



CrossRoads: Bulletin of the Passionist Alumni Association

April 2022

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**Did a friend forward this
bulletin to you?**

[Click here to register.](#)

Thinking of forwarding this?

Please forward this bulletin to a former classmate or friend who attended school in Passionist formation. The Passionist Alumni Association relies on you to build our membership. Every day we hear stories of renewed friendships and new friendships. Did a friend forward this bulletin to you because you once studied with the Passionists?

If so, please **CLICK ON THIS LINK:** <https://passionistorderalumni.org/> to register with the Passionist Alumni Association to stay in touch. Thank you.

Louisville, Kentucky is the location of our 2022 Reunion.

WANT PAST ISSUES?

To read past issues of CrossRoads, click this link: <https://passionist.org/passionist-formation-alumni-crossroads/>

An In-Person Reunion in September



It's official! The reunion committee, led by Carl DeLage and Jim Byrne, announced that we get to gather in September.

We meet in Louisville. And yes, you read that correctly. We expect to gather live, assuming the worst COVID variants lie behind us.

The City of Louisville itself is one bold, entertaining, and surprising destination. As for us alums, we have not run out of stories to tell or new friendships to make. Life is g-o-o-o-o-d among the hundreds of folks who studied and interacted with the Passionists at one time or another.

Let's get down to the facts...

DATES: September 16-18, 2022

LOCATION: Sacred Heart Community, 1924 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40205. All activities will take place in the brand new, spacious Parish Hall.

In-Person Reunion *cont'd*

LODGING: The official hotel with special rates is the Wingate by Wyndham at 3200 Kemmons Dr., Louisville, KY 40218. The distance from St. Agnes is about 7 minutes (2.6 miles). Shuttling by alumni volunteers will be available.

Booking by phone (preferable): Call them at 502-694-4726 to reserve. Tell them it's the Passionist Reunion. Our Group Code is **CDPRDE**. Group rate is \$129/night plus 16.07% tax.

Booking online: Click on this link. **Wingate Welcomes PASSIONIST REUNION** When you first click on the link, it will pop up “**This hotel is not available for your dates.**” Ignore that message. Choose official dates of September 16 thru 18 ONLY. You can check the ‘Room’ box and identify the number of adult guests. Do not click on ‘Rate Applied.’ Lastly, click on ‘Update’ where you will see the \$129 rate and a reference to the Passionist Reunion. Proceed to complete your booking from there.

A BOURBON TASTING: Fr. Nelson, the pastor of St. Agnes, has arranged a bourbon tasting for us on Saturday night of the reunion, after the photo session.



Interactive Opportunities

Wanted! Musicians and Singers for the 2022 Reunion.

Who does not remember how mind-blowing music was at every single formation level? Two events at the September reunion—a prayer service on Saturday and Mass on Sunday—offer powerful moments to sing together and back up the melodies with guitars and keyboards. If you want to take part, email Jack Dermody at dermody@cox.net.

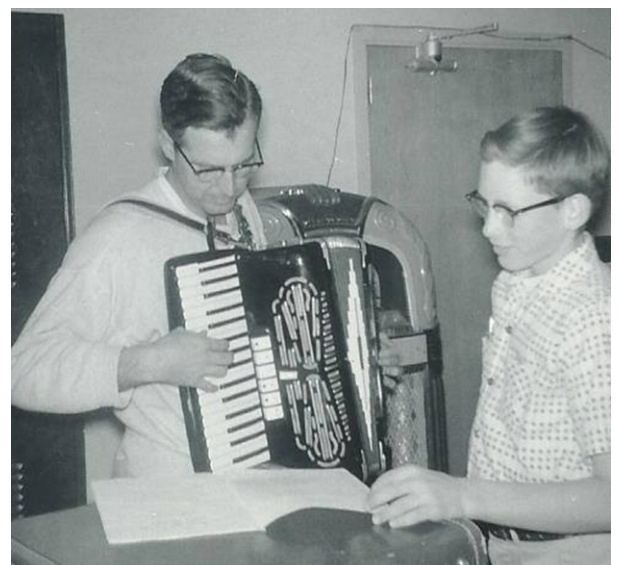


Photo: The student on the right, (now a 76-year-old alum), threatens to play the accordion in church in 2022 if no other musicians sign up.

