

A large globe is the central focus, positioned in a hallway with a series of arches. A hanging lantern illuminates the scene from above. The globe shows the Americas and the Atlantic Ocean. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

# Moment to See, *Courage to Act*

Discussion Guide and Readings

## Discussion Guide

### MOTIVATION

“This is the moment to see the poor.”

These are the words of Pope Francis, invoked in an April 17, 2020 [Science](#) editorial authored by the leaders of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. They call on us to ensure that the universal challenges imposed by COVID-19 do not blind us to the disproportionate and often far more deadly burdens being placed on disadvantaged groups – and to recognize that the crises they face, though more visible in the midst of a pandemic, are longstanding and enduring.

In a heartbreaking example of this very point, our nation’s long history of racial and social injustice once again confronts us in dramatic ways. The tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of police, like so many others before him, illuminates the long journey yet before us in realizing a nation and world that comports with our commitment to social and economic justice, consonant with Catholic teaching.

The Constitutions of Holy Cross – the document that guides the life and ministry of the Holy Cross order – states: “There are networks of privilege, prejudice and power so commonplace that often neither oppressors nor victims are aware of them. We must be aware and also understanding by reason of fellowship with the impoverished and by reason of patient learning. For the kingdom to come in this world, disciples must have the competence to see and the courage to act.”

God’s call comes in many forms: from a calling to religious life or a life of service to a commitment to help cure disease or bring justice to the oppressed, but also to know the wonder of God’s creation through the study of philosophy, mathematical topology, or elementary particle physics. Thus being a Catholic University helps shape what kind of University we choose to be, but being a University, with the concomitant knowledge discovery and formation of the next generation of thinkers and leaders, shapes our understanding of what it means to be Catholic.

***Moment to See, Courage to Act*** calls all members of the Notre Dame community to ask themselves “What do you see and how will you act on that?”, as individuals and as a community, both internally and externally.

## LOGISTICS

***Moment to See, Courage to Act*** discussion groups provide an opportunity for small groups of faculty members to informally exchange ideas and perspectives about the three short foundational documents that follow this discussion guide:

- *Commonweal* interview of Pope Francis by Austen Ivereigh (April 8, 2020)
- “Moment to See the Poor” *Science* editorial by Joachim von Braun, et al. (April 17, 2020)
- *Constitutions of the Congregation of Holy Cross* (2:14 – dealing with “Mission”)

These conversations will serve as a precursor to follow-on discussion and refinement during Notre Dame’s academic strategic planning process, which is scheduled to begin in the Fall 2021 semester. For conversations to be meaningful, it is vital that participants read the documents in advance and consider how we might act as individuals and as a university, both internally and externally. This is a special moment in our nation’s and our University’s history to shape our path forward.

We anticipate these will be rich discussions and want to make sure to capture big themes and ideas. Notes will be taken, but we also encourage participants to post ideas themselves via the “Chat” feature in their Zoom call. At the end of the meeting, the Chat stream will be saved. Key themes will be culled from the notes and the chat stream and posted to a password-protected section of the *Moment to See, Courage to Act* webpage.

## DISCUSSION FORMAT

Discussions will be facilitated but informal, with some variations depending on the facilitator and the size of the group. After the facilitator gives a brief welcome and participants introduce themselves, the group will explore the three readings guided (but in no way limited) by the prompts below.

### Potential Reflection Questions and Prompts

- Pope Francis considered the pandemic’s effect on him personally, noting “I’m thinking of my responsibilities now, and what will come afterwards.” He asks, “What will be my service ... in the aftermath?” How do you see your own responsibilities changing as a result of the pandemic and other crises? What about Notre Dame’s responsibilities?
- Pope Francis cites that the uncertainty of the pandemic can give rise to moments of invention and creativity. Share some moments of invention and creativity that you have witnessed in your own scholarship, field, or among colleagues at Notre Dame.

