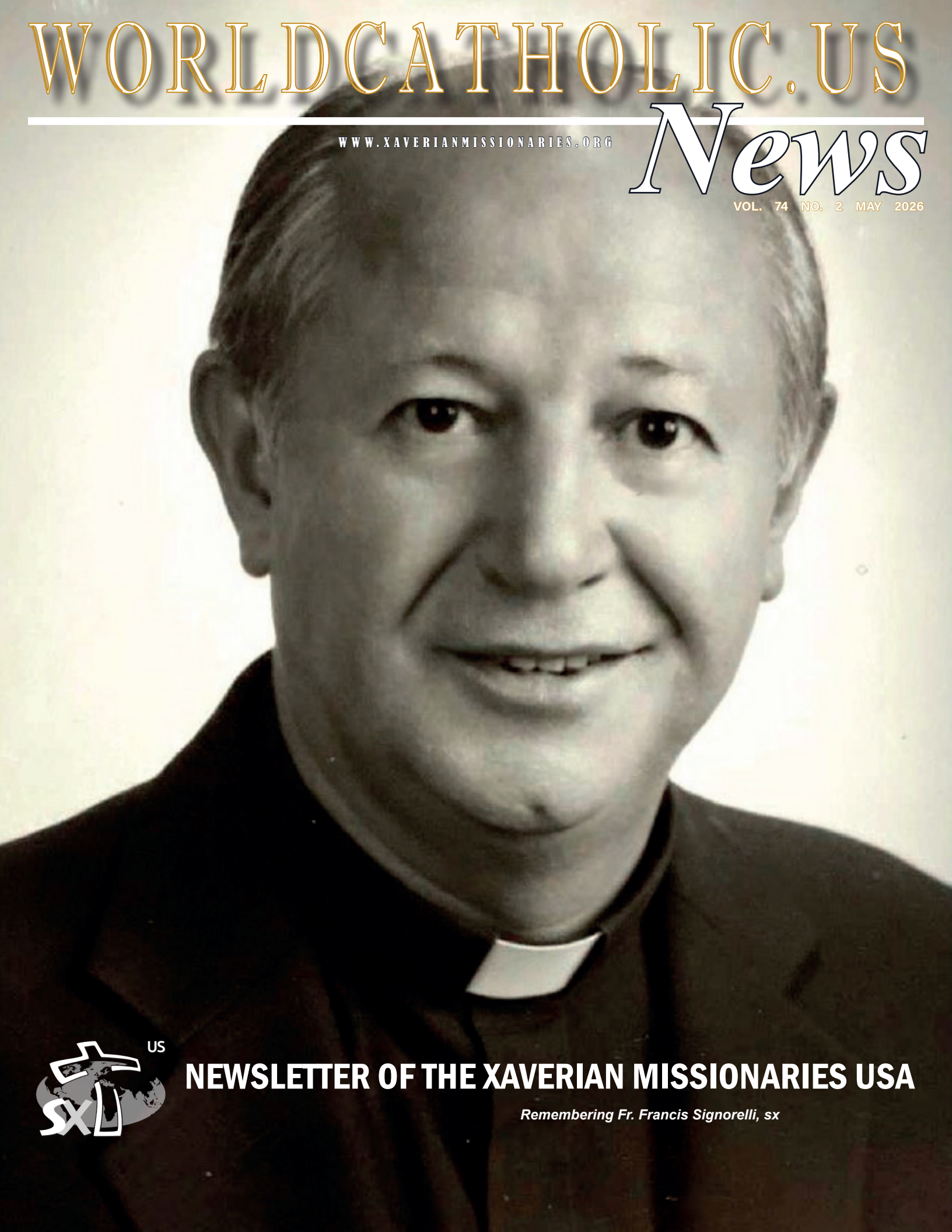


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News

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NEWSLETTER OF THE XAVERIAN MISSIONARIES USA

Remembering Fr. Francis Signorelli, sx

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MESSAGE FROM FR. ALEX

Surrexit Christus spes mea! — Christ, my hope, is risen!



