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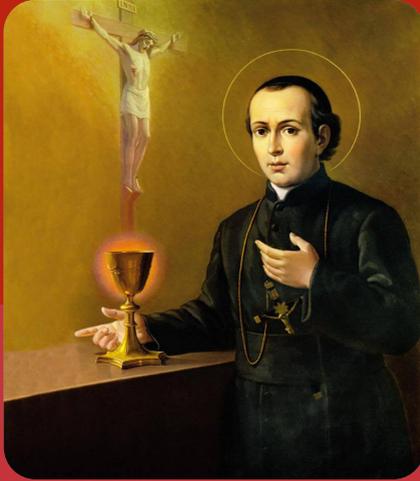
THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY



"Behold the Lamb of God" (Jn 1:29)

Final Print Edition

ADVENT - CHRISTMAS



The Precious Blood Family is published three times a year by the Congregation of Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Atlantic Province.

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EDITORIAL

With this print issue of the *Precious Blood Family*, a 30-year run comes to an end. In its several iterations over those years the content and format of the magazine has seen considerable change, though the consistent thread has been promotion of the devotion and spirituality of the Most Precious Blood. The leadership of the Atlantic Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood has decided to publish a digital edition of the magazine to appear twice a year on the province's website. So while it is with sadness that circumstances beyond our control have necessitated the decision to cease a printed version of the publication, including factors such as declining readership and the rising costs of printing and postage, this is not entirely a farewell. A number of other digital and online offerings are listed in the "Staying in Touch" feature at the end of this issue suited for these times when technology affords a much farther reach than print media ever could — and for the most part, free of charge!

In this last year, I have tried to include as many members of the "family" as I could. We have heard from the Provincial Director of the United States Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and a Companion of that province. An Adorer of the Blood of Christ has contributed as has one of their Associates. A Sister of the Precious Blood founded by Mother Brunner has also written a number of articles in recent issues. Of course, members of the Atlantic Province of the Missionaries have written articles as have members of the Union of the Blood of Christ and others who frequent our mission houses. It would be impossible to list all the many others who have written articles over the years, the volunteers who have given so generously of their time and talent to assist in the design, preparation and mailing of issues. Mention should also be made of Fr. Peter Nobili C.P.P.S. whose brainchild this publication was and of Fr. Jerome Hologa C.P.P.S. who took over the editorial duties prior to my assuming that role. So a hearty thanks to all and sundry for making *The Precious Blood Family* possible these three decades.

So on behalf of the Missionaries, I wish you all a blessed Advent and Christmas season. May we continue to meet online in the New Year and beyond united in the Blood which is precious.

Fr. John Colacino, C.P.P.S.

Last Things First

John Colacino C.P.P.S.

The season of Advent draws our attention to the so-called “last things,” the time of looking forward to the Lord’s return “to judge the living and the dead.” We can’t very well ignore the fact each of us will come before the tribunal of Christ to account for our lives. No doubt we have all kinds of images floating around in our heads when we hear that word “judgment.” Perhaps memories of your report card, or a performance review at work, maybe even making a court appearance — something, in other words, you might have dreaded.

When I think of judgment, I imagine this enormous big-screen TV on which God plays a video of your whole life with free admission for anyone who’d like to come. And in the front row there will be all those people you weren’t very nice to, like your boss or your in-laws. And at the end of the show, they’ll give you a “thumbs up” or a “thumbs down!”

We can’t help but think of divine judgment in such all too human terms. Life is full of comparisons we could make to that day when *Christ brings to light what is hidden in darkness and will manifest the motives of our hearts* (1 Cor. 4:5). Yet whatever comparisons we might come up with we can be sure any similarity between divine and human judgment will be faint at best. One huge difference between them will be the standards. For when human beings go about judging, they’re always looking for evidence of wrongdoing, of failure, of defects. Think of an athletic competition like ice-skating or diving. The judges are always looking for the slightest slip-up, the smallest fault, to make a difference between a “10” and a “9.8.” Or think of a game show or a spelling bee where people are eliminated one by one because they fail to measure up at some point. In other words, almost every human form of judgment is negative: you get points taken off, check marks, penalties, even a police record. Even when we’ve done our best we’re still not quite good enough. We might be the runner up, or get an honorable mention, even a consolation prize, but that’s never the same as first place. Like on *Jeopardy* only the winner gets the money.

