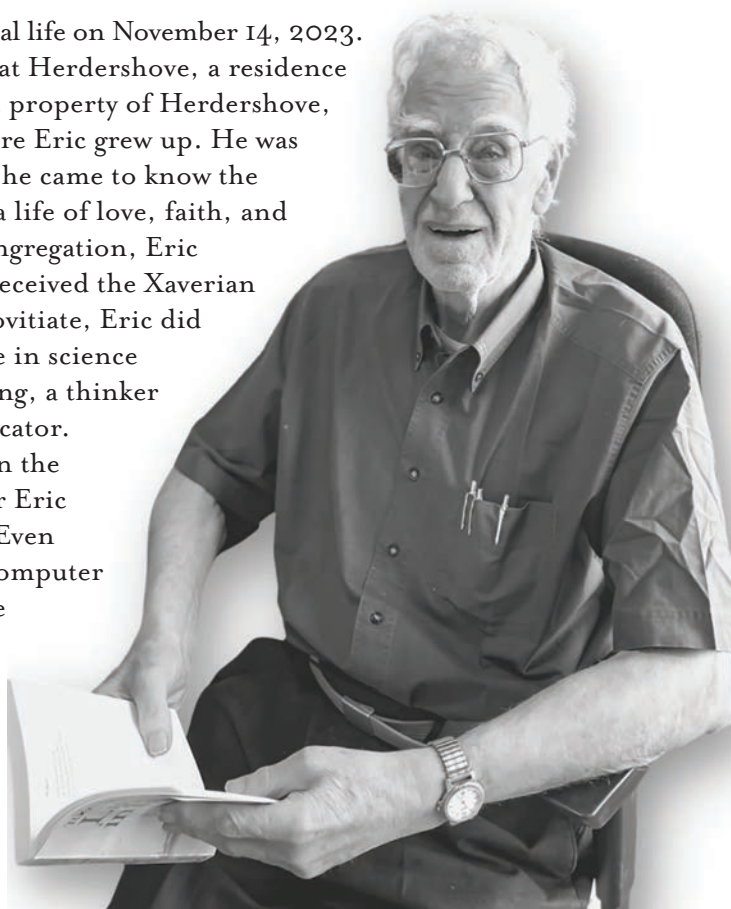
BROTHER ERIC VANDENBROUCKE, C.F.X.

(Brother Siegfried)

1935-2023

Brother Eric Vandenbroucke peacefully entered eternal life on November 14, 2023. He was a member of the Xaverian community living at Herdershove, a residence for the elderly in Bruges, Belgium. Interestingly, the property of Herdershove, with its pastures and animals was the very village where Eric grew up. He was born May 16, 1935 in Bruges, where as a young man he came to know the Xaverian Brothers. Responding to God's call to live a life of love, faith, and trust as a disciple of Jesus Christ in the Xaverian Congregation, Eric entered the novitiate in Torhout in 1952, where he received the Xaverian habit and religious name Brother Siegfried. After novitiate, Eric did his professional studies in Leuven earning his degree in science and technology. As a young Brother, Eric was engaging, a thinker curious about many things, and a very dedicated educator. He taught in a technical school in Bruges and lived in the Brothers community house in Sint-Michels. Brother Eric taught computer science and was a popular teacher. Even in his retirement years, he enjoyed working on the computer and assisting others. May Brother Eric now enjoy the peace, love, and fullness of Christ's paschal mystery.

Eric was engaging, a thinker curious about many things, and a very dedicated educator.





BROTHER RODNEY SULZER, C.F.X.