- What do you as an individual see, and how will you act on that?
- What do you see as a challenge for Notre Dame, and how should the University act on that?
- To the young, Pope Francis says, “Have the courage to look ahead, and to be prophetic.” What can and should we do to encourage this sentiment among our students?
- Pope Francis is insistent that the difficult times of the pandemic must not be lost to memory; they are worthy of contemplation and reflection. What, to your mind, are some of the major lessons of the pandemic? What implications do these lessons have for the academy?
- The *Science* editorial describes how the pandemic has undermined United Nations sustainability goals related to poverty, hunger, health, work, and economic growth. What “big ideas” might position Notre Dame to respond with impact?
- The *Science* editorial posits that cooperative research in science is one response to address root causes and respond effectively to global health crises. What interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary contributions is Notre Dame poised to make? What collaborative partnerships—both within Notre Dame and beyond—represent a key opportunity?
- Constitution 2:14 speaks of networks of privilege, prejudice, and power that are commonplace yet hidden. What particular role do faculty play in revealing such networks? How are students best motivated to recognize and address them?
- Regarding Constitution 2:14, which aspects of a Notre Dame education give students “competence to see”? Which aspects also provide the “courage to act”? Are these aspects the same or different?
- Pope Francis describes seeing as an act of restoration. What must we “see” anew in the academy? Which aspects of our work and endeavor are most in need of restoration?

# Commonweal

Published on *Commonweal Magazine* (<https://www.commonwealmagazine.org>)

[Home](#) > An Interview with Pope Francis



Pope Francis leaves the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican March 18, 2020, after a livestream of his weekly general audience. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

**Toward the end of March I suggested to Pope Francis that this might be a good moment to address the English-speaking world: the pandemic that had so affected Italy and Spain was now reaching the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. Without promising anything, he asked me to send some questions. I picked six themes, each one with a series of questions he could answer or not as he saw fit. A week later, I received a communication that he had recorded some reflections in response to the questions. The interview was conducted in [Spanish](#) <sup>[1]</sup>; the translation is my own.**

**—Austen Ivereigh**

*The first question was about how Pope Francis was experiencing the pandemic and lockdown, both in the Santa Marta residence and the Vatican administration (“the curia”) more widely, both practically and spiritually.*

**Pope Francis:** The Curia is trying to carry on its work, and to live normally, organizing in shifts so that not everyone is present at the same time. It’s been well thought out. We are sticking to the measures

ordered by the health authorities. Here in the Santa Marta residence we now have two shifts for meals, which helps a lot to alleviate the impact. Everyone works in his office or from his room, using technology. Everyone is working; there are no idlers here.

How am I living this spiritually? I'm praying more, because I feel I should. And I think of people. That's what concerns me: people. Thinking of people anoints me, it does me good, it takes me out of my self-preoccupation. Of course I have my areas of selfishness. On Tuesdays, my confessor comes, and I take care of things there.

I'm thinking of my responsibilities now, and what will come afterwards. What will be my service as Bishop of Rome, as head of the church, in the aftermath? That aftermath has already begun to be revealed as tragic and painful, which is why we must be thinking about it now. The Vatican's Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development has been working on this, and meeting with me.

My major concern—at least what comes through my prayer—is how to accompany and be closer to the people of God. Hence the livestreaming of the 7 a.m. Mass [I celebrate each morning] which many people follow and appreciate, as well as the addresses I've given, and the March 27 event in St. Peter's Square. Hence, too, the step-up in activities of the office of papal charities, attending to the sick and hungry.

I'm living this as a time of great uncertainty. It's a time for inventing, for creativity.