That’s probably the biggest difference between human and divine judgment. For the Bible tells us, in the fascinating words of St. Paul, that after the Lord judges us *for what has been done in the body, whether good or [worthless] things....then everyone will receive praise from God* (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10, 1 Cor. 4:5). Yes, that’s right, *praise!* Recompense, the Bible says, even for “worthless” things. Something very unusual compared to human judgment. For when all is said and done, God wants to point out our pluses and not our minuses. God wants to commend us and not condemn us. God’s judgment, after all, is something positive.

I’m not saying everything we bring to that Day will be “praised” in the same way. Indeed, Paul warns that, *Each one must be careful how he [or she] builds. . . [since] the work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it.* I don’t think God’s judgment will be like a funeral eulogy, carefully designed to conceal someone’s faults and failings. That’s a human way of praising, different from God’s. So different that Paul says even the good works we bring — made from *gold, silver, and precious stones* — even they will need refinement from all their dross and imperfection. And the worthless things — made from *wood, hay, or straw* -- well, they’ll be *burned up. . . as through fire,* and we’ll *suffer loss*, Paul says. But — he adds — the person *will be saved.* (Cf. 1 Cor. 3:10-15)

The Catholic faith calls this winnowing “purgatory.” Here too a variety of images comes to mind as with



judgment: perhaps flames leaping around helpless bodies; the precious Blood of Jesus dripping from the cross or a chalice to quench those flames; Our Lady reaching down from heaven to lift the poor souls up into paradise or, less dramatically, some shadowy never-never land, neither heaven nor hell, where the not-so-good and the not-so-bad are detained until they “do their time.”

Such images for purgatory are just that — images. More or less helpful ways for us to grasp the process by which we enter eternal life. I was given a better understanding of purgatory on a retreat I was giving by a woman who asked to see me. She was upset about her stepmother who had died a few months previous. She discovered something about her stepmother, something she had done, which made her very angry. She didn't tell me what it was, just that it took her nine months to work through her anger and finally to forgive her stepmother. One night she became aware of a presence in her bedroom. She was sure it was her stepmother. It happened again the next night. But this time she heard a voice — her stepmother's — say to her, “Thank you. Now I can rest in peace.” What was troubling this woman was whether her anger had somehow prevented her stepmother from going to heaven all those months.

I had no idea what to say to her, but I did want to help her find some peace when all of a sudden “purgatory” came to mind. I told her, “I think you might have had an experience of something we Catholics believe in. It's a very comforting belief when you stop and think about it. Almost everyone leaves this world with some unfinished business either with God or other people. It sounds to me like your stepmother had at least one loose string she needed to deal with. And God gave her the chance, a chance to retrace a misstep she took in this life and somehow make something worthless, good. Trouble was, she couldn't do that by herself. You were the only one who could assist her. We used to call that ‘helping the holy souls in purgatory.’ Which you did by working through your anger and forgiving her. We used to call that ‘gaining an indulgence’ on behalf of the poor souls. And once you did that, she was free to be with God in heaven.”

Frankly, I didn't know where all this was coming from. Indulgences are among those things about which Catholics might feel a little uneasy, if not embarrassed. They are, however, regularly granted as during the Holy Year upon which we are soon to embark. The

Catechism of the Catholic Church says an “indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian gains under certain prescribed conditions” (no. 1471). It goes on to say that “through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory” (no. 1498). “Temporal punishment,” by the way means the lingering effects of our sins even after they've been forgiven. Among the ways to gain an indulgence are acts of mercy and charity, which is what I think that woman did for her stepmother. She forgave her. So that, in Paul's language, her stepmother's “work of straw” was “burned up” and thus became worthy of praise. The “fire” of judgment was lessened because her stepdaughter was willing to enter the process of judgment and help her through it. Showing once more how very different divine judgment is from human: where the latter leaves us alone to deal with our guilt, God makes provision for mutual assistance, and yes, even, indulgence.

Another way to gain an indulgence is to perform some religious act. When I used to preach parish missions, for example, I gave the final blessing with my mission cross at which those who attended the mission could receive a “plenary,” or full, indulgence which could be “applied” to oneself or to the dead. One such mission's theme was “relationships” with a service of healing the last evening. A few weeks after the mission, I received a letter which read, “Dear Father John, I had a powerful healing experience and you were the instrument the Lord chose to work through. At the healing service Thursday night, I asked for prayers for my son Michael who killed himself four years ago and I shared with you my dream. [He] said he was in a ‘special place in heaven’ and ‘they are good to us.’ I was sitting at my kitchen table reflecting quietly and prayerfully about the whole evening when suddenly Michael appeared above me on my right side in midair doing [what seemed like] a special dance in the air. I was caught up in the peace, joy and freedom of his movement. To say my spirit is caught up in the air with my son in joy and exaltation is the understatement of the year. And I am witnessing to the power of prayer and to what these eyes have seen.”