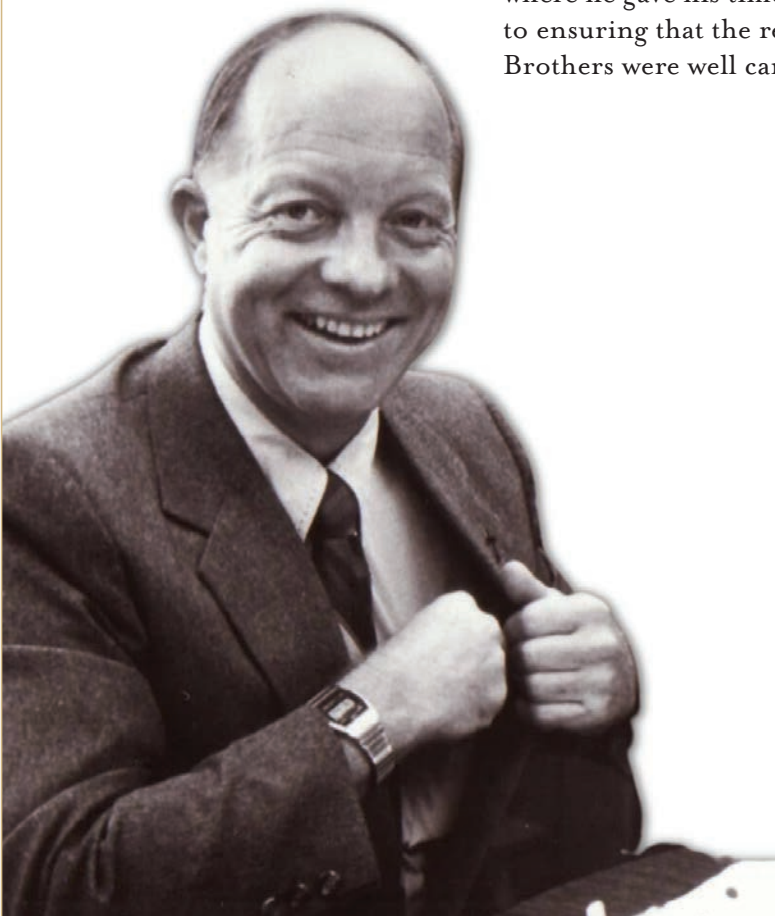
(Brother Pierce)
1938-2023

Brother Rodney Sulzer was a man who loved his vocation. With his ever-present smile, short stories that never seemed to end and dedication to his Brothers and congregation, Brother Rodney was faithful to whatever was asked of him. He was graced with a delightful and engaging sense of humor. Born in Louisville, KY in 1938, the only child of William and Virginia (Goose) Sulzer, he was a graduate of St. Xavier HS, Class of '56, after which he entered the Xaverian Brothers and received the religious name of Brother Pierce. He was a Xaverian Brother for 67 years.

Like a Xaverian missionary disciple, Brother Rodney followed his call to serve in a variety of communities, schools, and social groups, including as a missionary to Bolivia. He helped broaden our horizons for ministry and relationships with persons from many communities. He taught in several Xaverian schools starting with Flaget High School in the 1960's, followed by periods in schools in New York and all three Xaverian schools in Maryland up until 1989 when he served as principal of Mount St. Joseph HS in Baltimore. He also served as co-director of our hospitality community in Venice, Florida and as Director of Ryken House, where he gave his time and energy to ensuring that the retired Brothers were well cared for.

In 2008, he retired and returned to Ryken House in Louisville and moved in 2021 with the Xaverian community to Treyton Oak Towers, where he flourished and was well received by the residents. In early 2023, he relocated to Nazareth Home, Louisville. He died at Nazareth Home on Wednesday, November 8, 2023. Earlier that day, one Brother gave him a haircut, another Brother brought him a delicious milkshake — he loved ice cream surprises with abandon! He bantered happily with them. The phone rang with a call from his dear friend in Michigan. That night Brother Rodney died in his sleep. A truly happy death! May he rest in peace.

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BROTHER CORNELIUS E. HUBBUCH, C.F.X.

