

## 'Positio' for Father Peyton's cause now with Vatican congregation

EASTON, Mass. (CNS) — Presentation of the "positio," or official position paper, on the life and holiness of Father Patrick Peyton to a Vatican congregation is the latest step in the sainthood cause of the Holy Cross priest.

A May 18 statement issued by Holy Cross Family Ministries in Easton said the document was four years in the making and is the synthesis of a 6,000-page report completed by tribunals in the Archdiocese of Baltimore and 34 other dioceses around the world.

"We are very pleased to see progress in Father Peyton's cause," said Holy Cross Father Wilfred Raymond. "Many people regularly tell me we need a 'saint for families' and that Father Peyton is the appropriate candidate."

Father Peyton came to the United States from Ireland in 1928 when he was 19. Ordained in 1941, he was the founder of Holy Cross Family Ministries, which includes Family Rosary,

Family Theater Productions, Father Peyton Family Institute and Family Rosary International.

His ministry produced more than 600 radio and television programs and 10,000 broadcasts. The priest also conducted rosary crusades for millions of people in dozens of countries.

Father Raymond, president of Holy Cross Family Ministries, delivered the "positio" to the Vatican Congregation for Saints' Causes April 21. Joining him were Andrea Ambrosi of Rome and Holy Cross Father David S. Marcham of North Easton, who are, respectively, postulator and vice postulator of Father Peyton's cause. Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila, Philippines, was there as well.

"We honor Father Peyton's memory by bringing families together to pray, especially the rosary," Father Raymond added in his statement. "We continue to fulfill his vision by sharing his strong belief with families around the world that the family that

prays together stays together."

Father Peyton died in 1992 and is buried in Easton. His sainthood cause was opened in June 2001 in the Diocese of Fall River. It was moved from that diocese to the Baltimore Archdiocese by the Vatican, citing the archdiocese's experience with other sainthood causes.

Father Peyton was known worldwide as "The Rosary Priest." He had two especially famous mottos: "The family that prays together stays together" and "A world at prayer is a world at peace."

**A "positio," or position paper on the life and holiness of Holy Cross Father Patrick Peyton, has been presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. Father Peyton is pictured in an undated photo.**



CNS PHOTO/FAMILY THEATER PRODUCTIONS

## Seeing with the heart:

# Saint Mary's students help South Bend woman leave legacy

BY AMY H. SMESSAERT

SOUTH BEND — Who knew that "a last wish before I die" request would forge a bond of love among two Saint Mary's College students, a Sister of the Holy Cross and a South Bend woman living with AIDS.

It all started with Sheila Muhammad's desire to leave a written legacy for her family about her challenges and triumphs since she was first diagnosed with AIDS 25 years ago. "I wanted to leave something for my kids about my life and help others who have the virus and are dealing with the struggles I went through," said Muhammad, a widow who has three children and six grandchildren. She also is blind, having lost her eyesight in 1995 due to cytomegalovirus (CMV), which she may have contracted because of her compromised immune system.

"I try to keep positive. I put one foot in front of the other. My motto: 'Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do something.' I try everything. I am a fighter," said Muhammad. "I've been employed (by Sodexo) at Holy Cross College for 12 years — I wash dishes. I try to be as normal as I can be. Losing my sight does not mean I lose my ability to work."

When Muhammad expressed her wish to share her life's story, her longtime friend Holy Cross Sister Linda Bellemore "got into gear" to find someone to help Muhammad. That someone turned out to be the team of Morgan Carroll of Fort Wayne, who graduated from Saint



PHOTOS BY SISTER ELLEN MARY (TAYLOR), CSC

**South Bend resident Sheila Muhammad, left, and Morgan Carroll, a 2015 graduate of Saint Mary's College, share a laugh. The two became good friends through a six-month service project during which Carroll and classmate Faye Kennedy recorded and transcribed Muhammad's story about living with AIDS. Carroll is a Bishop Luers High School graduate and parishioner of St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne.**

Mary's in May with a degree in communication studies, and Faye Kennedy of Stillwater, Minnesota, who graduated in 2014 with a degree in business administration. Both were students of Marne Austin, assistant professor of communication studies. The two learned about chronicling oral histories in one of her courses. When Austin alerted her class that a sister of the Holy Cross had a service project for someone to document Muhammad's story, Carroll and Kennedy promptly volunteered.

"The students' immediate,

positive response to this invitation was indicative of women who know and believe that life, learning, growing, faith and service are their personal values and why they are at Saint Mary's College," said Sister Bellemore, who first met Muhammad through AIDS Ministries/AIDS Assist in South Bend.

Carroll wanted to help Muhammad for another compelling reason: She was born with a condition that could have left her blind, if not for surgeries at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis.

"This experience has put my personal situation into perspective and helped me appreciate the vision I have been blessed with. Sheila is truly a role model in the way she lives her life despite the many challenges she faces," Carroll said. "I deeply appreciate all that she has done for me."

The six-month-long service project for Muhammad began shortly after Carroll and Kennedy volunteered. "Sheila would talk and we would record her on our phones. Then we transcribed the conversations and compiled her story,"

Carroll explained. "It was important for the three of us to get to know one another."

"I really loved meeting the girls and telling them my story. I love them for not judging me. I know I have them as friends for life," said Muhammad. "If my story gets published in a book, they will get special mention in the credits."

Carroll described the impact the project — and Muhammad — have had on her life. "Each time we left Sheila's house, we got a deeper understanding of how amazing she is. Her inspiring attitude and outlook lifted my spirits. She is one of the biggest inspirations in my time at Saint Mary's."

"Sheila has always kept me grounded," echoed Sister Bellemore. "She sees obstacles and asks, 'How do I get around it?' She has such a positive outlook on life — she lives it."

Sister Bellemore recalled the moment when Carroll and Kennedy presented Muhammad with the finished product. "Witnessing Sheila's excitement that her greatest wish for her anticipated short life was fulfilled, and hearing her expressed gratitude for a task that she had been unable to accomplish herself, confirmed for me that the mission of Saint Mary's College is alive and impacting our world. Indeed, these women were prepared to make a difference in the world and they already are."

**Amy H. Smeesaert** is the communication director for Sisters of the Holy Cross.