Like “purgatory” in my talk with the woman on retreat, the idea of “applying indulgences” to the deceased popped into my head at just the moment this mother came down the aisle at the healing service. I can only

trust the Holy Spirit was at work in both cases because it never occurred to me before to give such advice. I do, however, always try and help people place their stories in the context of our Catholic faith. And I came to see how, in this story, our faith shows us how the “straw” work of Michael’s suicide could be “burned up” by God’s merciful indulgence: through the power of Jesus Christ, whose Blood has won for us every grace, and who has made us—yes, us — *stewards of the mysteries of God* (1 Cor. 3:9), God who has *given us the ministry of reconciliation* (2 Cor. 5:18). That’s the ministry I believe this mother and this stepdaughter exercised on behalf of their son and stepmother. And by the way, neither one gave me the slightest impression of being unbalanced in mind or spirit.

Still, none of us — however much we believe in Christ — can be absolutely certain of our salvation in the final sense. That would be the sin of presumption. In other words, to anticipate what is, after all, God’s free gift, something not “owed” to us in any way which God may or may not bestow according to his sovereign right. On the other hand, we are not allowed to anticipate God condemning us either. That would be the sin of despair. That’s true, not just of our own salvation, but the salvation of every other person as well. We may, indeed, hope God’s will that *all people be saved* (1 Tim. 2:4) will be done.

“What in hell,” then, is hell? I’m sure it conjures up images the same way judgment and purgatory do. Images of fire and brimstone, pitchforks and devils, images not always helpful. I think we can imagine the afterlife with a bit more sophistication. One way to do that is by viewing eternity in other terms, terms we all understand, like relationships. In terms of hell, this would mean a human being, despite all God’s efforts, despite the work of Christ, despite the Church’s constant prayer, that someone has still refused, unconditionally and absolutely, God’s offer of salvation. In other words, that someone, somewhere, sometime, has deliberately chosen total isolation, “definitive self-exclusion” as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (no.1033) puts it, self-exclusion from God and the company of heaven. Someone so imprisoned within him or herself, that God and others will forever be kept away. A person hopelessly closed to love.

St. Isaac of Nineveh described hell in such terms, as the unrequited love of God: “As for me, I say that those who are tormented in hell are tormented by the invasion of love. What is there more bitter and more violent than the pains of love? Those who feel they have sinned against love bear in themselves a damnation much heavier than the most dreaded punishments. The suffering with which sinning against love afflicts the heart is more keenly felt than any other torment. It is absurd to suppose that sinners in hell are deprived of God’s love. Love . . . is offered impartially. But by its very power, God’s love acts in two ways. It torments sinners, as happens here on earth when we are tormented by the presence of a friend to whom we have been unfaithful. . . . That is what the torment of hell is in my opinion -- remorse” (*Ascetic Treatises*, 84). Ah yes, hell as unrequited love.

Yet even here, such a person is hard to imagine. It won’t be long, however, before images from Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* will fill our minds. And the figure of Ebenezer Scrooge is as good as any to help us imagine a hellish soul. For the Scrooge of Christmas Eve is a person in hell: a man, miserable and alone, with nothing but a “Bah, humbug!” to greet the Lord’s birth.

Dickens describes him as follows:

“Scrooge: a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn’t thaw it one degree at Christmas. External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty.” That’s one hell of a description!

Neither his employee Bob Cratchit nor his crippled son, Tiny Tim; not his newlywed nephew, nor the gentlemen who came collecting for the poor; not the festive carolers, nor Londoners making final preparations for the feast; nor, finally, the anniversary of his dead partner, Jacob

Marley's, death, could move this heart where love had grown stone cold, where hell had already taken root, and final damnation seemed not only possible, but likely.

