

13/2016

In memoriam

Xaverian biographical profiles



Fr. Lorenzo Crosara

31 May 1933 ~ 12 December 2016

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Priabona di Monte di Malo (VI – ITA)
31 May 1933

Franklin (USA)
12 December 2016

Fr. Lorenzo Crosara was born in Priabona di Monte di Malo, Vicenza, Italy, on 31 May 1933. He was raised with love by his parents, who taught him from an early age “to acquire a sense of God and to venerate Him and to love his neighbor according to the faith he received at baptism”.

After finishing elementary school and the first two years of high school at the parish school of Priabona, the twelve-year old Lorenzo began to think about what he would do with his life. In connection with this, in response to the first question of the questionnaire *Esame della vocazione*, he wrote:

During the first year of high school, the geography teacher spoke to us about Africa and its peoples, telling us also about the missionaries, their life, sacrifices and adventures. All the pupils were then asked to subscribe to a missionary magazine.

I subscribed to the monthly magazine *Il piccolo missionario*, which was published by the Comboni Missionaries. I always read it from the first word to the last. I was struck most of all by the missionaries’ adventures and I began to daydream about becoming a missionary, but it seemed to

me something that was beyond my reach because, among other things, I would have to leave my mother.

During the summer vacations, albeit with many doubts, I decided on my own that I would become a missionary. However, I did not know how to tell my parents about my decision. In the meantime, a Xaverian Father had come to my village to do missionary animation. I told him about my decision and, one week later, I received his letter of acceptance.

Divine Providence made me forget this letter of acceptance on my study desk, where it was found by my mother, who read it and, as she told me later, cried for joy. And all the time I thought she would reject my decision. She immediately began to prepare everything I would need. On 13 September 1946, accompanied by my father, I travelled to the minor seminary of Vicenza and joined the community there.

Lorenzo attended the third year of high school in Vicenza, the fourth year in Grumone and the fifth year in Zelarino. He was then ready to join the novitiate of the Xaverian Region of Italy. In connection with this, Fr. Eugenio Morazzoni, the rector of the Zelarino community, wrote in September 1950:

Lorenzo Crosara is a serious and reflective young man. On some occasions he criticized orders given by the prefects and the superiors, but when he was reprimanded for this he acknowledged his error and did his best to make amends. The parish priest told me that he looks upon Lorenzo as one of his best formed seminarians.

He has a good life of piety and took special care of his spiritual life during this year. He is fairly intelligent. He is suitable for admission to the novitiate and I think he will be successful in his vocation.

On 1 August 1950, Fr. Alessandro Baccega, the parish priest of Priabona, wrote:

The one-month period of vacations of the junior seminarian Lorenzo Crosara has come to an end. To tell the truth, it has ended too soon. I would have liked to keep him with me in the parish because he has done well and he has helped me to help many people.

Rarely do we parish priests have the good fortune to have young men who are so convinced of their vocation and dedicated to their duties. Lorenzo has behaved in a very exemplary manner.

His constant joviality has shown me and convinced me that he is ready to consecrate himself to God.

He is irreproachable in performing his daily and weekly duties; he is always obedient to his parish priest, and all this proves that he has taken to heart the formation given to him by his Superiors.

I had looked after Lorenzo since he was a young boy and I wanted to see him join the seminary. It was a bolt from the blue for me and for his parents when we heard about his desire to become a missionary. We tried several times to get him to desist, but to no avail.



On 11 October 1950, aged 17, Lorenzo joined the Novitiate of the Xaverian Region of Italy. He made his First Profession on 12 October 1951 and continued with the usual course of literary, philosophy and theology studies: the first year of Lyceum in Desio (1951–52); two years of philosophy in Holliston, MA (1952–54.¹); three years of theology at the Marist College in Framingham, MA (1954–57), where he earned the Baccalaureate; the fourth year of theology at the Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI (1957–58)². He made his Final Profession on 5 November 1955 and was ordained priest on 22 March 1958 in Franklin, WI.

In his application for admission to the priesthood, he wrote to the Superior General, Fr. Giovanni Castelli, on 18 January 1958:

For a long time now I have felt in me a strong desire to be a priest. Motivated by a great love for God and for souls, and convinced at the same time that I have the minimum of virtue required by the Church, I ask you to admit me to ordination.

I am aware that I am asking to embrace a state of life that entails solemn and demanding duties, and noble and sublime tasks, but I trust in God's help and abandon myself to His kindness and mercy because nothing else inspires me to make this this application but the glory of God and the salvation of souls, especially those entrusted to the care of our Holy Society.

I also believe I must strive for my salvation with the means made available by our Congregation, to which I once again promise total adhesion and obedience.

In the certainty that you will grant my request, I thank you and ask you to bless me.

In a period of six years (1960–66), Fr. Lorenzo competently carried out a two-fold task in Holliston, USA: he taught in the Xaverian seminary and served as editor of the *Xaverian Missionaries Newsletter*.

¹ Lorenzo Crosara was assigned to the USA in 1952.

² He obtained the Masters in theology there in June 1960.



In the meantime, there was an urgent need for new Xaverians in the mission of Sierra Leone and Fr. Crosara was sent there in August 1966. He worked as assistant priest (1966–68) and then director of the secondary school (1968–73) in Kabala³.

On 29 March 1973, Fr. Crosara wrote to the General Councilor, Fr. Augusto Luca: «The secondary school of Kabala has 410 pupils and I am in charge of its administration. The students are happy with my work and I am respected by the community of Kabala. I spend endless hours from six in the morning until late evening in the school and at my desk».

In June 1973 he returned to Italy for medical tests. In connection with this, he wrote to Fr. Luca: «I was feeling very tired, I couldn't sleep at night, and had to resort to sleeping pills and tranquilizers with little benefit. I had two episodes of abdominal cramps in one month. The doctor did not know what was causing them and advised me to have an X-ray, which revealed the presence of a very large number of stones in my liver».

He did not return to Sierra Leone because he was assigned once again to the USA in December 1973, where he carried out various tasks as editor of the *Xaverian Missionaries Newsletter* (1975–82), director of the *Shrine* in Holliston (1984–86), as a missionary animator (1986–93) and rector of the Holliston community (1993–96).

From 1996 until 2016 he resided in Franklin, WI, where he worked in the pastoral ministry.

After a visit to the Xaverian USA Region, the General Councilor, Fr. Emilio Iurman, wrote to him on 31 October 1998:

I must say that you are a very pleasant person. You will recall that I told you in Franklin that I admire the energy with which you express your ideas. Long live old age if it is accompanied by such a positive outlook.

You also tell me you have been criticized for your way of doing some things. Perhaps not everything is beyond criticism, but I must say that there was great lucidity and also some... suffering in what you were saying and, therefore, we must respect and rejoice at the fact that one has still the desire to pursue his dreams. Bravo!

³ Kabala is a residential area in the northern province of Sierra Leone and is the administrative center of the district of Koinadugu. Fr. Serafino Calza was the first Xaverian to settle in Kabala and from there he visited Kondembaya, Mongobendugo and other centers of the tribes that had welcomed the presence of the Catholic school.



The season is winter, as you see, the trees now stand as if they were dead: for where are the leaves of the fig-tree? Where are the clusters of the vine? These in winter time are dead, but green in spring.

For God works a resurrection year by year in these visible things; that, beholding what happens to things inanimate, you may believe concerning things animate and rational. (St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lecture 18*)

On 12 December 2016, the Lord called Fr. Lorenzo Crosara to share in His eternal glory, that he might praise Him forever in the festive assembly of His saints.

Fr. Domenico Calarco S.X.

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