



# FOLLOWING THE XAVIERIAN WAY

# Concordia

## Lasting Connections & Enduring Relationships... that's what we build!

The 2023/2024 school year has proven to be quite fruitful; chock full of special events, seminars and retreats focused on building enduring personal relationships inside and out of our Xaverian school communities.

We launched the academic year in August 2023 with the XBSS New Teacher Retreat in Boston, MA, where U.S. teachers and administrators welcomed two fellow teachers from St. Francis Xavier Institute in Bruges.

Although the St. Francis Xavier Institute ("De Frères" as they are commonly called in Bruges) is no longer "governed" by the Xaverian Brothers, the school, its teachers and students, hold a very important place in our hearts and our history as it is the original school founded by the Xaverian Brothers. Therefore, inviting two of their teachers to join in our retreat made perfect sense and aligned with the goal of broadening and enhancing our personal relationships in order to better serve our students and extended communities.

Our two guests – Greet Van de Cappelle and Fien Lavins – jumped at the invitation to visit America and meet their U.S. colleagues in Xaverian education and we were more than happy to receive them.

They brought to the retreat their own unique points of view informed by their education and lifetime experiences. Greet is a Latin teacher at De Frères in Bruges and Fien teaches religion.

Greet shared after the retreat, "it has become more and more clear to me how important the vision of the Brothers is in education. I am inspired, and I will seek to bring the Xaverian values to Bruges and keep the connection going between us."

In meeting many U.S. Brothers, Fien Lavins wrote, "Thanks to all of you who, in the wake of Theodore Ryken, made the choice to devote your whole lives to young people (often underprivileged) through a commitment to education!" She went on to share, "My colleague and I were very

*Xaverian students tour cultural sites with host guides from De Frères.*



### IN THIS ISSUE

- Lasting Connections & Enduring Relationships...that's what we build!
- Servant Leadership In Action At Recent XBSS Junior Retreat
- This Year's Ryken Award Recipients
- A New Community Residence to open in Kasenga, Congo
- "Responding to the Call"-- Retired Brothers offer retreat to XBHS Staff and Faculty
- Preparation is afoot...
- Please keep our Sant Zaverien Students in Your Prayers...
- A Letter of "Thanks" from Kenya...
- Together we will define what it means to live out the Xaverian Charism



- 1 (1 to r) Joseph Sotelo, Jenna Vona, Fien Lavins, Greet Van de Cappelle, Andrew Press, and Joseph Webb. Fien and Greet were our guests from Belgium. Others in the photo are faculty at Xaverian Brothers High School, Westwood, MA.
- 2 (1 to r) Brother Tim Hoy, Brother Joseph Pawlika, Brother Richard Lunny, Fien Lavins, Greet Van de Cappelle, Brother Robert Green, Brother Bob Arrowsmith, Brother Richard Mazza, Brother Paul Feeny.
- 3 Students in Bruges during the exchange program visit in February.
- 4 Xaverian, Brooklyn students site seeing during their visit.
- 5 Students from Xaverian, Brooklyn and De Frères, Bruges during the exchange program visit in February.

IN MEETING MANY U.S. BROTHERS, FIEN LAVINS WROTE, "THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO, IN THE WAKE OF THEODORE RYKEN, MADE THE CHOICE TO DEVOTE YOUR WHOLE LIVES TO YOUNG PEOPLE (OFTEN UNDERPRIVILEGED) THROUGH A COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION!"

impressed with the retreat. A 3-day in-depth reflection was experienced by participants in a respectful and understanding way. How beautiful to see young and not so young working together towards a common goal."

Invigorated by the retreat experience and the Xaverian charism, Greet and Fien returned to Belgium with a new sense of purpose that inspired them to initiate their own Founder's Day Celebration on December 4, 2023.

It's also worth noting, events like these were not limited to teachers and administrators. This past year, students from both De Frères in Bruges and Xaverian in Brooklyn experienced a new culture, language and environment when they participated in the student annual "Exchange Program." Belgian students visited Brooklyn and Brooklyn students visited Bruges. Not only was a great time had by all, opportunities like these foster a sense of connectedness in our students, expanding their empathy and respect for others in our world.