So proclaims the ancient Sequence of Easter Sunday, echoing through the centuries with undiminished joy. This is not merely a poetic phrase, but the very foundation of who we are as Christians: a people of hope, a people who lift their eyes toward the eternal light even when surrounded by darkness, uncertainty, and destruction.

Over the past year, we have witnessed profound suffering and loss. The devastation brought about by war and economic instability; it has touched every corner of our world, leaving many burdened with grief, fear, and weariness. And yet, even in the midst of such trials, we are not abandoned to despair. For “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5). This is the truth that sustains us: Christ, our risen Lord, has conquered death once and for all.

As St. Paul reminds us, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile” (1 Corinthians 15:17). But Christ has been raised—truly and gloriously—and in Him, death no longer has the final word. Our Paschal Victim, the spotless Lamb, offers Himself in love; by His death, He destroys death, and by His rising, He restores us to life. As it is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:54–55).

This is the source of our hope—not a fleeting optimism or naïve wishfulness, but a deep and abiding certainty rooted in the living God. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). Because He lives, we too shall live. Because He has triumphed, we are never defeated.

Therefore, let us rejoice! Let us give thanks to God for the countless ways He continues to work in our lives, even when we cannot see clearly. Let this Easter not pass as a mere date on the calendar, but as a renewed encounter with the risen Christ. In the midst of a world that often feels chaotic and uncertain, may we learn to recognize His presence—walking beside us, just as He walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Let us also be bearers of this hope to others. The world does not need more fear or division; it longs for the quiet, steadfast witness of those who believe. As Scripture exhorts us, “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Peter 3:15). May our lives speak that reason clearly.

So, be people of hope—people who carry light into darkness, peace into turmoil, and love into wounded hearts. Not because the road is easy, but because Christ walks it with us. For He has promised, “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

With hearts renewed in faith and joy, let us proclaim it boldly: Christ is risen! He is truly risen!

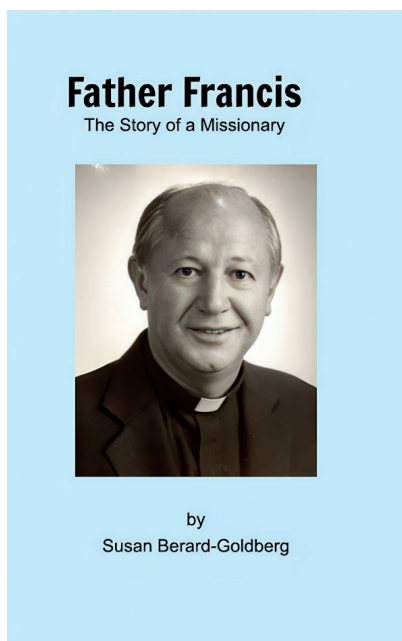
Seeing, Seeking and Finding God in People's Suffering

By Fr. Francis Signorelli, sx

Fr. Francis entered Eternal Life on February 7, 2026. His reflection, written in April 2021, encapsulates his dedication to missionary life following the Gospel of Jesus.



Father Francis Signorelli, sx



Read the PDF at https://www.xavianmissionaries.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/FatherFrancis_PDF.pdf

I always treasured the Testament Letter of our Founder, St. Guido M. Conforti, as well as his personal life witness. They have been for me a source of light and strength, both here in the USA and especially in the years of my missionary experience in the Amazons in Brazil.

Especially in the Amazons in the first months, when I found myself alone in a small town, not knowing the language, culture and the people. I found special meaning in the Founder's Letter, trying to live his teaching: "spirit of living faith, that would help me to find God, look for God and love God in all things."

I particularly remember the time I was threatened by a rich person for siding with poor peasants he had kicked out of their little peace of land which he claimed he had legally bought. Once on the way to the village I found myself facing two arrogant persons who told me to "go home and stay out of politics or else I would be in trouble. Do your ministry and that is all."

A couple of months after, that rich person was chosen to be Godfather of some children at Baptism by parents who were looking for a wealthy man to purchase the white robe for their child and some nice gifts. He had not taken part of the preparation for parents and God-parents as was required. I would not allow him to be the God-parent. He was furious and said he would make me pay for it. I went to the Bishop and

reported the threat. The Bishop had the State Authorities deny him the Visa to stay and he had to leave and got back to Portugal. That was my way to see God, seek and find God in all, as the Founder had taught us.