(Brother DeMontfort)
1936 - 2023

Brother Cornelius Hubbuch

led an enlivening and impactful career as a Xaverian Brother. His life truly was a “call fulfilled.” A native of Louisville, KY, he was the son of Cornelius and Mary Louise Hubbuch. After being in the first graduating class of St. Raphael’s School, he went on to St. Xavier on Broadway and, after graduating in 1954, made the journey to Old Point Comfort, VA to join the Xaverian Brothers. He received the habit and was given the religious name Brother DeMontfort. After taking vows, he went on to Xaverian College and Catholic University. He began his teaching career at the young Xaverian High School, Brooklyn where he was known as an engaging English teacher and dean of students. From Xaverian he was sent on to Ryken High School in Leonardtown, MD where he learned soon after arriving that his mission was to close the school. Undeterred, he rallied the Brothers and the faculty to make the school successful — and they did! Working with the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, he facilitated the efforts to merge Ryken with St. Mary’s Academy to become St. Mary’s Ryken HS.

In 1976, at just 40 years old, he was elected to serve as Provincial of the Sacred Heart Province of the Brothers. His six years as Provincial were pivotal for the life of the Brothers. He was a visionary, who encouraged the Brothers to realize the gifts that God had given them and to embrace renewal and growth. It was his vision, with the assistance of capable assistants, that



saw to the development of what is now known as Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools. He believed in the full participation of the laity in the life of the church and knew that the success of Xaverian education needed the gifts that lay men and women could bring to Catholic school governance.

Following a sabbatical program at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, CA, where he received a MA in Theology, he joined the faculty of the Institute for Spirituality and Worship at the Jesuit School of Theology, later serving for 10 years as the Co-Director of the program. Leaving Berkeley in 1994, he returned to Baltimore to serve as the formation director for XBSS and as a member of the leadership team of the Province. He was elected to serve as Vicar-General of the Congregation in 1989 and re-elected to that role in 1995. Cornelius was instrumental in the reorganization of the Congregation at the General Chapter of 1995 and worked tirelessly as a member of the Leadership Team to implement the vision of that Chapter.

In 2000, he accepted the invitation to join the staff at the Southdown Institute in Aurora, Canada and later became the first director of the Carter Centre for Excellence In Leadership at Southdown. In 2004, he rejoined the Congregational Leadership Team and spearheaded the congregation’s response to the sexual abuse crisis, developing educational programs for the Brothers, creating a Review Board, meeting and assisting those who had been sexually abused, and overseeing the Congregation’s accreditation in accordance with the national standards established for the protection of young people. He was also a driving force behind the creation of the Xaverian Brothers Associates. In between all these endeavors, he lectured and conducted retreats internationally and spent time teaching and directing young men in formation for the Brothers in Congo and Kenya.

In 2014, Brother Cornelius retired from an active Congregational leadership role. He moved to Ryken House in Louisville and with this Louisville Xaverian Community moved to Treyton Oak Towers in 2021.

He died peacefully at Nazareth Home, Louisville on December 2, 2023. He was predeceased by his sister Carolyn Knop and his brother Glenn, and is survived by his sister Marilyn Allen, brother John, sister-in-law Linda Hubbuch, as well as many nieces and nephews, in multiple generations.

BROTHER THOMAS J. MURPHY, C.F.X.

(Brother Gavin)
1928-2023

Ardent devotion to the Congregation's mission, sincere affection for his Brothers in community, compassionate service to all whom he met throughout his seventy-six years as a Xaverian Brother are the signature qualities that flow from **Brother Thomas Murphy's** single-minded response to God's call to follow Christ. Brother Thomas entered eternal life peacefully on December 12, 2023.

Brother Thomas was born in Brooklyn, New York to Thomas and Agnes Murphy. Tom attended Saint Teresa's Elementary School where he first met the Xaverian Brothers. Upon graduation from Saint Teresa's in 1943, Tom entered Saint Joseph's Juniorate in Peabody, Massachusetts, a secondary school for young men thinking about becoming a Brother. After graduating from the Juniorate in 1947, Tom entered Sacred Heart Novitiate in Fort Monroe, Virginia where he received the Xaverian habit and religious name 'Brother Gavin.'