*In my second question, I referred to a nineteenth-century novel very dear to Pope Francis which he has mentioned recently: Alessandro Manzoni's I promessi sposi (The Betrothed). The novel's drama centers on the Milan plague of 1630. There are various priestly characters: the cowardly curé Don Abbondio, the holy cardinal archbishop Borromeo, and the Capuchin friars who serve the lazzaretto, a kind of field hospital where the infected are rigorously separated from the healthy. In the light of the novel, how did Pope Francis see the mission of the church in the context of COVID-19?*

**Pope Francis:** Cardinal Federigo [Borromeo] really is a hero of the Milan plague. Yet in one of the chapters he goes to greet a village but with the window of his carriage closed to protect himself. This did not go down well with the people. The people of God need their pastor to be close to them, not to overprotect himself. The people of God need their pastors to be self-sacrificing, like the Capuchins, who stayed close.

The creativity of the Christian needs to show forth in opening up new horizons, opening windows, opening transcendence toward God and toward people, and in creating new ways of being at home. It's not easy to be confined to your house. What comes to my mind is a verse from the *Aeneid* in the midst of defeat: the counsel is not to give up, but save yourself for better times, for in those times remembering what has happened will help us. Take care of yourselves for a future that will come. And remembering in that future what has happened will do you good.

Take care of the *now*, for the sake of tomorrow. Always creatively, with a simple creativity, capable of inventing something new each day. Inside the home that's not hard to discover, but don't run away, don't take refuge in escapism, which in this time is of no use to you.

*My third question was about government policies in response to the crisis. While the quarantining of the population is a sign that some governments are willing to sacrifice economic wellbeing for the sake of vulnerable people, I suggested it was also exposing levels of exclusion that have been considered normal and acceptable before now.*

**Pope Francis:** It's true, a number of governments have taken exemplary measures to defend the population on the basis of clear priorities. But we're realizing that all our thinking, like it or not, has been

shaped around the economy. In the world of finance it has seemed normal to sacrifice [people], to practice a politics of the throwaway culture, from the beginning to the end of life. I'm thinking, for example, of prenatal selection. It's very unusual these days to meet Down's Syndrome people on the street; when the tomograph [scan] detects them, they are binned. It's a culture of euthanasia, either legal or covert, in which the elderly are given medication but only up to a point.

What comes to mind is Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae vitae*. The great controversy at the time was over the [contraceptive] pill, but what people didn't realize was the prophetic force of the encyclical, which foresaw the neo-Malthusianism which was then just getting underway across the world. Paul VI sounded the alarm over that wave of neo-Malthusianism. We see it in the way people are selected according to their utility or productivity: the throwaway culture.

Right now, the homeless continue to be homeless. A photo appeared the other day of a parking lot in Las Vegas where they had been put in quarantine. And the hotels were empty. But the homeless cannot go to a hotel. That is the throwaway culture in practice.

*I was curious to know if the pope saw the crisis and the economic devastation it is wreaking as a chance for an ecological conversion, for reassessing priorities and lifestyles. I asked him concretely whether it was possible that we might see in the future an economy that—to use his words—was more “human” and less “liquid.”*

Go down into the underground, and pass from the hyper-virtual, fleshless world to the suffering flesh of the poor. This is the conversion we have to undergo. And if we don't start there, there will be no conversion.

**Pope Francis:** There is an expression in Spanish: “God always forgives, we forgive sometimes, but nature never forgives.” We did not respond to the partial catastrophes. Who now speaks of the fires in Australia, or remembers that eighteen months ago a boat could cross the North Pole because the glaciers had all melted? Who speaks now of the floods? I don't know if these are the revenge of nature, but they are certainly nature's responses.

We have a selective memory. I want to dwell on this point. I was amazed at the seventieth-anniversary commemoration of the Normandy landings, which was attended by people at the highest levels of culture and politics. It was one big celebration. It's true that it marked the beginning of the end of dictatorship, but no one seemed to recall the 10,000 boys who remained on that beach.

When I went to Redipuglia for the centenary of the First World War, I saw a lovely monument and names on a stone, but that was it. I cried, thinking of Benedict XV's phrase *inutile strage* (“senseless massacre”), and the same happened to me at Anzio on All Souls' Day, thinking of all the North American soldiers buried there, each of whom had a family, and how any of them might have been me.