Interactive Opportunities *cont'd*

What's Next in Haiti and Agua Prieta? In 2020 and 2021, dozens of us became “hands across two borders” – the Haiti and Mexico borders. We delivered over \$20,000 to each mission. Both Fr. Hugo, C.P. in Haiti and Passionist Sister Tere in Agua Prieta have expressed mountains of gratitude.

We just learned that Fr. Hugo is going on a sabbatical for a while, so when we hear more news about Haiti from him or others, look here in CrossRoads for an update.

Sister Tere and her crew continue to shelter middle school students from extreme dangers on the US-Mexican border. Opportunities are still here to deliver your own personal work of mercy to help her deal effectively with their unmerciful challenges. Roof construction continues and there is still a need to purchase over a dozen laptop computers. As we regroup about future plans, please consider donating to Sister Tere's Colegio Guadalupe Pasionista with a few clicks at GoFundMe at <https://gofund.me/62cb6154> THANK YOU.



Sister Tere.

Thinking about Updating Yourself on Our Website? Was your last biography updated 3 jobs and 4 grandchildren ago? If so, NOW could be the time to share more info. If you agree, email Bob Duffield at bdlinwood1@cox.net

Do you know you can still contribute to Steve George's decades-old *Moments in Time* Website?

On the Home Page of Moments in Time, Steve George invites us to send stories and other info. Says Steve, “If you wish to contribute your stories, please do. Your memories enrich all of us who lived this time of formation and growth. There are many ways to make your contribution. You will find them as you peruse these pages. Don't hesitate to add your Moments in Time.” Here's a link:

<http://cp.aznetwork.com/> Contact Steve at <http://cp.aznetwork.com/contact/index.html>.

Got News about Local and Class Get-Togethers? If you have breaking news from those gatherings in Louisville, St. Louis, Chicago, and elsewhere, consider sending updates to *CrossRoads* via Jack Dermody at Dermody@cox.net.

Where's Waldo? Got a photo of a seminary friend you have never found? If so, submit it to us for the next issue. Maybe somebody will remember him.

Got an Op-Ed Piece or Letter to the Editor? We welcome and will seriously consider publishing opinion pieces if you submit them.



Alumni Biographies on passionist.org



By: Bob Duffield

A bit of my own story. Pre-Vatican II, when did you become an altar boy? In 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade? In my day, once a year our grade school would thank the altar boys by providing them a meal, snacks and a movie. I can remember always wanting to be a priest after seeing the movie “The Devil at 4 o’clock” with Spencer Tracy. I was raised in the Jesuit parish of Gesu in Detroit. I knew of the Passionists because of my dad’s youngest brother, Owen Duffield, C.P. And I don’t think it was until I was in college that I learned even my dad had been in the Archdiocese of Detroit’s college seminary for several years. Did seminary training run in the family? Well, at least one of us was

ordained, Owen, though he left the Passionists several years after Mother of Good Counsel seminary closed. And I can remember Father Roger Mercurio, C.P., asking me when I entered the Associates-in-Residence program in Louisville in January 1975, if I thought Owen would be interested in returning to the community. My response was that it was a bit too late. He had gotten married.

Our member biographies. This is a reminder that we continue to collect Alumni biographies for our website. Our latest submittal was by Richard Ptak who attended MGC for two years and would have graduated in 1964. Rich provides interesting recollections of his time at MGC. Check it out at <https://passionist.org/alumni/memberbios/> Send me an email at bdlinwood1@cox.net if you don’t remember the password.

