



MISSION & MINISTRIES

Preamble

"Our mission is the Lord's and so is the strength for it." (C 2:20).

The General Chapter of 2022 affirms and sees itself in continuity with the journey of our Holy Cross mission, as articulated in recent chapters. We participate in God's mission as "educators in the faith," reaching "out to the afflicted and in a preferential way to the poor and the oppressed" (C 2:12-13). We thereby seek to embody with renewed energy and zeal the mission of Jesus through our baptism and vowed life; as apostolic religious, we share in his prophetic ministry. We do so in a single religious family as priests and brothers founded by Blessed Basile Moreau.

We are all called as brothers and sisters, *fratelli tutti*, to be on fire with zeal for the Kingdom of God. Our Holy Founder speaks to us through his charisms of unity, hospitality, trust in divine providence, and zeal for the mission discovered through the Cross, our only Hope. The spirit and teachings of Pope Francis encourage us to deepen our Holy Cross mission and values, which resonate with our apostolic heritage. The joyful simplicity of Gospel life to which Pope Francis urges us in *Evangelii Gaudium* has been modeled for us by our brother, Saint Brother André Bessette, in his ministry of prayer, healing, and compassionate hospitality. Venerable Patrick Peyton recognized that the hunger and zeal for the mission in every culture are rooted in a life of personal and familial prayer.

A clarion call to humanity in *Laudato Si'*, to care for all creation, our common home, echoes our desire for and commitments to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, as well as the manifestation of our preferential option for the poor. In *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis urges us to address with love the daunting pressure on the contemporary family, including those forced to migrate because of war and natural disasters. As Blessed Moreau envisioned, we stand side by side with all people (C 2:12) whose lot we share by striving to live together as modeled by the Holy Family.

We hear the cry of refugees, who now number in the millions, affected by war and natural disasters. Global climate change impacts all of us. People worldwide experience firsthand the realities of social polarization around race, gender, class, income level, social status, and religion, leading to frustration and violence. We live and minister in countries where violent religious fundamentalism impinges on religious freedom and threatens our brothers and sisters. More recently, our missionary efforts were affected as the world experienced the devastating effect of the Covid-19 pandemic and was brought to its knees, to the point of hopelessness. In this new-normal pandemic situation, the world has experienced discouragement, disappointment, and weariness, particularly the underprivileged. Their loneliness, poverty, and suffering of injustice have been amplified. There is an urgent need for the mission of compassion and to stand with the poor and afflicted. "Today, too, Jesus needs hearts capable of experiencing vocation as a true love story that urges them to go forth to the peripheries of our world as messengers and agents of compassion" (Pope Francis; World Mission Day 2021).

In all of these situations, as disciples of Jesus, we stand side by side with all people. Like them, we are burdened by the same struggles and beset by the same weaknesses; like them, we are made new by the same Lord's love; like them, we hope for a world where justice and love prevail (C 2:12).

We witness many signs and acts of ordinary and inspiring goodwill: those welcoming the stranger, comforting the afflicted, building harmony, and creating new bonds of friendship. We know that our Holy Cross confreres have achieved remarkable apostolic success. Among them, we number our 19th-century missions in Africa, North America, and especially Bengal, as well as our entry into India, Latin America, Haiti, and return to Africa in the 20th century. On five continents, we have founded remarkable educational institutions, taken risks to share the Gospel and primarily evangelize, and courageously stood with the people we serve as they suffered the violence of unjust political regimes. We have helped God's people to embrace their spiritual lives by devoting themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady of Sorrows, and St. Joseph in innovative and life-giving ways. In unison and with the generosity of our colleagues, coworkers, benefactors, and people of good will throughout the world, we have educated generations of people, lifting them out of poverty and equipping many to be leaders in their own family, church, and society.

The experience of our internationality has been very life-giving. Our confreres serving as men with hope to bring have touched lives in simple but profound ways. We applaud each religious and jurisdiction for its resilience in mission to remain side-by-side with the suffering world.

We now ask ourselves: How might we create a more profound sense of the global Holy Cross mission to do God's work? We respond to Father Moreau's invitation: "Hurry then; to this work of resurrection...it is in this way that you will prepare the world for a better time than ours" (Moreau 1856, *Christian Education*).