Expect to learn more about the results of the enduring relationship between the XBSS and our friends and colleagues in Bruges in the future. Together, we will work to help others discover their uniqueness so they, too, may "share the love of God with the world through their giftedness."

# Servant Leadership In Action At Recent XBSS Junior Retreat



Brother Brian Davis gave the opening address to 100 student retreatants.

“You are supposed to be here, God wants you here for a reason!” These are the words shared by Brother Brian Davis during the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools (XBSS) annual Junior Retreat hosted at the Holy Family Retreat Center in West Hartford, CT, from March 3rd to 7th. Brother Brian Davis gave a welcome address to the 100 student retreatants emphasizing the divine purpose behind each student’s presence at the retreat.

Throughout the week, speakers reiterated this message, encouraging students to recognize their God-given talents and leadership potential. Students were challenged to consider how they might return to their school communities prepared to share the Xaverian mission and charism through their own deeds and words.

The retreat featured Mass, guest speakers, guided reflections, a service day in the greater Hartford area, and large and small group activities all aimed at deepening participants’ understanding of our Xaverian history and values, fostering spiritual growth, and nurturing personal relationships across the network of schools. Additionally, students had the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation facilitated by visiting priests from the Diocese of Norwich and Archdiocese of Hartford.

Dr. Michael Nicholson, Principal of Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood, MA, was one of many impactful speakers. In his talk, “My Life in Ministry,” he described his own path to finding God as falling in love with the service of God, and aligning mission, passion, and one’s talents to making a difference in this world. He challenged students to move past the busyness and noise of this world, take more time for prayer and reflection, and use their God given gifts to better serve a world in need.

The XBSS Junior Retreat provided students with a transformative experience, empowering them to embrace their role as stewards of the Xaverian mission and agents of positive change in their communities.

**“We see our XBSS leaders as young people who have the mind, heart, commitment, and charisma to make a real difference in our community.”**



View the video of the XBSS Student Leadership Retreat 2024.

[xavb.ro/xbssretreat24](http://xavb.ro/xbssretreat24)



**“These junior leaders are seen as involved, caring, and committed community members who influence their classmates through their actions and involvement. They lead by their example!”**



Michael Nicholson speaking on the topic of “My Life in Ministry.”



One of the student leaders addressing the retreatants.

# Announcing This Year's Ryken Award Recipients

Each year, the **Theodore James Ryken Award** is presented to members of the faculty, staff or administration of each of the 13 Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools who exhibit a commitment to the Founder's vision. The persons pictured here are recognized as committed and dedicated individuals who proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They nurture their school community spiritually; 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.

*Congratulations  
to all for a job  
well done!*



	<p>◀ <b>Stacey Geary</b> Lowell Catholic</p>		<p>◀ <b>Jeanne Lynch-Galvin</b> Malden Catholic High School</p>
<p><b>Jenna Gallagher</b> ▶ Mount St. Joseph High School</p>		<p><b>Leatha Recio-Cruz</b> ▶ Nazareth Regional High School</p>	
	<p>◀ <b>Stanley Spottswood</b> Our Lady of Good Counsel High School</p>		<p>◀ <b>Linda Whitney</b> St. John's High School</p>
<p><b>Steve Ruemenapp</b> ▶ St. John's Preparatory School</p>		<p><b>Diane Kestler</b> ▶ St. Mary's Ryken High School</p>	
	<p>◀ <b>Brad Chamberlain</b> St. Mary's Ryken High School</p>		<p>◀ <b>Renee Benoit</b> St. Bernard School</p>
<p><b>Michael Glaser</b> ▶ St. Xavier High School</p>		<p><b>Michael Wilson</b> ▶ Xaverian High School</p>	
	<p>◀ <b>Marta Castro-Maguder</b> Xavier High School</p>		<p>◀ <b>Ryan Howard</b> Xaverian Brothers High School</p>



## A New Community Residence to open in Kasenga, Congo

Long overdue construction began earlier this year on a new community residence for the Brothers in Kasenga, Congo. The original residence was built nearly 100 years ago when the Brothers first opened this mission in the 1930's. As you can imagine, the wear and tear of the elements over the years left the original building beyond repair. Thus, making the decision to build a new home the most cost-effective approach to take. The new residence will accommodate the Brothers who work at the primary school and secondary school in this remote village of Kasenga on the Luapula River on the border with Zambia.