We have close to 200 online biographies – active and deceased members. Check them out and invite your classmates to consider penning their own biographies. Send new biographies to Bob Duffield at bdlinwood1@cox.net.

Priests and brothers, too. Remember those high school priests and brothers? Don’t forget to scroll up and down at “Members’ Biographies” to discover among both the living and deceased members that include many of our favorite teachers and brothers, including the likes of Fathers Xavier Albert, Peter Berendt, Morris (Jim) Cahill, Owen Duffield, Michael Hoolahan, Randal Joyce, David Kohne, Germain Legere, Kenneth O’Malley, Alfred Pooler, Albert Schwer, Gerard Steckel, Carl Tenhunfeld, Brother Kevin O’Malley and more.

Photos of the 2019 Reunion. As we prepare for the upcoming 2022 Alumni reunion in Louisville this coming September, check out the many pictures of the reunion held at the Detroit retreat center back in 2019. Here is the link: <https://passionist.org/2019-reunion/>.



SignPosts



In SignPosts we welcome our newest members, report the passing of all those who at some time participated in Passionist formation, and announce life changes of others. The title of this regular feature “SignPosts” is a nod to the original monthly feature “Sign Post” contained in Sign Magazine, the substantial Passionist Catholic magazine that many of us grew up with. It was published from 1921 to 1982. Check out a little history here: <https://passionistarchives.org/category/publications/sign-magazine/>

New Member Registrations

Fr. Joe Blasko—was in Passionist formation from fall of 1956 through December 1965 including Prep, Novitiate, Philosophy and a semester of Theology. He did a wide variety of things in the years after—from high school teaching and coaching, to working with a non-profit and with the Ohio Environmental Agency, to sales and bus driving, finally attending Hales Corners Seminary and was ordained for the Gaylord diocese in

Michigan and retired after twenty years. He is now back home where he helps out with Masses and confessions.

Richard Ptak (Warrenton Class of '64): Richard studied two years with us and credits his foundation in Warrenton for “quite a ride” eventually in an international career in engineering and business. That “foundation” included providing live specimens for biology lab and working the farm. He confessed to being tone deaf in choir, as well as fearful of a lifetime under a vow of obedience. Though he never experienced any crisis of faith, he did lose contact with the Passionists for many years and is grateful to find our alumni association and a chance to reconnect. You can read a more complete and fascinating biography at our website:

<https://passionist.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Ptak-Richard-1.pdf>

Where's Waldo (Lost and Found Members)

Whenever we find somebody, especially after several decades of time, the Parable of the Prodigal Son might race to our heads – not so much about merciful fathers but a ton more about the joy of reuniting with a genuine brother. Al Maryan tells of finding John McAleenan:

I just got off the phone with John McAleenan (Warrenton Class of 1967). He was retired in Kissimmee, Florida, with his wife Patti. After an adventuresome career with the U.S. Air Force, he's ultimately arrived in the sunshine state after years working for the City of Anchorage, Alaska. John can be contacted at 907-317-2192 or mcaleenanjohn@gmail.com

Those we mourn...

Chris Abeyta (See article in this issue)

Fr. Ronan Newbold, C.P. (Ordained 1969) See brief obit at this link: <https://therecordnewspaper.org/passionist-father-ronan-newbold-who-ministered-in-japan-and-the-u-s-dies/>

Alumni Council Update



Mike Owens

Easter Sunday has arrived! How did we get so far into 2022 so quickly?

The Alumni Council began the year by welcoming our three new members: **Jim Byrne**, **Bob Duffield** and **Bob Yeargin**. These alumni are the first new additions to the Council in 4+ years, and each of them is already making a very positive impact. Jim will be co-chairing the Family Events (aka Reunion) Committee with **Carl DeLage**. Bob Duffield has assumed responsibility for our Flocknote distribution of CrossRoads and other communications. Bob Yeargin will be co-chairing the Alumni Membership and Development Committee with **Don Noltemeyer**.