At this time in Europe when we are beginning to hear populist speeches and witness political decisions of this selective kind it's all too easy to remember Hitler's speeches in 1933, which were not so different from some of the speeches of a few European politicians now.

What comes to mind is another verse of Virgil's: [*forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*] [“Perhaps one day it will be good to remember these things too.”] We need to recover our memory because memory will come to our aid. This is not humanity's first plague; the others have become mere anecdotes. We need to remember our roots, our tradition which is packed full of memories. In the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, the First Week, as well as the “Contemplation to Attain Love” in the Fourth Week, are completely taken up with remembering. It's a conversion through remembrance.

This crisis is affecting us all, rich and poor alike, and putting a spotlight on hypocrisy. I am worried by the hypocrisy of certain political personalities who speak of facing up to the crisis, of the problem of hunger in the world, but who in the meantime manufacture weapons. This is a time to be converted

from this kind of functional hypocrisy. It's a time for integrity. Either we are coherent with our beliefs or we lose everything.

You ask me about conversion. Every crisis contains both danger and opportunity: the opportunity to move out from the danger. Today I believe we have to slow down our rate of production and consumption (*Laudato si'*, 191) and to learn to understand and contemplate the natural world. We need to reconnect with our real surroundings. This is the opportunity for conversion.

Yes, I see early signs of an economy that is less liquid, more human. But let us not lose our memory once all this is past, let us not file it away and go back to where we were. This is the time to take the decisive step, to move from using and misusing nature to contemplating it. We have lost the contemplative dimension; we have to get it back at this time.

And speaking of contemplation, I'd like to dwell on one point. This is the moment to see the poor. Jesus says we will have the poor with us always, and it's true. They are a reality we cannot deny. But the poor are hidden, because poverty is bashful. In Rome recently, in the midst of the quarantine, a policeman said to a man: "You can't be on the street, go home." The response was: "I have no home. I live in the street." To discover such a large number of people who are on the margins.... And we don't see them, because poverty is bashful. They are there but we don't see them: they have become part of the landscape; they are things.

St. Teresa of Calcutta saw them, and had the courage to embark on a journey of conversion. To "see" the poor means to restore their humanity. They are not things, not garbage; they are people. We can't settle for a welfare policy such as we have for rescued animals. We often treat the poor like rescued animals. We can't settle for a partial welfare policy.

I'm going to dare to offer some advice. This is the time to go to the underground. I'm thinking of Dostoyevsky's short novel, *Notes from the Underground*. In another book, *The House of the Dead*, the employees of a prison hospital had become so inured they treated their poor prisoners like things. And seeing the way they treated one who had just died, the one on the bed alongside tells them: "Enough! He too had a mother!" We need to tell ourselves this often: that poor person had a mother who raised him lovingly. Later in life we don't know what happened. But it helps to think of that love he once received through his mother's hope.

We disempower the poor. We don't give them the right to dream of their mothers. They don't know what affection is; many live on drugs. And to see them can help us to discover the piety, the *pietas*, which points toward God and toward our neighbor.

Go down into the underground, and pass from the hyper-virtual, fleshless world to the suffering flesh of the poor. This is the conversion we have to undergo. And if we don't start there, there will be no conversion.

I'm thinking at this time of the saints who live next door. They are heroes: doctors, volunteers, religious sisters, priests, shop workers—all performing their duty so that society can continue functioning. How many doctors and nurses have died! How many religious sisters have died! All serving.... What comes to my mind is something said by the tailor, in my view one of the characters with greatest integrity in *The Betrothed*. He says: "The Lord does not leave his miracles half-finished." If we become aware of this miracle of the next-door saints, if we can follow their tracks, the miracle will end well, for the good of all. God doesn't leave things halfway. We are the ones who do that.

What we are living now is a place of *metanoia* (conversion), and we have the chance to begin. So let's not let it slip from us, and let's move ahead.

