

**HOLY CROSS RETREAT CENTER
STRATEGIC PLAN**

Initially approved by the team July 2011, reviewed in fall each year with the Definitory

Updated March 21, 2024

(Yellow highlights are recent changes)

Mission Statement:

Holy Cross Retreat Center is an oasis of prayer and personal growth where people encounter Christ through Franciscan spirituality and hospitality.

Vision Statement:

The Gospel and the Spirit of St. Francis of Assisi call us to welcome all in spiritual or physical need. In that spirit, Holy Cross Retreat Center focuses on Franciscan Hospitality and Service. We see Christ in those who come for spiritual enrichment, whether within the Catholic, Christian or other religious traditions. Those coming for planning find a place of peace and comfort. As we are able, we provide facilities that permit a safe, caring space for those seeking personal or physical renewal, and hope for those who are in need. As St. Francis was called by Jesus to “rebuild my Church”, we through the Holy Spirit will support discernment and strive to expand our outreach to the poor and our capacity for midweek and nonprofit groups. “If you need and want to come to me for the sake of your soul or for some consolation, come.” (from letter of St. Francis to Brother Leo.) “May we be able to follow in the footprints of your beloved Son Jesus Christ.” (from the Letter to the Entire Order.)

I GOAL: We will enhance the relationship with those who come to the Retreat Center and expand our outreach efforts

Strategy 1. Staff is to be attentive to the needs and concerns of groups and individual retreatants.

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Interact with each group throughout their stay, have a staff member present each day whenever possible.
- Respond to requests when a group is on site in a timely manner.
- Incorporate suggestions from evaluations, respond to physical plant needs, seek input from groups for future plans.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Hold regular training for staff and develop handbook	Business Mgr & Director	Each year	Staff has a common vision	Retreatants are made to feel welcome and staff is responsive to needs	Cooks received training
Diversify the menu based on type of group and length of stay	Business Mgr and Head Cook	Ongoing	Wider variety of foods,	Standard menus for various needs and type of group	The cooking staff is expanding the menu and listening to comments.

Strategy 2. To expand and improve communication with groups and individual retreatants

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Continue bimonthly e-newsletter, annual report in early December with appeal, June newsletter mailed to those without email with retreat schedule.
- Prepare and distribute an annual report with progress on projects and other aspects, including finances.
- Distribute evaluations to each group; read and incorporate suggestions where feasible.
- Send out contracts and information at least 6 months ahead of time. Verify that contracts are signed and returned within a month or so.
- Respond with interest to inquiries and initiate contact if needed.
- Use TV, newspapers, social media, web site to promote retreats and events
- Web redesigned by Province person and now can register and pay online, and pages expanded.

Strategy 3. To host public events that will welcome a variety of people to Holy Cross

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Host Transitus each year (a ceremony recalling the death of St. Francis of Assisi) with OSF leaders.
- Blessing of the animals on Feast of St. Francis
- Work on expanding and improving the Franciscan Festival of Fine Arts each Labor Day weekend.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Day programs and more outreach for	Bob	Spring	Series developed to engage	Contact with retirees	Christian Unity

Senior Citizens. Consider Days of Recollection during some seasons.	Anglich	2022	senior citizens, by contacting health & community groups.	who live in the area	service, Receiving relics, Earth Day
Consider Taize events open to the public	Director	2023			

Past Accomplishments:

- Dedication of new Chapel February 22, 2015
- Installation of stained glass and celebration of artwork for new chapel March 12, 2017
- 60th Anniversary open house June 18, 2017
- Promote all vocations during 40th anniversary celebration of Tom’s ordination July 2019, raised \$9,000, 3 videos of vocations

Strategy 4. To expand outreach into the local dioceses and beyond

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Assist in local parishes, on diocesan commissions, and offer Parish Missions, retreats, and weekend calls on site.
- Increase contacts with NMSU and other non-profits to better use facilities midweek.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Organize formation and education for the local area	Retreat dir.		Develop Catholic lay formation opportunities, more religious groups	HCR as locus for LC lay formation and ministry	Joint Confirmation retreat, at a discount. Tom led Eucharistic Min training in Carlsbad Oct. 2022. Grant helps with costs.
Consider event/workshops/retreats to promote the Eucharist	Director	2023	Good attendance and feedback	Religious Ed teachers, priests and other parish leaders	

Strategy 5. To maintain a strong volunteer program that addresses a variety of needs.