I always admired the way the people lived Good Friday. The town was quiet compared to the other days when people were coming from far away rushing to the little shops to purchase their necessities. On Good Friday, they spent hours in the church praying before the Crucifix and going and kiss Jesus on the Cross. I had plenty of occasions to keep Jesus present in my daily life, in time of prayer, at the Altar, especially in moments of difficulties, solitude and temptation.

A source of particular strength was the effort to have a life of community of at least two confreres and sharing with the local Sisters in the Parish. We had community prayer with them, and shared with the Brazilian Sisters our little finances. It was our way to give witness not only by words, but above all by our way of life to the Founder's Words: "To live a spirit of faith that makes us see God, seek God and love God in all."

This is my little reflection in a spirit of sharing.

Fr. Francis Signorelli, a Xaverian Missionary Father from Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in Holliston, MA, passed away on February 7, 2026. He was 93 years old. Born in 1932 in Marolles, Oise, France, he was the youngest son of the late Christoforo and Guiseppa Signorelli. He had an older brother and two older sisters, all predeceased. The family moved to Brembate Bergemo Italy, in the late 1930s. There are many nieces, nephews, and cousins in France and Italy.

Fr. Francis began his preparation for missionary service in Italy as a high school student in 1945 and completed his initial studies in 1952. After completing his novitiate year, he took his first vows as a Xaverian Missionary. He was then sent to the USA to complete his studies for the priesthood. His first years in the US were in Holliston, where he studied at the Marist Seminary in Framingham. He then completed his graduate studies in Milwaukee, WI, studying at St. Francis Major Seminary, and was ordained a priest on February 2, 1959.

Fr. Francis was assigned to Holliston, where he served as Spiritual Director for the high school seminarians as well as treasurer of the community. In 1968, he was named the Rector of the college and graduate student community in Milwaukee. In 1974, he was assigned to the Brazilian mission of the Xaverians along the Amazon River, where he served as pastor and later as Provincial Superior. In 1983, he was elected the Vice General of the worldwide Xaverian Communities, resident in Rome, Italy, but travelling to all of the various Xaverian Missions throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

At the conclusion of his service on the General Administration, he returned to the USA and took a sabbatical year. In 1993, he was elected the Provincial Superior of the United States, headquartered in Wayne, New Jersey. At the conclusion of his mandate in 2000, he returned to Holliston, first as the Rector of the community there and then from 2003 to 2014 as director of Our Lady of Fatima Shrine. He remained in Holliston, assisting the community in any way he could in his senior years.

Fr. Francis enjoyed a very rich and expansive missionary experience throughout his 67 years of priesthood, and he gladly shared that joy and passion with all he met. He has been very well loved by all who frequent Our Lady of Fatima Shrine and will be deeply missed.



B&W photos are of Fr. Francis in Brazil. The photo on the far right is with Fr. Tony Lalli, sx)



Left photo is Fr. Francis with Fr. Dominic Caldognetto, sx.

MEDICAL MISSION

A few weeks ago, I was on a medical mission in El Salvador with a group called Helping Hands Medical Mission. While I was talking about my experience with some people, they asked me what I do on a mission trip, as if the answer could be measured in tasks completed or hours worked. I paused, searching for words that would not reduce something sacred into something merely functional.

“Besides being the chaplain,” I said, “nothing.”

At first, that answer seemed to confuse them. Nothing? In a place where doctors, physician assistants, nurses, and volunteers move tirelessly, where medications are counted and distributed, where lines of people stretch under the sun with quiet hope in their eyes, what does it mean to do nothing?

But “nothing,” in this case, is everything that cannot be scheduled. It is being present when a mother begins to cry—not from pain, but from the exhaustion of carrying it alone for too long. It is listening to stories that have no neat ending, stories shaped by loss, resilience, and a stubborn kind of faith. It is sitting beside someone in silence when words would only get in the way. It is being ready, at any moment, to anoint trembling hands in the middle of uncertainty, where fear and hope meet.