*My fifth question centered on the effects on the church of the crisis, and the need to rethink our ways of operating. Does he see emerging from this a church that is more missionary, more creative, less*



*attached to institutions? Are we seeing a new kind of “home church”?*

**Pope Francis:** Less attached to institutions? I'd say less attached to certain ways of thinking. Because the church *is* institution. The temptation is to dream of a deinstitutionalized church, a gnostic church without institutions, or one that is subject to fixed institutions, which would be a Pelagian church. The one who makes the church is the Holy Spirit, who is neither gnostic nor Pelagian. It is the Holy Spirit who institutionalizes the church, in an alternative, complementary way, because the Holy Spirit provokes disorder through the charisms, but then out of that disorder creates harmony.

A church that is free is not an anarchic church, because freedom is God's gift. An institutional church means a church institutionalized by the Holy Spirit.

A tension between disorder and harmony: this is the church that must come out of the crisis. We have to learn to live in a church that exists in the tension between harmony and disorder provoked by the Holy Spirit. If you ask me which book of theology can best help you understand this, it would be the Acts of the Apostles. There you will see how the Holy Spirit deinstitutionalizes what is no longer of use, and institutionalizes the future of the church. That is the church that needs to come out of the crisis.

About a week ago an Italian bishop, somewhat flustered, called me. He had been going round the hospitals wanting to give absolution to those inside the wards from the hallway of the hospital. But he had spoken to canon lawyers who had told him he couldn't, that absolution could only be given in direct contact. “What do you think, Father?” he had asked me. I told him: “Bishop, fulfill your priestly duty.” And the bishop said, “*Grazie, ho capito*” (“Thank you, I understand”). I found out later that he was giving absolution all around the place.

This is the freedom of the Spirit in the midst of a crisis, not a church closed off in institutions. That doesn't mean that canon law is not important: it is, it helps, and please let's make good use of it, it is for our good. But the final canon says that the whole of canon law is for the salvation of souls, and that's what opens the door for us to go out in times of difficulty to bring the consolation of God.

You ask me about a “home church.” We have to respond to our confinement with all our creativity. We can either get depressed and alienated—through media that can take us out of our reality—or we can get creative. At home we need an apostolic creativity, a creativity shorn of so many useless things, but with a yearning to express our faith in community, as the people of God. So: to be in lockdown, but yearning, with that memory that yearns and begets hope—this is what will help us escape our confinement.

*Finally, I asked Pope Francis how we are being called to live this extraordinary Lent and Eastertide. I asked him if he had a particular message for the elderly who were self-isolating, for confined young people, and for those facing poverty as result of the crisis.*

**Pope Francis:** You speak of the isolated elderly: solitude and distance. How many elderly there are whose children do not go and visit them in normal times! I remember in Buenos Aires when I visited old people's homes, I would ask them: And how's your family? *Fine, fine!* Do they come? *Yes, always!* Then the nurse would take me aside and say the children hadn't been to see them in six months. Solitude and abandonment...distance.

Yet the elderly continue to be our roots. And they must speak to the young. This tension between young and old must always be resolved in the encounter with each other. Because the young person is bud and foliage, but without roots they cannot bear fruit. The elderly are the roots. I would say to them, today: I know you feel death is close, and you are afraid, but look elsewhere, remember your children, and do not stop dreaming. This is what God asks of you: to dream (Joel 3:1).

What would I say to the young people? Have the courage to look ahead, and to be prophetic. May the dreams of the old correspond to your prophecies—also Joel 3:1.

Those who have been impoverished by the crisis are today's deprived, who are added to the numbers of deprived of all times, men and women whose status is "deprived." They have lost everything, or they are going to lose everything. What meaning does deprivation have for me, in the light of the Gospel? It means to enter into the world of the deprived, to understand that he who had, no longer has. What I ask of people is that they take the elderly and the young under their wing, that they take history under the wing, take the deprived under their wing.

