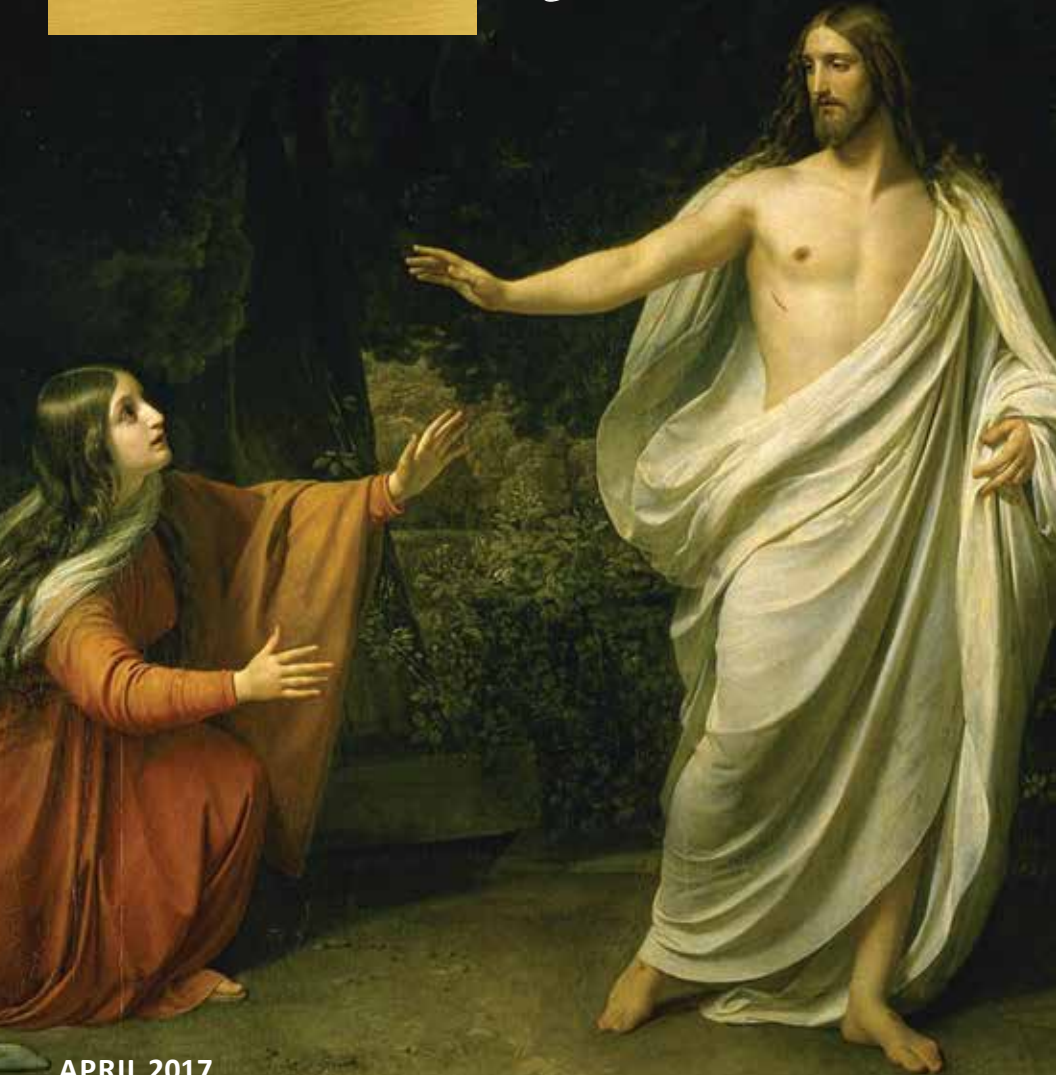




# Holy Cross Priory

An Anglican Benedictine Community  
In Canada

*The Brothers wish  
you God's blessings  
at this holy festival  
of the Resurrection  
of our Lord*



APRIL 2017

# God's Wonderful Surprise

“Easter faith – a leap of generosity  
breaking out beyond what can be rationally guaranteed”

– BLONDELL

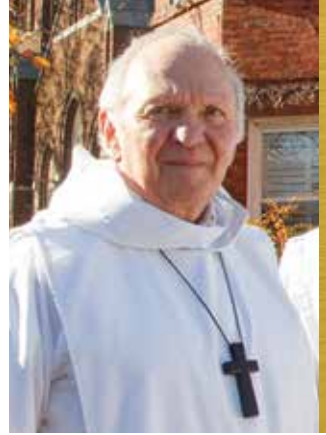
We in the Western hemisphere prefer to guide our decisions and activities in rational ways. We are people of commerce so mathematical accuracy is essential for the way business is conducted. Facts, figures, charts, schedules, investments, and insurance figure prominently in much of our daily life. Many of us despair if we are unable to give clear explanations, neat answers, or ready solutions. We are seldom comfortable with surprises, be they good or bad.