Brother Thomas' devotion to the work of the Congregation was shaped by his many experiences of mission and ministry that included elementary and secondary education both in the United States and in Kenya. His commitment was clear. He understood our Founder's counsel, "that nothing special is achieved without much labor, effort and zeal." Students, whether at Brooklyn's St. Matthew's Grade School; Mount St. Joseph, Baltimore; Flaget HS, Louisville; Our Lady of Good Counsel,

Maryland or Xaverian HS, Brooklyn, knew 'Brother Gavin' was devoted to their learning and well-being as people. He enjoyed many enduring relationships with his students. Those relationships continued up to the day he died.

In 1997, at age sixty-nine Tom was asked to join our mission in Kenya. His deep desire to see the Congregation continue, impelled Tom's response to the needs of Kenya. He ministered at both St. Joseph Centre, Bungoma and at the scholasticate in Nairobi. Tom shared our Founder's vision of "the Church's mission of evangelization through a life of gospel witness lived in solidarity and availability among the people."

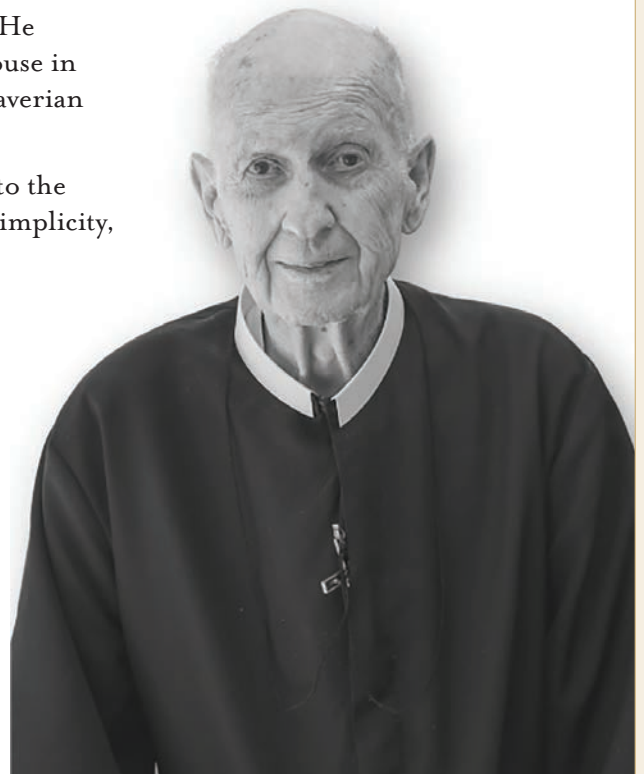
Upon return from Kenya, Tom joined the Baltimore community where he was the community animator and was involved in volunteer ministries. He later moved to Ryken House in Louisville and then to Xaverian House, Danvers.

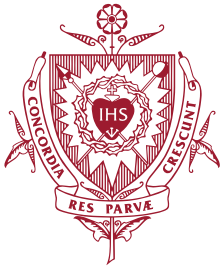
Brother Thomas' legacy to the Congregation is one of simplicity, zeal for our mission, a deep sense of fraternal love and compassion for all whom he served as well as a quick sense of humor. He heeded well the words of our Fundamental Principles. "As a follower of Jesus and a brother of your brothers, keep ever before you the motto

of the Congregation: *Concordia res parvæ crescunt*. In harmony small things grow."

May Brother Tom now enjoy the peace of Jesus whom he so faithfully followed. *Requiescat in pace, Frater.*

*Tom shared our
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among the people."*





XAVERIAN BROTHERS

4409 Frederick Avenue
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New Course Offered...Ordinary Sacredness

As we continue our partnership with the Boston College Crossroads Program, a new six week course is being offered beginning this spring. This course explores the sacredness of the ordinary by highlighting the five core spiritual values in the Xaverian tradition: *humility, simplicity, trust, compassion, and zeal.*

To learn more visit xavb.ro/osxbbc or scan the QR code:



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