In those moments, you realize that a mission trip is not only about what is given—it is about what is revealed.

The people we encounter in El Salvador receive care that is tangible: medicine, treatment, relief. But what they give in return cannot be packed into suitcases or recorded in reports. They offer a glimpse into what it means to hold onto family when life presses hard against it. They show what it looks like to forgive when it would be easier not to remain together when everything seems to pull apart.

And the volunteers—those who arrive thinking they are coming to help—quietly begin to change. Somewhere between long days and shared meals, between laughter that needs no translation and tears that say more than words ever could, something shifts. Priorities rearrange themselves. Broken relationships back home come to mind. The idea of family becomes less abstract and more urgent, more fragile, more worth fighting for.

What begins as service becomes an encounter.

You start to notice that the divine does not wait in grand gestures or extraordinary moments. It appears in the ordinary—in the way a hand is held, in the patience of listening, in the courage to stay when things are difficult. It is there, in small interactions that seem insignificant at first, yet somehow leave a lasting mark on the heart.

By the end of those ten days, no one leaves the same way they came. Not the patients. Not the volunteers. Not even me.

Because a mission is not a place where one group gives and another receives. It is where both discover, often unexpectedly, that they belong to one another—that they are part of a larger family, bound not by circumstance, but by something deeper, something quietly sacred.

A mission trip is



N TO EL SALVADOR

By Fr. Alex Rodriguez, sx

not only about what is given—it is about what is revealed.



Pictures provided by Fr. Alex Rodriguez, sx

Building Bridges

Fr. Carl Chudy, sx

In a world that so often amplifies our differences, where headlines thrive on religious division and conflict, what happens when people from diverse faith backgrounds simply come together to listen? It's a question that feels both urgent and hopeful. We are frequently told what separates a Christian from a Muslim, a Jew from a Hindu, or a Baha'i from all of them. But what do they share?

The Metrowest Interfaith Community gathered for a planning session—a community of neighbors that included a Rabbi, an Imam, a Catholic priest, and individuals from Hindu, Baha'i, and Christian backgrounds. They weren't there to debate or convert one another. They were there to share why bridging these divides was essential to them, both as human beings and as people of faith.

The takeaways from their dialogue were not just comforting platitudes; they were profound, counterintuitive, and deeply practical lessons for finding common ground. These are the six most surprising and impactful truths that surfaced when people chose curiosity over judgment and dialogue over division.

Takeaway 1: Our Real Enemy Isn't Each Other—It's Misinformation

One of the first points raised came from a member who grew up in a Hindu household within a Muslim community and attended a Christian school. She argued that the tendency for people to believe their religion is superior—a phenomenon she called “territorial complacency”—is often rooted in a simple lack of information.

Most people are only exposed to the teachings and perspectives of their own leaders. This can foster a worldview in which one's own tradition is the sole source of goodness, leading to the automatic rejection of others. The true purpose of interfaith dialogue, she concluded, is not to erase differences but to dismantle the dangerous misconceptions that turn neighbors into

strangers. It serves as a crucial antidote to the ignorance that breeds fear and division. It struck me that so much global conflict is built on this very foundation: not malice, but a simple, tragic absence of the other's story. But dismantling falsehoods is only the first step. Once the static of misinformation is cleared, an even more profound harmony becomes audible.

Takeaway 2: At Their Core, All Faiths Are Saying the Same Thing

This idea may seem counterintuitive, given the vast differences in rituals and scriptures. Yet, speaker after speaker returned to a single, unifying theme: the core messages are strikingly similar. The same speaker who warned about misinformation shared her experience of studying the Hindu Gita and the Christian Bible side by side for 3 years. Her discovery was astonishing: “Christ and Krishna are saying the same thing, exactly the same thing,” just expressed through different cultural and linguistic modes.

This sentiment was echoed by members of the Baha'i community, who explained that a central tenet of their faith is that “all religions are one and the same basic religious teaching,” with “one truth that permeates everything,” suggesting that different faiths are simply different paths leading toward the same ultimate reality. This shared truth isn't just an abstract idea; it has deeply practical implications for how we live. It forces us to reconsider what's truly important about the journey.