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Host volunteer groups of students from Las Cruces Catholic Schools to do yardwork.
- Hold regular appreciation dinners or picnics for active volunteers.

What will be done	Who	By	Measure	Target	Result
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		When			
Develop volunteer training and coordination, background checks, and books and resources for children as of part the asylum seekers hospitality	Staff plus volunteers	2023	Better accountability and service to the immigrants.	Immigrants who are appreciated and refreshed, and volunteers who are more prepared.	Continue to welcome refugees through referrals and Annunciation House
Meet regularly with Good Works and other volunteer groups to develop priorities and provide support.	Retreat Director, Business Manager	Ongoing	Orientation Regular Meetings Appreciation	Volunteers who have a sense of the mission and who feel useful, supported and appreciated.	Tom or PD meets with them, and Tom prioritizes & approves projects
Seek out master gardeners and people to assist with caring for landscaping	Staff	ongoing	Organized consistent volunteers, NMSU, or Elizabeth Grinell	Landscaping more carefully cared for and beautifully	Luis Rubio began caring for roses Oct. 2023
Serra Club helps with Art Festival and other events on occasion	Tom	Ongoing	We have volunteers for dining room & beer garden	Trained and pleasant people to greet visitors.	They continue to do so.

II GOAL: We will expand the range of Franciscan sponsored activities both on campus and in the area

Strategy 1. To plan more Franciscan sponsored retreats, events, and interaction with OFS

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Listen to what people are requesting, consult, and organize spiritual renewal experiences.
- Host Franciscan themed Retreats and Days of Reflection on a regular basis.
- Reach out to Secular Franciscan groups in the region to invite them here regularly
- Place Franciscan materials in the rooms and on the outdoor bulletin board to be more visible to guests.
- Plan and lead pilgrimage to early Franciscan missions in New Mexico each year.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Include promotion for Secular Franciscans on the web site and in newsletters.	Director	Ongoing	Web link and OFS info in newsletter	Lay Franciscan involvement more obvious	Now included on the new web design
Develop new Franciscan themed retreats and	Director	ongoing	New retreats	To have a wider	Laudato Si! and

invite other Friars to lead them. Contact OLG Province.			developed for 2023	representation of Franciscan Spirituality for retreatants to benefit from	retreats for Secular Franciscans
Consider hosting and promoting a Province pilgrimage to Assisi	Director/David Rall	2023-24	2025		
Co-sponsor Economic Justice Retreat for Young Adults	Sr. Joan	2024			Scheduled but not enough participants

PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Pilgrimage to Assisi and Rome for HCRC benefactors Sept 27-Oct 7, 2018 led by Fr. Tom with a group of 20 or so.
- Early Franciscan Missions in New Mexico pilgrimage each year since 2011.

Strategy 2. To increase a sense of service to those in need in light of our Franciscan charism.

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Provide free room and board for medical patients, asylum seekers and immigrants fearing deportation.
- Host 2 Recovering Alcoholic Retreats annually and ongoing AA meetings.
- Provide discounts for those who want to use HCRC and have limited finances.
- Support CAFé community organizing to respond to local justice issues.
- Offer monthly confessions and mass and occasional retreats at two local prisons, coordinate with Kairos.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Continue to provide discounts to groups and individuals as needed	Staff	2022	Discounts are given to those groups and individuals who need them and are reviewed annually	Ministry to those who can't otherwise be served	About \$13,000 per fiscal year
Develop outreach to the homeless through NM Family Services to provide temporary shelter for those who have been vetted	Director	2020	People in need will be stabilized and in their own low income housing after their stay	10-15 per year	Several come each year
Tithe 10% of our income for discounts, donations, and value of free hospitality.	Director	ongoing	About \$70,000.00 worth of contributions	Share what we have with those who are in	Average \$73,000+

				need, in Franciscan spirit	fiscal year.
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Past Accomplishments:

- Hosted over 1,775 refugees from 2016-2022
- Hosted 42 medical patients 1117 days from 2016-2022
- Hosted 2 Recovering Alcoholics retreats annually since early years of the retreat ministry
- Have provided \$123,361 in discounts from 2016-2022

III GOAL: We will establish a sound financial base and will continue to upgrade the buildings and grounds

Strategy 1. To maintain the buildings and property and make improvements

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Make repairs and additions to facilities by Good Works and other volunteers when possible.
- Use evaluations to pinpoint areas of concern and have maintenance address those concerns.
- Work with HCRC Foundation to identify projects which can be funded.
- Assess, utilize and adapt current spaces to our changing needs.
- On a regular basis inspect rooms, flip mattresses and note any repairs needed.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Add solar panels for the retreat center	Staff	Summer 2020	Check options with the Province or on our own	Using more sustainable energy	180 panels installed and operational
Build a second hermitage	Director, Business Mgr. and Good Works	Spring 2023	Those who seek solitude will have adequate space	Provide for present and future needs of retreatants	Finished and blessed June 2023
Replace windows in retreat rooms, large conference room, offices, and kitchen to improve efficiency. Casita and living rooms to be replaced Dec. 2023	Staff	2022	Better insulation and protection from sun	60+ windows replaced in 4 buildings	Retreat rooms and conference room Completed May 2022. Casita windows replaced 2023
Overhaul computer network	David Rall	2023		Better and faster	Purchased two new

				network	computers and strengthened network
Consider replacing sliding door in Serra Hall with door and window. Add window on south wall	Good Works	2023		Improve energy efficiency and prevent as much floor buckling	Possible with other renovations.
Consider replacing carpeting in Casita rooms with tile	Director and Business Mgr	2023		Better wearing flooring	subfloor and flooring repaired, new carpet in Aug 2023
Consider replacing carpeting in meeting rooms	Director and Business Mgr	2025			Serra Hall carpet replaced 2023
Consider an outdoor firepit/place area behind the large conference room	Director, business mgr and Good Works	2023-24			Movable fireplace b/n dining room and large conference room

Past Accomplishments:

Strategy 2. To accent the beauty and sense of hospitality and peace of the property

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Plant new flowers annually in flower beds, paint as needed, keep sidewalks and outdoor areas clean and presentable.
- Decorate Hacienda during fall and Advent
- Railings and posts for retreat room walkways repainted 8/2020.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Find a permanent home (pergola) for the gongs currently on the gazebo	Good Works	2023	Anticipate use and place appropriately	2024	Pergola built by labyrinth early 2024
Investigate landscaping middle of parking lot across from Chapel	Business Mgr, Director, Frank Chavez	Spring 2023	Look at different options and attach costs	Make a decision by 2023	Would need water, maybe not worth it.
Upgrade irrigation zones in courtyard in between the retreat rooms	Good Works, Director	2024	Design zones, trench, lay pipe, test system	Grass is watered regularly and stays green	On list for Good Works volunteers

Past Accomplishments:

- New signs installed to guide people to the property and various areas were placed in Fall of 2017

- New bulletin board was constructed by Good Works volunteers in 2017.
- St. Francis statue repainted and relocated to gazebo in 2020
- Mary, Undoer of Knots grotto in place 2019
- Prayer Walk brochure created 2020
- Two new outdoor statues received from Baca Funeral Home, and pavers reset on east of hacienda.