The Christian faith revolves around Incarnation and Resurrection – both embarrassingly irrational concepts. Embarrassing because both are God's action and beyond our control or manipulation. It is much easier to regard Jesus as a good teacher, healer, or inspired prophet than to claim that he is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Anointed One. We can deal with Jesus the martyr – killed by religious hatred and fear and the collusion of a foreign government. Yet for over 2,000 years the Church has celebrated Jesus' resurrection.

In an attempt to make the resurrection of Jesus a “respectable” teaching, we are prone to offer platitudes about hope and love and renewal. Or we can be merely existential in deciding how any teaching about the resurrection may be of any value to one's daily life. Our answers may be dull, safe, and ordinary. Few want to celebrant the dull, the safe, the ordinary.

We have kept Lent – with extra devotions, fasting, special readings, retreats, quiet days, and music. We work hard to keep a holy Lent. Perhaps we have become used to Lent. Now Easter is here. We are not asked to work, but to celebrate, to rejoice, to give thanks. Sometimes that is harder than keeping a good Lent.

Some are not comfortable in celebrating, laughing or giving thanks. One may ask why there should be celebrations. Many of us will still be our difficult, fearful selves and will be prone to act in familiar ways. Still God invites us to celebrate. God loves us despite our understanding of ourselves. God gives us



BR. DAVID BRYAN HOOPES OHC

special talents, insights, skills, and perceptions. God gives us life – abundant and everlasting. Conventional wisdom says that difficult people should be punished, as should liars, cheats, and criminals. The weak should be removed from office and the strong put in charge. But the resurrection of Jesus overshadows our conventional wisdom. The resurrection tells us that God has given us the gift of everlasting life. It doesn't make sense.

How hard it is to believe in miracles. They are unpredictable; we cannot control them; they are often embarrassingly irrational. For over 2,000 years humankind have heard of the miracle of Jesus' resurrection and many have welcomed the miracle to bless their lives. They have accepted that God's generosity is greater than anything that one can imagine. St. Athanasius once wrote, "to believe in God is to know that the rules will be fair and that there will be wonderful surprises."

Jesus' resurrection is God's wonderful surprise. By all reasonable standards Jesus' death should have ended his radical religious and social movement. Yet Jesus' movement continues to grow. The disciples neither asked for nor expected the Resurrection. They were surprised: surprised that God could do what they could not. And their lives were never the same again. God's wonderful surprise changed their lives and the lives of millions of people. They could not explain the surprise but they accepted it and were blessed.

We may have trouble in our understanding of the resurrection, but perhaps we can accept it as God's wonderful surprise – and be open to the wonderful surprises of God which shall come.

In his book *Christian Doctrine*, J.S. Whale wrote: "We cannot begin to understand how it happened. The Gospels cannot explain the resurrection; it is the resurrection alone which explains the Gospels – belief in the resurrection, is not an appendage to the Christian faith; it is the Christian faith."

Br. David Bryan Hoopes OHC,  
PRIOR

# Community Notes



**BR. CHRISTIAN** was one of the preachers at a dialogue sermon at St. John's Church, Toronto. Canon Simon Li invited him to share in the parish liturgy. Br. Christian was well received.



**BR. DAVID BRYAN** continues to serve as Associate Priest at St. Hilda's Church, Pastoral Associate at St. James Cathedral, Honorary Assistant at St. Barnabas Church, and Chaplain to the Sisters of the Church. He conducted a Lenten Quiet Day for the clergy of the York/Credit Valley area of the Diocese of Toronto, and made an Embertide visit to the Sisters of the Church. Br. David Bryan and Roy Parker OHC enjoyed the gift of a ten-day cruise in February; the gift was from Br.

Adrian OHC. The cruise was also a celebration of Br. Roy's Golden Jubilee of priesthood. He and Br. David have been friends since 1964. Both entered Holy Cross in 1972.



**BR. LEONARD** spent the months of December, January, and February in Liberia and Ghana. While in Bolahun, Leonard interred the remains of beloved OHC Brother Fr. Joseph Parsell (see page 5). Although Fr. Parsell died in 1994 and his remains were interred at West Park, friends of the Order in Liberia consistently requested that some of Father's remains be placed in Bolahun where Fr. Parsell served over 40 years with distinction. The Superior and Council agreed to that request and Br.

Leonard did the honours. After Br. Leonard's time in Liberia he was in Ghana where he visited family, friends, and OHC Associates. He spent time at the Order's farm in the Kumasi area and at St. Nicholas' Seminary in Cape Coast. He also attended funerals and did some pastoral work in a variety of parishes.

**BR. REGINALD-MARTIN** completed eight years as lay pastoral associate at The Church of St. Paul the Apostle, Rexdale. At St. Paul's, Br. Reginald ministered with Br. Bryan Youngward, OHC, then incumbent, with the interim priest Beverly Lewis, and the present incumbent Jo-Anne Billinger. Br. Reginald provided pastoral care to the sick and house-bound, worked with the youth, trained Eucharistic ministers and anointers, coordinated work on a history of St. Paul's, and assisted with parish liturgies and ministry to a nursing home in the parish. He continues to serve as a member of the Diocesan Momentum Planning Committee; as Supervisor of the Peer Review Group for Supervisors of Curates; as a member of the Diocesan Volunteers for Congregational Development and the Fresh Start Program; as a Parish Selection Committee Coach; and assists congregations in areas of division and conflict. Br. Reginald does spiritual direction with clergy and religious.