Takeaway 3: Honorable Morals Outweigh Ritual

In a world where religious identity is often associated with specific rituals—how one prays, what one eats, or which holidays one observes—an insight from an Islamic perspective offered a profound reordering of priorities. An Imam in the group explained that the primary purpose of the Prophet Muhammad was not to establish rituals, but to perfect human character. He shared a powerful teaching from his tradition: If there

is any Muslim who prays... who fasts... who performs the pilgrimage... But his character and his moral conduct is not decorated. We disassociate ourselves from them.

Hearing this, I was struck by how often we, as a society, mistake the symbols of faith for faith itself. This was a powerful call back to a universal starting point: our shared character. It suggests that the true measure of faith is not the performance of specific rites, which can divide us, but the practice of honorable morals like kindness, integrity, and compassion—a common ground accessible to all humanity.

Takeaway 4: Solidarity Is an Ancient Moral Superpower

Our Rabbi in the community shared a timeless story from the Torah that serves as a powerful model for modern interfaith work. She recounted the tale of the Egyptian midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, who were commanded by Pharaoh to kill all newborn Israelite boys.

Crucially, these midwives were not Israelites forced to choose their own. They were Egyptians who chose to defy their own king out of a sense of shared humanity that transcended tribal lines. The scripture says they refused because they “feared God,” holding themselves to a “higher moral standard” than the one imposed by their society. They chose solidarity with their neighbors over obedience to a ruler who sought to gain power by turning people against one another. This ancient story reveals that interfaith work is not just about polite conversation; it is an act of moral courage. It is about standing together against injustice and refusing to be fooled by those who profit from our division. This call for solidarity feels urgent and, at times, daunting. But the group also reminded me that the foundation for such courage is not complex political strategy, but something far simpler.



Members of the Metrowest Interfaith Community planning session. Fr. Carl is standing third from the right.

Takeaway 5: To Understand Others, We Must Become Like Children

One of the most beautiful and practical lessons came from a former preschool teacher. She shared an analogy drawn from her years of working with very young children. When confronted with difference, she explained, a young child's first instinct is not fear or judgment, but pure curiosity.

She described how a child might see another with a different head covering and simply ask, "What's that?" They listen to the answer, think it's "cool," and then immediately return to their shared humanity: "Let's go swing." Her conclusion was simple and direct: "As adults, we need to be more like that." The simplicity of that image was humbling. We must learn to approach those who seem different from us with that same childlike curiosity, replacing fear with a genuine desire to understand. This shift from fear to curiosity doesn't just change our relationships with others; I learned it can profoundly alter the relationship we have with our own faith.

Takeaway 6: Engaging Other Faiths Can Make Your Own Stronger

A common fear among people of faith is that engaging with other traditions might weaken or dilute their own beliefs. The priest's personal experience directly refuted this.

My interfaith experiences has taught me to be a better Catholic priest, and I can't not involving myself in interreligious solidarity. It has taught me to be a better Catholic, to understand more deeply my intimate and profound connection to everyone around me, inspired by my own faith.

I suggested that rather than threatening one's faith, interfaith engagement can actually deepen it. By seeing the divine reflected in another's eyes, we gain a deeper understanding of our own connection to God and to the whole of humanity. It transforms faith from an exclusive identity into an expansive source of connection. It compels us to ask questions no one else can pose.

Conclusion: The Power of a Single Conversation

Listening to this dialogue, I realized these six lessons were not separate ideas, but a single, interconnected path. It became clear that the walls of misinformation (1) can be dismantled by a simple, childlike curiosity (5). When we look with those eyes, we discover that at their core, all faiths are voicing the same essential truths (2), calling us not to divergent rituals but to a shared practice of honorable morals (3). This recognition of our common ground becomes the bedrock of solidarity against injustice (4), an act of engagement that, far from weakening our beliefs, actually strengthens our own faith (6).

These takeaways prove that dialogue is one of the most powerful tools we have to mend the fractures in our world. They are a potent reminder that beneath our diverse religious labels lies a profound and shared humanity.