Strategy 3. To have diversified sources of income to augment the income of the retreat operations

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Sustain good relations with the Holy Cross Retreat Foundation with solid proposals, good communication and reporting.
- Sustain Franciscan Festival of Fine Arts as a means of income and good promotion.
- Have an annual appeal in December and Raffle ticket sales during Franciscan Festival.
- Expand and maintain gift shop.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Submit grant requests to other sources	Business Manager and director	Each year	As needed	More new income	Tax retention credit accepted and coming
Long term stay for Steven Taborda during college and Tina Stanley for 5 months for writing sabbatical	Director				Income as of 8/20 is \$4,200. Going forward \$350 per month
Develop agreement with Catholic Charities to rent two rooms in Casita for counseling	Debbie and Director	Nov. 2023	Room is being refurbished	Pleasant space	Agreement developed, rooms in process of remodeling.

- Holy Cross Foundation has provided grants to improve infrastructure, remodel retreat rooms and other buildings, purchase new equipment and pave the road among many other projects.

Strategy 4. To prepare for the stable operation of HCRC in the years to come.

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Update operational manuals and job	Business	Summer	Manuals created or	Good records for	Many done but still need

descriptions	Mgr and each area	2023	revised	upcoming years	some
Develop a succession plan to be sent to the Province to assist in choosing Director. Develop succession plan for Margaret and Debbie	Staff and advisors	Feb.2022 Summer 2023	Description of the vision and goals here and needs for a Director	A director, perhaps a lay person, who can sustain the vital ministry for years to come.	Tom reassigned. Henry Beck OFM arrives Aug 2023 to be full time associate
Contribute surplus funds to the Province each year	Staff and volunteers	August each year	\$75,000.00 per year	Financial assistance for province needs	Sent \$70,000 in fiscal year 2019-2020, \$50,000 in 2021-2022
Meet as with advisors to consider five year plan for HCR Foundation grants to upgrade and expand as warranted.	Staff and advisors	Fall 2022	Plan will foresee needs and be ready	Building and operations well funded.	Advisory committee has been formed and meeting as of 2020
Project trends in hosted and sponsored retreats to better prepare for future needs	Director and Business Manager	Fall 2022	Have a plan in place for decline or increase in certain types of retreats	Seamless transition to more or less income from different types of retreats	Some ACTS groups have not continued, other new ones joined. Neo Catechumenate groups are coming
Seek out other leaders who can assist in retreat ministry	Director	2023	Help with planning and retreats	Two or three others engaged	Greg Friedman, and Henry Beck
Place money in savings and investments equal to six months operations	Business Manager	ongoing		Excess in checking account invested as of early 2024	Now over \$400,000.00 and was available tho not needed during the pandemic

PLEASE CONTINUE TO GOAL IV

IV GOAL: We will promote Justice, Peace, and Care of Creation

Strategy 1. To implement *Laudato, Si!* goals and actions

Currently and on an ongoing basis we:

- Have a booth at the annual Franciscan Festival of Fine Arts
- Host an annual event for Earth Day

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Establish a plan and leadership	Staff	Nov. 2021	Specifics for HCRC and cooperation with others	Public action local and beyond	Henry A has returned to TX for health reasons. Henry B is interested.
Adopting renewable energy			Develop a way to use grey water or to capture water from runoff		Installed and operational
Achieving carbon neutrality					
Defending all life			Developing Earth Day events to promote care for the earth		Good day in 2022 and planning for 2023
Solidarity with indigenous peoples and vulnerable groups	Staff		Welcoming immigrants and the homeless		HCRC hosts unprocessed immigrants as well as others.
Adopting simpler lifestyles			Create compost system that will utilize green waste		Meetings done on zoom when possible to reduce travel.
Fostering ecological and justice education and spirituality			Retreat on Laudato Si May 20, 2022 Host Climate Justice Retreat for Young Adults in 2023 Work on achieving Living Wage for employees	Working with local groups	Two staff members on the Board of café community organizing Wellness benefit increased for employees
Advocating for sustainable developments					Chose more efficient AC/heat units to replace old ones
Following ethical investment guidelines, including divestment from fossil fuels and other industries that harm the planet.			Investments are conscious of social issues	Mission Endowment and Christian Bros.	
Plan an annual Earth Day event to promote Laudato Si!	Staff and volunteers	Started spring 2022	Laudato planning committee still active		Event in 2023, cooperate with Nature museum 2024