What comes now to mind is another verse of Virgil's, at the end of Book 2 of the *Aeneid*, when Aeneas, following defeat in Troy, has lost everything. Two paths lie before him: to remain there to weep and end his life, or to follow what was in his heart, to go up to the mountain and leave the war behind. It's a beautiful verse. *Cessi, et sublato montem genitore petivi* ("I gave way to fate and, bearing my father on my shoulders, made for the mountain").

This is what we all have to do now, today: to take with us the roots of our traditions, and make for the mountain.

**Issue:** [May 2020](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags**[Pope](#)

[Francis](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

[Spirituality](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

[Coronavirus](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

[Theology](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

[Social Justice](#) <sup>[7]</sup>

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**This story is included in these collections:**

[The Coronavirus](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

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# The moment to see the poor

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**T**he coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has illuminated inequities that have put poor people—in both low-income nations and in rich countries—at the greatest risk of suffering. Pope Francis recently pointed to that in an interview: “This is the moment to see the poor.”

Until science finds appropriate drugs and a vaccine to treat and prevent COVID-19, today’s paradox is that everybody needs to cooperate with others while simultaneously self-isolating as a protective measure. Yet, whereas social distancing is quite feasible for wealthy people, poor people crowded in urban slums or refugee camps do not have that option and lack face masks and hand-washing facilities. To address the risks in large, crowded cities in developing countries, we must support prevention by testing, providing access to protective equipment, and launching a big effort to build provisional hospitals to isolate infected people.

In addition, the digital divide between the rich and poor may be costing lives. Inequitable distribution of technology and online resources means that crucial information on COVID-19, particularly early warnings and recommended early responses, are not timely, if received at all, in low-income communities. Without access to responsible, transparent, and current information, a cacophony of unproven assumptions can instead spread through poor communities. This gap in access to technology also translates into a lack of opportunities for distance learning while schools are closed, and teleworking during societal lockdown is infeasible for millions of low-income workers because of the nature of their jobs and lack of access to communications infrastructure. What COVID-19 is teaching us is that universal access to internet and communication technologies should be a human right.

Unfortunately, these inequities lead to yet others in poor communities. COVID-19 is adversely affecting national economies and is destroying small businesses and farmers. The disruptive consequences for food systems, especially, hurt poor people, who spend most of their income on food. This is increasing hunger and exacerbating the public health threat of the pandemic. The global agenda to advance the United Nations (UN) sustainability goals—particularly those related to poverty, hunger, health, decent work, and economic growth—will be undermined by COVID-19,

unless the world cooperates and includes the rescue of small businesses and farmers as it seeks to avoid a global economic crisis.

COVID-19 has also exposed the fragility of interconnectedness. Increasing global economic interactions have opened the world to massive cross-border flows of goods, services, money, ideas, and people. That allowed many to move out of poverty. However, curbing the rapid spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome–coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) requires closing borders around infection hotspots. These closings must be temporary only, and they must not hinder cooperation between nations to handle the pandemic. Human resources, equipment, knowledge about treatments, and supplies, as well as nonmarket and spiritual goods, must be shared, including with poor countries. The pandemic initially inspired nations to look inward. Seeking a solution to COVID-19 through

national isolation would be counterproductive. SARS-CoV-2 does not recognize borders. Rich nations need to support transnational and UN organizations in their global efforts to control spread of this contagion.

Science capacity in general, and specifically related to infectious diseases, is highly unequal around the world. This contributes to a greater risk of suffering in poor nations. Root causes and prevention of infectious diseases caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites that spread from animals to humans, for example, require co-

operative research that is close to potential risk areas, including in poor nations. Now is the time for the developed world to commit to improving this. If this gap in science capacity continues to grow, the interest of rich nations will become more limited and further leave disease burden among the poor.