But then Scrooge tastes a bit of purgatory one Christmas Eve during the night. An experience heralded, interestingly enough, by his dead partner, Marley, who appears to Scrooge in chains. (I can't help thinking here of that woman and her deceased stepmother.) At any rate, Marley, the poor soul, helps Scrooge get ready for a trial by fire, the testing of his works, an experience of purification, which comes in the form of three spirits who bring Scrooge face to face with himself, past, present and future. What a marvelous image of purgatory that is! Exactly what a great theologian, Romano Guardini, described as follows:

"We have to do with the mystery of a grace that forgives and creates anew. When he [or she] is judged, the man [or woman] see [themselves] entirely in the holy light of God, see the circumstances, the causes, the accidental and the essential, see the outside and the inside, see to the very bottom, what was known to [them] or what was hidden from [them] because it lay too deep, or had been forgotten, suppressed, or slighted. And [they] see it all without a shadow of protection. Pride, vanity, evasion, indifference are gone [in purgatory]. [We are] exposed, sensitive, collected. [We are] on the side of truth in opposition to [ourselves]. [We are] prepared to face [our] own life with its undone duties, its loose ends, its muddle. In a mystery of suffering, the heart adjusts itself to contrition and delivers itself up to the power of the holy Creator-Spirit. Opportunities misused are re-bestowed, wrong turns retraced and taken rightly. Evil, by being lived again, is made over into good. The improvement is not an external matter. The whole nature, plunged into re-creating grace, through the mystery of effectual repentance, comes out new-made. This is what the Church calls Purgatory." It's what Dickens made Scrooge pass through when the spirits of Christmas past, present, and future, visited him one night.

But all that is a prelude to heaven. Once purgatory transforms us and we come out new-made, glory awaits. Here again, despite the images of clouds, halos, and pearly gates that come to mind, heaven is about relationships too. What the *Catechism* describes as a "communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed" (no. 1024).

In other words, heaven is perfect intimacy, unrestricted love, total openness to others. Something like Scrooge on Christmas Day, after the ghosts forced him to face himself in judgment, after they helped the helpless soul escape his works *as through fire*; after all this, a new Scrooge flings open his window: tells a boy to go buy the prize turkey and gives him a handsome tip for doing so; brings the turkey to the Cratchit family for dinner, and then visits his estranged nephew and his wife to make merry and dance.

That's as good an image as any of heaven: Good Old Ebenezer Scrooge, who, as Dickens put it, "became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. . . . [A]nd it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge." Like Scrooge, we also must face, sooner or later, and just as squarely, our past, our present, and our future — but always with hope. Welcoming those messengers of transformation God sends us every so often, even should they seem to haunt and disturb us. So that our lamps can be filled with the oil of hope, ready for the Advent of Christ when he comes. Who lives and reigns, forever and ever. Amen.

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Matthew, Mark, Luke, John...and Isaiah

Linda MacCammon

In the Christian tradition, the four weeks leading up to Christmas is the season of Advent, a period of spiritual preparation and reflection on the arrival of Jesus Christ and his expected return at the eschaton. Traditionally, the season is filled with celebrations and festivities as Christians reflect on themes of hope, peace, joy, and love that ground Christian faith. The book of Isaiah is frequently the focus of Advent and for good reason. Isaiah is quoted more than any other prophet in the New Testament. Jesus begins his ministry with a reading from Isaiah 61 (Luke 4:14-30) and quotes the prophet repeatedly in his preaching and teaching. Isaiah's Servant Songs (42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12) shape the Gospel narratives, presenting Jesus as the Messiah and Suffering Servant of God whose sacrificial death atones for our sins. It is not surprising that the early church referred to the book as the "Fifth Gospel."

Traditionally, the "good news" of the Gospel is a joyful message that human beings are saved from their sins and receive eternal life with God through the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christians access God's gift of salvation through faith in what God has accomplished in the risen Christ. But what many Christians fail to fully appreciate is God's unceasing efforts to nurture the virtue of faith within human beings, the kind of spiritual excellence that makes salvation possible. Faith-building is not a simple or easy task—even for God. It's a complex, turbulent, and evolving process in which human beings learn to trust God, believe in God's promises, and respond appropriately with gratitude, loyalty, obedience, and service.

For this season of Advent, we will briefly explore God's faith-building activities that begin in Genesis, are institutionalized in Exodus, and reach a pivotal moment in the book of Isaiah, setting the stage for the advent of Jesus Christ. In these biblical episodes a pattern emerges: God offers human beings an aspirational ideal for the divine-human relationship and then provides a practical program and numerous gifts to help them realize it. Taken as a revelatory whole, God's approach to faith-building not only prepares the people of Israel

for realizing the ideal and promise of the New Jerusalem but also prepares the early followers of Jesus to grasp the truth and magnitude of the new revelations they encounter in the crucified and risen Christ.

