

**HOLY CROSS RETREAT CENTER
STRATEGIC PLAN
Initially approved by the team July 2011**

Updated March 3, 2025

Mission Statement:

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

Vision Statement:

The Gospel and St. Francis of Assisi call us to welcome those in spiritual or physical need. In that spirit, Holy Cross is a Catholic Retreat Center that focuses on Franciscan Hospitality and Service. We see Christ in all of creation, and particularly in those who come for spiritual enrichment, regardless of faith tradition. Those coming for planning find a place of peace and comfort. We provide a safe, caring space and hope for those who are in need. We strive to improve our service, increase our capacity and remain open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit for our future direction.

Core Values:

Prayer: As a Franciscan oasis of spirituality and hospitality, we invite others to encounter Christ through personal and communal prayer by encouraging personal growth on their journey of faith.

“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.)

Community: As Conventual Franciscan Friars and Retreat Center staff we strive to respond compassionately to the needs of those who come to us by providing hospitality in a community of hope where all are embraced.

“When they go about through the world, they are not to quarrel nor contend in words (cf. 2 Tim 2:14), nor are they to judge others, but they are to be meek, peaceable and modest, meek and humble, speaking uprightly to all, as is fitting.” (Rule of the Order of Friars Minor, Chapter III)

Care for Creation: As we strive to build a community of prayer by embracing all as our brothers and sisters, we also embrace all of nature as part of God’s family. We strive to protect and respect the environment, following the example of St. Francis who considered all creatures as brothers and sisters while promoting sustainability and responsible stewardship.

“Praise be you my Lord, with all your creatures.” (from Canticle of the Creatures by St. Francis)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I GOAL: We will enhance the relationship with those who come to the Retreat Center and expand our outreach efforts (pages 3-5)

- Strategy 1. Staff is to be attentive to the needs and concerns of groups and individual retreatants. p3
- Strategy 2. To expand and improve communication with groups and individual retreatants. p3
- Strategy 3. To host public events that will welcome a variety of people to Holy Cross. p4
- Strategy 4. To expand outreach into the local dioceses and beyond. p4-5
- Strategy 5. To maintain a strong volunteer program that addresses a variety of needs. p5

II GOAL: We will expand the range of Franciscan sponsored activities both on campus and in the area (pages 5-6)

- Strategy 1. To plan more Franciscan sponsored retreats, events, and interaction with OFS. p5-6
- Strategy 2. To increase a sense of service to those in need in light of our Franciscan charism. p6

III GOAL: We will establish a sound financial base and will continue to upgrade the buildings and grounds (pages 7-10)

- Strategy 1. To maintain the buildings and property and make improvements. p7
- Strategy 2. To accent the beauty and sense of hospitality and peace of the property. p8
- Strategy 3. To have diversified sources of income to augment the income of the retreat operations. p8-9
- Strategy 4. To prepare for the stable operation of HCRC in the years to come. p9-10

IV GOAL: We will promote Justice, Peace, and Care of Creation (page 10-11)

- Strategy 1. To implement *Laudato, Si!* goals and actions. p10-11
- Strategy 2. To promote Justice and Peace issues p11

Please note that current and ongoing practices, as well as past accomplishments, are listed at the end of the document.

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.

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 Plan another training for Francis and immigration	Employees received training
Diversify the menu based on type of group and length of stay	Program Coordinator 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

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Assist support groups to expand their base	Bro. Joe, Fr. Tom	Ongoing	Support groups expand	Advertise suicide support, AA group and counseling	
Improve communication methods using refined brochures and social media	Bro. Joe	Ongoing	Professional look and consistent posting	Current and potential retreatants, public	More engagement

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

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Day programs and more outreach for Senior Citizens. Consider Days of Recollection during some seasons.			Series developed to engage senior citizens, by contacting health & community groups.	Contact with retirees who live in the area	Christian Unity service, Receiving relics, Earth Day Other day programs
Consider Taize events open to the public	Director	2026	An evening or more with Taize music	Spiritual enrichment	
Consider having a prayer service to support people in the area, especially immigrants	Director, Program Coord	Fall 2025	Provide encouragement and prayerful support	Lessening fear and isolation	