If you haven't yet read Jack Dermody's article "We Did Something Great" about the hugely

successful fund raiser for the Passionist Sisters' Colegio de Guadalupe in Agua Prieta, Mexico, [click here](#).

I add my personal thanks to all the alumni and friends who generously supported this fundraiser with their prayers and contributions. From reading Sr. Tere's messages and watching the students' video, your support is already making a difference in that special ministry. Here is a link to that video:

<https://gofund.me/62cb6154>

Fr. John Schork, CP, may have had a busier start to 2022 than any of us. During January he joined the Passionist Holy Name Community in Houston. Besides maintaining his long list of assignments in the province, the community chose him as their local superior! Fortunately for all alumni, Fr. John will continue serving as the province liaison for the Alumni Council. Thank you, Fr. John, for all your support of our Passionist Alumni!

Carl DeLage, Jim Byrne and their reunion planning team are making great progress on our September reunion. As the saying goes, "third time's the charm".... we will meet in person in 2022! Be sure to read the reunion article in this issue.

Contacting me. As always, if you have any questions, suggestions or comments, please email me at: mtowens2368@icloud.com.

Alumni Council Members

Ray Alonzo: *Chair, Spiritual Formation*

Jim Byrne: *Co-Chair, Family Events*

Carl DeLage: *Co-Chair, Family Events*

Jack Dermody: *Chair, Communications: Website and Newsletter*

Bob Duffield: *Chair, Website Biographies and Technology*

Phil Jackson: *Spiritual Formation*

Carl Middleton: *Chair, Lay Association*

Don Noltemeyer: *Co-Chair, Alumni Profile and Recruitment*

Mike Owens: *Coordinator*

Richard Padilla: *Chair, Administration/Province Liaison*

John Schork, CP: *Province Liaison*

Claire Smith: *Communications*

Bob Yeargin: *Co-Chair, Alumni Profile and Recruitment*

Moments in Time

Fifty-Three Years Ago...

The 1960s was to become a black hole in the Catholic Church. One victim was the Mother of Good Counsel Preparatory Seminary. The upheaval in all parts of society encompassed a picture bigger than the closing of a single school.

It was a decade that sociologists still research. Vietnam, race riots, voter suppression, the Cold War, Vatican II, drugs and dropping out, and many other categories—social and religious— created a critical mass that imploded and was manifest in the Catholic Church, not just by a loss of vocations to the priesthood, brotherhood, and sisterhood of religious orders, but also by the mass exodus of priests, brothers, and nuns of both the religious orders and the diocesan clergy. Fr. Conleth Overman cited an Associated Press article in a homily in 1973, “... in the last seven years there has been a shrinkage of 40,000 religious in the United States alone: 2,300 fewer religious priests; 2,800 fewer religious brothers and 34,500 fewer religious sisters.” (C. Overman. 1973. *The Passionist Orbit*. Chicago: The Passionists of Holy Cross Province. p. 12)

It was not all dark and bleak. It was a time that we were all beginning to be allowed to exercise the critical thinking skills that we had been taught at MGC, novitiate, Sacred Heart Retreat, and Bellarmine College. Honest introspection led many of us to question the road we were taking.

But that’s not what this article describes. The closing of MGC after just 13 years of operation was one of many signposts signaling more change to come. It gets very personal when about 90 students are told “The doors are closing. You’re on your own. The world has changed.”

Some of us grieved from afar as this announcement was made. I can only imagine the confusion, stress, and loss of purpose experienced by those 90 students. More than 50 years later some hearts may still be broken.

On a brighter note, 50 years later, that initial pain of loss may be what brings so many men back to those roots with reunion after reunion, story after story, and laughter upon laughter, to heal and share a truly unique Moment in Time.

Passionist Seminary Will Close in June

By a Special Correspondent
of the Post-Dispatch

WARRENTON, Mo. — The Passionist Preparatory Seminary here will be discontinued in June.