In a world that often encourages us to build walls, what is one small bridge you can build this week?

WORLD MISSION NEWS

“Making of the World One Family...”

Italy Arrests Burundi Man over 2014 Murders of Three Catholic Nuns



Feb. 26 (Reuters) - Italy has arrested a 50-year-old Burundian man in connection with the murder of three Italian missionary nuns in the east African country's commercial capital Bujumbura more than 10 years ago, prosecutors in Parma said on Thursday.

Guillaume Harushimana is suspected of instigating, jointly organizing and logistically supporting the murders of Olga Raschietti, 83, Lucia Pulici, 75, and Bernadetta Boggian, 79, in two separate attacks on September 7-8, 2014.

Monica Moschioni, a lawyer appointed by a court to represent Harushimana, told Reuters she could not say whether he would plead innocent or guilty as she had not yet spoken to him. She was due to do so on Friday, she added.

KILLINGS ORDERED BY GENERAL, PROSECUTORS SAY

The killings were ordered by General Adolphe Nshimirimana, then head of the Burundi secret police, who was assassinated in 2015, the prosecutors said. Harushimana was one of the general's close associates, they added.

According to investigators, the nuns may have been killed for refusing to provide medical aid to Burundian militias deployed in Congo, disputes over the funding of a youth centre in Kamenge, or as part of a sacrificial rite.

Burundi authorities did not respond to a request for comment.

Prosecutors said four people were suspected of carrying out the killings. Two had made radio confessions and one described as the general's bodyguard was questioned in Parma and had partially admitted the facts, they added. The fourth person has not been identified.

The presumed killers entered the nuns' compound disguised in clerical robes and left wearing police uniforms, prosecutors said. In 2014, Reuters reported that two of the three victims were raped and decapitated.

Italian prosecutors said they reopened investigations into the murders in 2024, thanks to leads from a book by investigative journalist Giusy Baioni, leading them to testimonies from other nuns which had not been heard by Burundian authorities.

Harushimana's name had already emerged in connection with the murders, Italian prosecutors said, adding that he had obtained a travel visa to Italy in 2018 to attend a training course in the northern city of Parma.

They said he was taken in for questioning at the time in Parma, but denied any involvement, saying he had been outside Burundi at the time of the murders, and providing passport stamps as evidence of his absence from the country.

Reporting by Philippe Leroy Beaulieu in Gdansk, editing by Alvis Armellini, Sharon Singleton and Andrew Heavens

USA NEWS

DELEGATION HOUSE, XAVIER KNOLL FRANKLIN, WI

Xavier Knoll Mission Festival

Come one, come all to two days of festive family fun on June 27-28, 2026. Enjoy great food, music, fun and company as we celebrate and support Xaverian Missionaries mission and ministries worldwide. Keep up with announcements at <https://www.facebook.com/xaverianswi>

Lay Xaverians

“Missionary Disciples: The Xaverian Way,” shares the basics of who is a Lay Xaverian, what they do, and how the Xaverian charism has guided people through their lives. Lay Xaverians are an integral part of Xavier Knoll. Email Fr. Alex for more information. fralex@xaverianmissionaries.org

OUR LADY OF FATIMA SHRINE, HOLLISTON , MA

New Website

There is a new website, developed by Brother Kornel Glossanto, for The Missionary Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima. We hope it to make it easier for you to see the services and opportunities that wait for your next visit. Take a stroll through our website and discover for yourself at <https://fatimashrine.org/>

In Gratitude

Thanks to all who participated in our Lenten liturgies, events and fund-raisers. The Shrine depends on the involvement and active participation of the community. We are a family!

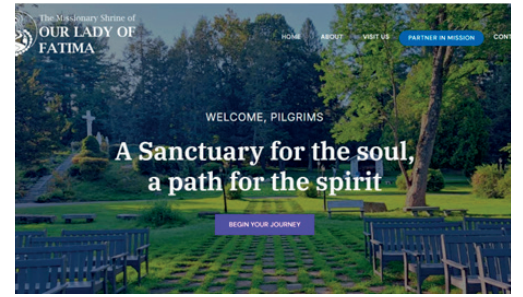
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