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

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Organize formation and education for the local area	Director		Develop Catholic lay formation opportunities, more religious groups	HCR as locus for LC lay formation and ministry	Joint Confirmation retreat, at a discount. Grant helps with costs.
Actively seek groups of Neo catechumentate	Director	End 2025	Ongoing events	Two scheduled before 2026 Large group	
Develop directed retreats for religious priests, brothers and sisters	Bro. Joe	End 2025	Ongoing events Two scheduled before 2026	Have an ongoing set of in-week retreats scheduled each year.	
We will strive to be a safe space for disenfranchised groups	All staff	Ongoing	People feel welcome		

We will increase our outreach to young adult groups	Bro. Joe	End 2025	Ongoing events	One scheduled by end of 2025	
We will offer a program for Youth Ministers	Bro. Joe	End of 2025	Good attendance	Training and support	

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

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Develop volunteer training and coordination, background checks, and books and resources for children as part of the asylum seekers hospitality	Staff plus volunteers	ongoing	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.	Director, Jerry Davis	Ongoing	Orientation Regular Meetings Appreciation	Volunteers who have a sense of the mission and who feel useful, supported and appreciated.	Jerry 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	Landscaping more carefully cared for and beautifully	LC Leadership group coming spring 2025
Serra Club helps with Art Festival and other events on occasion	Director	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

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Include promotion for Secular Franciscans	Director	Ongoing	Web link and OFS info in	Lay Franciscan	Now included

on the web site and in newsletters.			newsletter	involvement more obvious. Spanish group engaged	on the new web design
Develop new Franciscan themed retreats and invite other Friars to lead them. Contact OLG Province.	Director	ongoing	New retreats developed for 2025	To have a wider representation of Franciscan Spirituality for retreatants to benefit from	Laudato Si! and retreats for Secular Franciscans
Consider hosting and promoting a pilgrimage to Assisi	Director	2025	People enriched during Jubilee Year	Tom is chaplain for Nov. 3-13 to Italy	
Co-sponsor Economic Justice Retreat for Young Adults	Sr. Joan	2025			Scheduled but not enough participants
Find a way to make the library catalog searchable without users being able to change it	Bro. Joe	2025	We are one of only two libraries that have these books. Others may want to read or study from them	Franciscan scholars and others have access	

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

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Continue to provide discounts to groups and individuals as needed	Staff	ongoing	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 Community of Hope to provide temporary shelter for those who have been vetted	Director	ongoing	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 need, in Franciscan spirit	Average \$73,000+ fiscal year.

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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

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Consider a third hermitage	Director, Business Mgr. and Good Works	Fall 2025	Those who seek solitude will have adequate space	Provide for present and future needs of retreatants	
Consider replacing carpeting in small conference room, library, living room. Tiling remaining Casita rooms	Director and Business Mgr	2025	Evaluate each area to consider options	Better looking spaces for the future	
Replace Heat/AC units in the retreat rooms with more efficient models with thermostats	Business manager	24-25	All operational	Majority completed need 8 more	All done by end of 2025
Replace/upgrade sound panels in dining room and large conference room	Jerry, Director	2025	Aesthetically pleasing sound panels installed	Large groups who use those facilities	
Replace blinds in dining room	Director, Business Manager	2025	Window coverings are in place	Functional window coverings that can be easily opened and closed.	
Investigate options for replacing/stabilizing the atrium ceiling	Jerry Davis, Director	2025	Cost and plan for most viable options	Atrium roof functional and stable for the foreseeable future	

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

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Upgrade irrigation zones in courtyard in between the retreat rooms	Good Works, Director	2025	Design zones, trench, lay pipe, test system	Grass is watered regularly and stays green	On list for Good Works volunteers
Repaint or replace images in the upper level outside of the Large Conf Room	Jerry Davis, Director	2025	Ask local artists to paint a panel	Beautiful images, with proper sealant or method to preserve them.	
Look into an internship/project for students of NMSU's Horticulture program	Director, Bro. Joe	2025	Determine whether students are available/interested in assisting here for landscaping	If students are able to come, develop a plan for them to assist us with landscaping/grounds-keeping	
Look into developing parking lot across from Chapel with shade/solar panel installation	Director, Bus Mgr, Bro Joe	2025	Determine whether plan is feasible	Study costs and space for large vehicles	