## Preparation is afoot...

Yes, our Xaverian Novices are busy...busy preparing for a life of service. As the weeks and days lead up to First Profession, these young men are engaged in various ministries a few afternoons a week in the area near the novitiate in Kipushi, Congo. One of those ministries is preparing young children from the parish for the sacrament of baptism.



Brother Crispin teaching catechist class.

## "RESPONDING TO THE CALL"

### Retired Brothers offer retreat to XBHS Staff and Faculty

When God calls it may not always be when you expect it. Messages may come in times of quiet or chaos. The trick is learning to listen and receive His words. Brothers Paul Feeney, Richard Mazza and Joseph Pawlika offered a Lenten Twilight Retreat to faculty, staff, and administrators of Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood, MA, on March 12, 2024, expounding on this theme.

Their reflections focused on responding to the calls that come to us in the everyday flow of life, in our relationships with others, and in the events that invite us to compassion and service. The evening concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist and participation in a communal meal.



Brothers and XBHS staff enjoyed a meal after the retreat. Pictured here is Brother Richard Mazza (Saverio), Brother Joseph Pawlika, Dr. Carolyn Herman who coordinated the retreat, Mary Briody, and Brother Paul Feeney (Antoninus).



*Sant Zaverien Students Figaro, Guesnly, Marcnor, Stanley, and Kerson.*

## Please keep our Sant Zaverien Students in Your Prayers...

As reported previously, Brothers Adolph and Vincent were called back to Congo due the unrest in Haiti. Despite their temporary departure, our students continue to benefit from our program.

At present, the Missionhurst community in Haiti is accompanying our students as they continue with their studies via in-person gatherings where they discuss the daily challenges and concerns they're facing. In addition, Brothers Adolph and Vincent continue to communicate with the students, conducting regular check-ins through email and video calls.

Our students are resourceful. They've found an affordable housing solution by grouping in twos and threes. This helps with expenses and promotes camaraderie, brotherhood, and mutual support among the students living together. Living in community also creates an environment conducive to learning and exchange of ideas. This also gives them the opportunity to support each other in difficult times and share their experiences.

All of the students are doing well and continue to attend classes despite the unrest in the country. Their determination to continue their studies is admirable.

## A Letter of "Thanks" from Kenya...

My name is Oscar Sifuna. Six years ago, I was a twelve year old boy living on the streets of Bungoma, Kenya. When I look back at those years my heart fills with gratitude to God and the Xaverian Brothers. Together they have helped me to overcome many challenges.

Street life is never something to be admired! But, too many boys like me have no other option. Our situations at home make us run to the street in search of food and money we never find. Instead, we go hungry, sleep in the cold, experience physical and even sexual abuse. There's no medication when sick, no safe place to lay our heads. **We're the forgotten souls of Bungoma!**

Thanks to the Xaverian Brothers, I, like many others, was given the opportunity to change. When asked to give up my life on the street for a place at the Center. I happily said "yes."

I lived at the **Ryken Center for Hope** for some time before being asked to choose between going back to primary school or vocational training. I opted for training since I was an older boy past the age of being in primary school.

I am glad the Center agreed to my request. I was quickly enrolled at Kakamega Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Centre, in Kakamega. There I joined six other boys from Ryken Center. Together, we began our vocational training in building and construction/masonry, beauty and therapy, carpentry and joinery, and welding and fabrication.

So far, three of us from **Ryken Center for Hope** have already taken the grade 3 and 2 national examination trade tests. As I await my test results, I am currently doing an internship with a construction company in Bungoma.

I owe this success to the **Ryken Center for Hope** and the support of the Xaverian Brothers. I look forward to the day when I, too, can make a difference in the lives of boys, like me, who need a helping hand.

Wishing many blessings on all who have made my future brighter.