**BR. CHARLES:** In addition to his monastic studies and ongoing formation as a novice, Br. Charles continues to serve as an Honorary Assistant at The Church of the Redeemer, Bloor Street, where he presides at the Eucharist when needed. He also provides informal counsel to people in the 12-step programmes. Br. Charles conducted a Lenten retreat for The Church of St. Mary Magdalene.



# A Postcard From Liberia



On December 26 (St. Stephen’s Day), the ashes of Fr. Parsell were solemnly carried in procession from the former Holy Cross Monastery (now the home of The Community of the Love of Jesus) to St. Mary’s Church. At St. Mary’s a High Mass of Thanksgiving was offered. From the Church, Mr. John H. Willie, principle of Holy Cross School — affectionately known as “Willie” in the community — carried the ashes to the cemetery. Because Willie was born without fully developed arms, he was abandoned by his family and left to die. Father Parsell rescued him, “adopted” him and provided for education through college. Br. Leonard chose Willie to carry the ashes and to place them in the grave across from that of Fr. Sturges Allan OHC, founder of the Order’s work in Liberia. From the “other shore,” Fr. Parsell (known affectionately by the people of Liberia as “Father Africa”) is undoubtedly rejoicing.

Following the interment, a great feast was offered to all the village people and to the very large number of friends who had come to welcome Fr. Africa back to the place which he so loved and where he had made the Gospel so real. May he rest in God’s loving care and rise in glory.

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TOP LEFT: JOHN WILLY THE “ADOPTED” SON OF FR. PARSELL CARRYING THE ASHES IN A PROCESSION FROM THE OLD MONASTERY TO ST. MARY’S CHURCH, BOLAHUN

BOTTOM RIGHT: BR. LEONARD PRESENTING THE URN CONTAINING THE ASHES OF THE LATE FR. PARSELL TO FR. WILLIAM MOMO IN ST. MARY’S CHURCH, BOLAHUN. BEHIND THEM IS ABBOT EMMANUEL C.L.J.



# Renovated Guest House Space

One of the ministries Benedictine monasteries are known for is their ministry of hospitality. Holy Cross Priory, Toronto, is no exception. We offer our hospitality with a purpose: to respond to people from across Canada and beyond - old friends and new friends - who seek a spirit/mind/body retreat so that they may return, refreshed and renewed, to their life and work. We are seldom without guests and often must regretfully turn people away because of limited space.

With a generous start-up grant from the Order, we have started to renovate part of our Priory's basement as new Guest House space: a large bed-sitting room with fireplace, a full bathroom and kitchenette-dining area. A private entrance will help ensure private space as needed by guests, particularly women. A second, smaller bedroom will be attached to the larger space.

Our new guest space, plus our current two bedrooms on an upper floor, will provide the capacity we need to achieve a key goal in our current strategic plan: to further expand our hospitality with a purpose to minister to those providing both ordained and lay parish leadership. We've heard the need identified by both bishops and their parish leaders for a place of short-term rest, prayer, study, and, in some cases, respite. Now we will be better equipped to offer refreshment to them - and to all who seek it.

Our thanks to all who have prayerfully and financially supported this project to date. We would respectfully ask those who are able to offer financial help to consider it. And we would ask all to support us by your prayers. (Tax Receipts mailed on request. Holy Cross Priory CRA # 119248946RR0001).

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**BOTTOM RIGHT:**  
OUR DEDICATED  
RENOVATION CREW AT  
WORK ON THE NEW  
FULL BATHROOM AND  
KITCHENETTE/DINING  
AREA, FROM LEFT  
TO RIGHT: BOGDAN  
SWIERZBINSKI,  
EUGENE ORION,  
JACEK SWIERZBINSKI,  
YASHANDEEP SINGH.



**Love must act  
as light must shine  
and fire must burn.**

- Fr. Huntington OHC

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## **Worship Times**

- 7:00am**    **Matins**
- 8:00am**    **Eucharist**  
(MONDAY-FRIDAY,  
SATURDAY AT 5:00PM)
- 11:30am**   **Diurnum**  
(Midday Prayer)
- 5:00pm**    **Vespers**
- 7:30pm**    **Compline**
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### **Holy Cross Priory**

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Holy Cross Priory is a monastery of the Order of the Holy Cross, a community founded in 1884 by The Reverend James Otis Sargent Huntington to provide a specifically North American expression of monasticism for Anglicans. The Order has had a ministry in Canada since the 1890s. The Priory was founded in 1973.

HOLY CROSS PRIORY IS A REGISTERED CHARITY #119248946RR0001