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

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	
Look at increasing prices incrementally rather than all at once	Director	Ongoing	Income keeps pace with increased expenses	People are informed and aware ahead of time of any price changes	

Look into a columbarium for the Chapel	Director and Definitory	2025	Study done, contract for installation	Columbarium for the future	
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- 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 descriptions	Business Mgr and each area	Summer 2026	Manuals created or revised	Good records for upcoming years	Many done but still need 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	End of 2025	Description of the vision and goals here and needs for a Director	A director, who can sustain the vital ministry for years to come.	
Contribute surplus funds to the Province each year	Staff and volunteers	June each year	\$50,000.00 per year	Financial assistance for province needs	Sent \$70,000 in fiscal year 2019-2020, \$50,000 in 2021-2022, \$50,000 in 24-25.
Meet as with advisors to consider five year plan for HCR Foundation grants to upgrade and expand as warranted.	Staff and advisors	Fall 2025	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	Staff and Advisors	Fall 2025	Have a plan in place for decline or increase in certain types of	Seamless transition to more or less income from	Some ACTS groups have not continued, other new ones joined.

			retreats	different types of retreats	Neo Catechumenate groups are coming
Keep 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
Consider inviting additional Friars to the Advisory Board	Director	Spring 2025	2 Friars	More impact on Franciscan Charism and events	

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

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

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Establish a plan and leadership	Staff	Fall 225	Specifics for HCRC and cooperation with others	Public action local and beyond	.
Adopting renewable energy	Staff	Fall 2025	Consider Wind options	Less dependence on fossil fuels	
Defending all life					
Solidarity with indigenous peoples and vulnerable groups	Staff	Ongoing	Welcoming immigrants and the homeless	Direct assistance to others in need	HCRC hosts unprocessed immigrants as well as others.
Adopting simpler lifestyles	Staff	Ongoing	Create compost system that will utilize green waste , reduce travel	Less use of other resources	Meetings done on zoom when possible to reduce travel.
Fostering ecological and justice education and spirituality	Business Mgr and Retreat Staff	2026	Retreat on Laudato Si May 20, 2022 Host Climate Justice Retreat for Young Adults in	Working with local groups	Two staff members on the Board of café community organizing

			2023 Work on achieving Living Wage for employees		Wellness benefit increased for employees
Advocating for sustainable developments	Director	Ongoing	More efficient air conditioners, recycling old units, more solar panels over parking area, support community solar	Less resources and good witness	
Following ethical investment guidelines, including divestment from fossil fuels and other industries that harm the planet.	Invest with Catholic Extention				
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

Strategy 2. To promote Justice and Peace issues

What will be done	Who	By When	Measure	Target	Result
Strive to pay livable wages and provide benefits to employees	Business Manager and Director	Ongoing	Wages and benefits are reviewed annually	Employees of HCRC	

Further Ideas

- **Keep this document for historical references and create a more concise new format**
- **Develop directed retreats for religious and priests**
- **Decide what is best to provide reliable water for personal use, and irrigation**
- **Improve communication methods using refined brochures and social media.**

- **Add more training for staff to deal with immigration issues.**
- **Consider a third hermitage**
- **Increase prices incrementally to accommodate rising costs**
- **Replace or repaint images in the upper level outside of the large conference room**
- **Ask again for a columbarium**
- **Reach out directly to the Neo Catechumenate groups**

CURRENT PRACTICE AND PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I GOAL: We will enhance the relationship with those who come to the Retreat Center and expand our outreach efforts (pages 3-5)

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

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.

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.
- Tom led Eucharistic Min training in Carlsbad Oct. 2022.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Past Accomplishments:

- 180 solar panels added 2020
- 2022-2024 replaced windows in retreat rooms, large conference room, offices, hacienda living room and casita
- Computer network rewired and configured by David Rall 2025
- Wi-fi upgraded and now throughout campus Joe Bach and David Rall 2025
- Outdoor firepit in space between Large Conference room and dining room 2024
- Serra Hall sub floor and carpet replaced 2023 Large Conf. in 2024.

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.

Past Accomplishments:

- Jerry David constructed pergola for gongs near labyrinth 2024.
- 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.
- Tax retention credit accepted and most received

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

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