Gratefully yours,

**Oscar Sifuna**



*Oscar with the other young men from Ryken Center for Hope who are in vocational training in Kakamega.*



*Oscar at his internship with a construction company.*



# Together we will define what it means to live out the Xaverian Charism

Brothers, Associates and Partners in Mission have been meeting in each of our regions worldwide to discuss how they live out the Xaverian Charism today and what it means for the future. Over 4,000 people have completed our lived charism survey.

## LOUISVILLE, KY

Brothers and Associates in Louisville have been meeting monthly to reflect on how they live out the Xaverian Charism.



Left to right: Brothers Dan Doherty, Dan Conaghan, Kenney Gorman, and Peter Mahoney

## LUBUMBASHI, CONGO

On February 11th, all the Brothers in the Congolese region participated in a day of recollection on the lived reality of the Xaverian Charism. The recollection was held at the Carmelite Fathers' retreat house.



Brothers in the Congo region during the Day of Recollection.

## BOSTON, MA

Chief Administrators met and reviewed the early results of the lived charism study as it pertains to our Xaverian schools.



XBSS staff Dr. Ben Horgan, Brother Richard Lunny and Dr. Patrick Slattery led chief administrators in a discussion regarding the results of the Lived Charism Study.

## BUNGOMA, KENYA

Earlier this year, Brothers Dominique Olondo and Francis Wambua visited Bungoma. During their stay, they held meetings with the teachers and students at St. Xavier High School, Bungoma as well as the employees of St. Joseph Community and Ryken Centre for Hope. They seized the opportunity to explain the Xaverian Charism to them and provided reflection questions pertaining to the lived reality of our shared Xaverian Charism.



One of the classes at St. Xavier High School in Bungoma, Kenya learning about the lived reality of our shared Xaverian Charism.

## DANVERS, MA

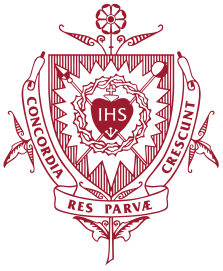
On February 17th, twenty-five Brothers from New England gathered at Xaverian House in Danvers, MA to share reflections on how they live the Xaverian Charism today and ponder how it will be lived in the future.



Left to right: (back row) Brother Tim Paul, (front row) Brothers Richard Mazza, Richard Cook, Robert Arrowsmith, Tom Puccio

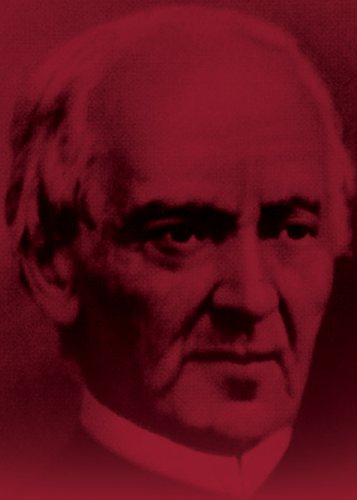
## BALTIMORE, MD

The Brothers and Associates in the Baltimore/DC region have met twice to share their individual reflections on the four questions posed by the Charism Commission.



## **XAVERIAN BROTHERS**

4409 Frederick Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21229



### **Theodore James Ryken Society**

The Theodore James Ryken Society recognizes friends of the Xaverian Brothers who are intimately involved in the mission of the Xaverian Brothers through their interest, moral support, prayers, and donations of \$1,000 or more annually. To learn more about the Theodore James Ryken Society and the specific programs for which we are soliciting support, contact Stephanie Stricker at [sstricker@xaverianbrothers.org](mailto:sstricker@xaverianbrothers.org) or 410-646-6777.

## **XAVERIAN BROTHERS**

*IN HARMONY SMALL THINGS GROW*

XAVERIANBROTHERS.ORG 

FACEBOOK.COM/XAVERIANBROTHERS 

TWITTER.COM/XAVERIANBROS 

INSTAGRAM.COM/XAVERIANBROTHERS 

YOUTUBE.COM/C/LIVINGTHECHARISM 

LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/XAVERIAN-BROTHERS 