The Very Rev. Paul M. Boyle C.P., head of the Holy Cross Province in Chicago that operates the seminary, said that reasons for the closure are a decrease in vocations for youths of high school age, escalating costs and a shortage of teaching personnel.

The seminary, which was established shortly after the Holy Cross Province was founded in 1906, has a current enrollment of 125 of whom 32 are seniors.

The present student body and part of the teaching staff will enter a program of collaboration with St. Henry's Seminary operated by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Belleville, Ill.

The Passionist Preparatory Seminary was started at St. Jerome's Monastery in St. Paul, Kan. It was moved briefly to Immaculate Conception Monastery, Chicago, and transferred in 1912 to Holy Cross Monastery, Cincinnati, O. In 1920 the seminary was moved to Normandy, Mo., and a new wing was added to the monastery structure in 1922.

In 1956, to accommodate increased enrollment, the Passionist Fathers sold the Normandy facility and moved the seminary to Warrenton.

Another factor in the decision to close the seminary, said Father Boyle, is the current re-organization of the recruitment program.

A strong effort will be made to encourage young men of college age to consider entering the Passionist community. Today less than 8 per cent of those entering the freshman class of the preparatory seminary continue on to the priesthood.

Currently the Very Rev. Owen Duffield C.P., is rector of the seminary. The Rev. Alfred Pooler C.P., is principal.

Father Boyle pointed out that the close of the seminary will not affect the continuation of retreats at Our Lady's Retreat House on the seminary grounds.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (St. Louis, Missouri) 12 Mar 1969, Wed Page 100
(Article re-arranged for readability. SAG)

Memories of Chris Abeyta - MGC Class of '68



From the Editor: *It is a treat when a lost alumnus sparks bountiful messages of memories and feelings. Chris Abeyta's classmates delivered the thoughts below only days after he left us on Tuesday, March 8, 2022.*

Web Links

To start, these web links are bound to bring you joy:

- **[Chris' own website](#)**. Enjoy photos and music tracks from his albums.
- Journalist Alex de Vore's tribute in the **[Santa Fe Reporter](#)**.
- Journalist Scott Wyland's remembrance in the **[Santa Fe New Mexican](#)**.
- A feature video from radio station **[KSWV](#)**. Chris performs front and center with some of his many grandchildren.
- "On the Road with Chris Abeyta" in October 2022 issue of **[CrossRoads](#)**.

Messages from Chris's classmates

Last I saw Chris was at the 2014 Reunion in Louisville. We briefly spent time catching up and commiserating over our stints in military service during the 60's & 70's. He shared that Vietnam left some tough scars on him, but it was hard for me to imagine that, based on the typical smile he sported so naturally. I was always envious of his musical abilities, especially the guitar playing. I enjoyed singing with him "way back when" @ MGC. Once we were late and scurried to Fr. Morris' choir practice and barely arrived on time. I noticed he seemed to move easier as we hurried along in our cassocks. I asked why that was. In typical Abeyta fashion he replied, "You have to slide your feet just right, man."

About one year ago we spoke on the phone to confirm his mailing address. It was only then I learned his given name was 'John' Abeyta, which he preferred be used when corresponding. It is an honor to have been a classmate to one who set the standard for giving of self and touching so many lives. I'll surely miss him. A line from an article posted in the Santa Fe New Mexican publication so accurately depicts him as I will always remember him: *The Man with the thin veiled grin and relaxed gaze.*

-Al Maryan

Chris Abeyta, *cont'd.*

Some years ago – maybe 20 or so – Deb and I took a vacation in Santa Fe and went out to dinner with Chris. He gave me one of his CD's, called 'Original Songs with Lumbre Del Sol.' (Some of these songs can be heard at <https://chrisabeyta.com/>)

-Mike Kruger

My wife, Carol, and I took a trip out west (from Florida) to visit my brother in Phoenix and some friends in Colorado. Returning thru New Mexico, we spent 2-3 days in Santa Fe visiting with Chris. In every restaurant we entered, you would think the Governor had walked in. Everyone recognized him and, based on the article in the Santa Fe paper, they may dedicate a fitting memorial to him. I tried to call him on March 3, but couldn't because his voicemail was full. I'm like Dave Arunski (next comment) in that we are trying to process this loss which happened too quickly. Let's keep him and his family in our prayers these days, as well as our MGC family as we all get older. Love to all.