Other major global crises, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, demand cooperative global responses that don’t leave out the poor. Once COVID-19 is under control, the world cannot return to business as usual. A thorough review of worldviews, lifestyles, and the problems of short-term economic valuation must be carried out. A more responsible, more sharing, more caring, more inclusive, and fairer society is required if we are to survive in the Anthropocene.

—Joachim von Braun, Stefano Zamagni, Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo

“...inequities lead to yet others in poor communities.”

# Congregation of Holy Cross *Ave Crux Spes Unica*

Search

Search

 Search

Menu

Search

1. [Home](#) >
2. [Resources](#) >
3. [Constitutions](#) >
4. 2: Mission

## 2: Mission

9. God so loved the world that He sent his only Son that we might have life and have it abundantly. In the fullness of time the Lord Jesus came among us anointed by the Spirit to inaugurate a kingdom of justice, love and peace. His rule would be no mere earthly regime: it would initiate a new creation in every land. His power would be within and without, rescuing us from the injustice we suffer and also from the injustice we inflict.

10. This was the good news that many misunderstood and many rejected. The Lord Jesus was crucified. But the Father raised Him to glory, and Christ breathed His Spirit into His people, the church. Dying and rising with Him in baptism, His followers are sent to continue His mission, to hasten along the kingdom.

11. The same Spirit moved Father Moreau to found the community of Holy Cross in which we have responded to the call to serve Christ. We live and work as priests and brothers together. Our mutual respect and shared undertaking should be a hopeful sign of the kingdom, and they are when others can behold how we love one another.

12. 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. Thus, wherever through its superiors the congregation sends us we go as educators in the faith to those whose lot we share, supporting men and women of grace and goodwill everywhere in their efforts to form communities of the coming kingdom.

13. Christ was anointed to bring good news to the poor, release for prisoners, sight for the blind, restoration for every broken victim. Our efforts, which are His, reach out to the afflicted and in a preferential way to the poor and the oppressed. We come not just as servants but as their neighbors, to be with them and of them. It is not that we take sides against sinful enemies; before the Lord all of us are

sinner and none is an enemy. We stand with the poor and the afflicted because only from there can we appeal as Jesus did for the conversion and the deliverance of all.

14. The mission is not simple, for the impoverishments we would relieve are not simple. There are networks of privilege, prejudice and power so commonplace that often neither oppressors nor victims are aware of them. We must be aware and also understanding by reason of fellowship with the impoverished and by reason of patient learning. For the kingdom to come in this world, disciples must have the competence to see and the courage to act.

15. Our concern for the dignity of every human being as God's cherished child directs our care to victims of every injury: prejudice, famine, warfare, ignorance, infidelity, abuse, natural calamity....

16. For many of us in Holy Cross, mission expresses itself in the education of youth in schools, colleges and universities. For others, our mission as educators takes place in parishes and other ministries. Wherever we work we assist others not only to recognize and develop their own gifts but also to discover the deepest longing in their lives. And, as in every work of our mission, we find that we ourselves stand to learn much from those whom we are called to teach.

17. Our mission sends us across borders of every sort. Often we must make ourselves at home among more than one people or culture, reminding us again that the farther we go in giving the more we stand to receive. Our broader experience allows both the appreciation and the critique of every culture and the disclosure that no culture of this world can be our abiding home.

18. All of us are involved in the mission: those who go out to work and those whose labors sustain the community itself, those in the fullness of their strength and those held back by sickness or by age, those who abide in the companionship of a local house and those sent to live and work by themselves, those in their active assignments and those who are still in training. All of us as a single brotherhood are joined in one communal response to the Lord's mission.

19. Periodically we review how well our ministries fulfill our mission. We must evaluate the quality, forms and priorities of our commitments as to how effectively they serve the needs of the church and the world.

20. Our mission is the Lord's and so is the strength for it. We turn to Him in prayer that He will clasp us more firmly to Himself and use our hands and wits to do the work that only He can do. Then our work itself becomes a prayer: a service that speaks to the Lord who works through us.

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Where We Serve](#)

[Vocations](#)