



# Where we've been and where we're going: a short history of Crosiers in the United States

by David Kostik

**I**N JUNE 2007, Crosiers will mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the province of St. Odilia, the Crosier Province in the United States. On June 11, 1957, the first Provincial Chapter of the newly established Province, convened in Fort Wayne, Ind., and elected Benno Mischke, osc, as Prior Provincial.

The concept of dividing the Crosier order into provinces had been approved at the Crosier General Chapter in 1955. Along with the U.S. Province, the General Chapter in 1955 also created the province of St. Augustine (Germany and the Netherlands) and the province of Theodore de Celles (Belgium). This move to divide the Order into provinces was in response to the growth and expansion the Order had been experiencing.

Dr. Roger Janssen, osc, in his book *750 years of the Crosiers*, observes, "From the time when the order

was active on four continents, it was actually too big to be administered and directed from one place. The few hundred confreres did not know or hardly knew each other, and their mutual connectedness had to bridge too many gaps to be able to work beneficially. Consequently, more and more voices rose in favor of dividing the Order into independent provinces: well arranged regions with a limited number of com-

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munities, rooted in the same culture and with their own administrative structure."

**Crosiers in the U. S. were a large part of the Order's growth**

Crosiers had been in this country continuously since three Crosiers arrived

in Butler, Minn., with a group of Dutch immigrants in 1910. That same year, Crosiers established their first presence in Onamia, Minn., when they founded Holy Cross Parish.

The roots of the Order were firmly planted in the United States in 1922, when Crosiers built a monastery in Onamia and opened a Crosier seminary there. In 1928, Thomas Brandon, osc, became the first U.S. Crosier to be ordained a priest. The original 1922 structure still stands at the core of a complex that has grown through six additions over 85 years. Most recently, a residential wing that houses 19 Crosiers was completed in 2004. Last year, Lake Song assisted living, built in partnership with the Mille Lacs Health System and the Mille Lacs Community Development Corporation, opened to serve Crosier and public needs for



**The first three Crosiers to arrive in the United States:**  
**From left, Henry Yzermans, osc;**  
**William Van Dinter, osc; Henry Van der Aa, osc.**

assisted living services. Lake Song physically connects Crosier facilities with the hospital, and created the concept of a unified campus named