-Rick Womack

I am listening as I write to Chris's "Canta Chris Abeyta" CD, which he gave me at a reunion with the note on it, "This is my spirit. -Real love, Chris." It is wonderful. That is Chris, lots of spirit and love. I so miss my friend who, conspiring with Jim Johnson, gave me a hard time mercilessly when we were freshmen at MGC. He was my main competitor on the checkerboard and became a close friend. He was an amazing competitor. He taught me basketball moves and welcomed my 'Hulk' to his 'Spider Man' on our senior year varsity team. Rest in Glory, Chris.

-Dave Arunski

I remember Chris was a kind-hearted human being who always seemed to have a slight smile on his face and spoke softly. I remember playing basketball with him. The one thing that I will always remember is that the only time I cantored in the harmony choir at mass was when Fr. Morris paired me up with Chris. I was a baritone and he was a second tenor. We blended well together. "Don't make fun of this guy for I never wanted to sing alone." I think it goes back to a childhood thing for me.

-Bill Rybak

At the Warrenton reunion Chris and I were off in a quiet spot and we talked for an hour or so. Chris was a bit of a hypochondriac and he confided in me that he was presently dying. Death was pretty imminent. As this was 17 years ago, I was heartened that my prayers for his survival were answered. Eventually, he brought out his guitar and we started a little sing-a-long. Some of the wives present joined us as did Fr. Peter who pulled out his harmonica. Chris gifted me with a CD, too.

What a voice! What a talent!

Dave Arunski's comment (above) about learning basketball moves from Chris, reminded me what a sly player he was. As the student JV coach, I watched Chris lull an opponent into relaxing with his seemingly unpretentious play before he'd take a step back and put up a 20-footer. More often than not -- swish.

Nice to know how revered, respected and appreciated he was back in Santa Fe.
God speed, Chris.

-Gene O'Neill

Chris Abeyta, *cont'd.*

Chris could always brighten my day. His friendliness, teasing/joking could keep you in stitches. I loved watching him play basketball. He was so talented and entertaining. He was a stand-up guy! I was happy to call him a friend.

-Tom McGee

At our 2014 reunion in Louisville, Chris and I did a bit of catching up and then as we parted he gave me a CD of his band's songs. I listened to the CD at home and I thought, wow, this is really good! So I emailed Chris and said that I was quite impressed and that he and his band could've been professionals. Chris didn't reply to my message and I hope it was because he didn't see it. Imagine my embarrassment when I discovered that he was a professional musician.

Please consider this my amends, Chris.

-Mike Mahoney

Chris was in our freshmen class, he was not in our sophomore class, but came back for our junior year. We used to say when one decided to leave the prep he "went to the infirmary". Chris was the only guy who went to the infirmary and "returned."

-Dan Stehly



(l-r): Jim Clark, Bill Rybak, Gene O'Neill, Tim Reece,
Fr. Raphael Grashoff, CP, Chris Abeyta and Jim Haas.

Your Privacy

Confidentiality and Privacy—We, the Passionist Alumni Council, value the privacy and confidentiality of all Alumni personal contact information provided to the Passionist Alumni Association.

Your personal contact information will not be shared with any third parties outside of the Passionist Alumni Association. For the purposes of communicating with each Alumni member, the Passionist Alumni Council is utilizing a web-based communications platform called “Flocknote.” All Passionist Alumni personal contact information utilized by Flocknote to communicate with you is safeguarded using secure data practices and policies.

See <https://flocknote.com/privacy> for further information.