God's Program of Faith-Building in Genesis

God's faith-building begins with the fundamental gifts of a good creation in accordance with God's design (Gen.1-2). God's "economy of the gift" establishes the Garden as an ideal moral order grounded in the core values of love, justice, respect, solidarity, generosity, and care, and governed by a "Divine Command" ethics of obedience. As creatures gifted with freedom and powers of reason, the man and woman are meant to live together as equal partners, create and nurture families, and fulfill their calling as stewards of the creation. Gratitude, trust, and unquestioned obedience to God's commands are the assumed and expected responses to God's generosity, but the couple's rapid fall from grace (Gen.3) reveals a fundamental weakness in the governance model, for with the gift of freedom comes the possibility of ingratitude, temptation, and sin, actions that erode faith and trust in God and threaten the created order. God's punishment is swift; for their moral failure and rebellion, Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden with cautionary warnings or "curses" (Gen.3:14-19) that portend the inevitable consequences of sin. To address this fundamental weakness, God introduces the gift of the covenant with the call of Abraham (Gen.12).

As God's chosen covenant partner, God offers Abraham generous incentives (a male heir, the land of Canaan, and divine protection) and a significant change in status. In return for Abraham's obedience, loyalty, and worship, God promises to transform the shrewd and often self-serving patriarch into a model of righteousness through whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen.12:3). To realize the covenant ideal, God rejects the strict divine command model for a more flexible, mentoring model that permits and even encourages Abraham to question and challenge God's motives and actions (Gen.15-18). Rather than undermine the divine-

human relationship, Abraham's freedom to question and make mistakes are faith-building activities that serve as a catalyst for his spiritual and moral growth. Over time, Abraham acquires "fear of the Lord," (the virtue of faith) characterized by gratitude, humility, obedience, worship, and unselfish service to others (Gen.21:22-34). As a God-fearer, Abraham trusts in God's providential care and thus obeys God's will freely, even when God commands Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, at Mount Moriah (Gen.22). Before Abraham can act, God intercedes, sparing the boy, "for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me" (Gen.22:12).

Ironically, the terror at Moriah marks a breakthrough in faith-building. Unlike Adam and Eve, Abraham's obedience is not prompted by an unreflective assent to authority; instead, it is prompted by faith in God's providential care and gratitude for the many blessings God provided over the years. With Abraham, righteousness before God is no longer limited to unthinking obedience to divine commands but is redefined and expanded to include the interior dispositions that promote spiritual and moral excellence. With the test at Moriah, Abraham's transformation to the "Father of Faith" is complete; however, changing circumstances require God to adjust the mentoring model to address the plight of Abraham's descendants in the book of Exodus.

God's Program of Faith-Building in Exodus

After years of brutal oppression by the Egyptians, the Hebrew slaves find themselves ill-equipped to become the "priestly kingdom" and "holy nation" God envisions and proclaims at Mount Sinai (Ex.19:3-6). To realize the covenant ideal on a much larger scale, God combines divine commands (a rule-centered model) with an intense spiritual and moral training program (the mentoring model) to nurture their faith in God. This faith-building hybrid transforms the Hebrews from a group of fearful and overly dependent slaves to a responsible and unified people eager to obey God's will and secure their return to the promised land of Canaan. With the leadership and guidance of Moses, the people enter a covenant with God and agree "in one voice" to uphold the Ten Commandments and all the covenant laws, customs, and ceremonies (the Torah), thus accepting complete responsibility for their freedom (Ex.19:7). As with Abraham, God's chosen people understand that they must demonstrate

gratitude, loyalty, and obedience, practice just relations with each other, and show compassion and care for the vulnerable in their midst, represented by the widow, the orphan, and the stranger (Ex.22:22-25). In accepting these terms, the people agree to a theocratic form of government, living together as one nation under God as they make their way to Canaan.

Although the people publicly pledge their loyalty and obedience to God and the covenant on three separate occasions (Ex.19:7; 24:3-4; 24:7), their longing for the old ways in the face of adversity tempts them to idolatry and rebellion (Ex.32; Num.11:21). God's punishment for their collective sins is harsh, resulting in death for the idolators (Ex.32:25-29) and forty years of wandering for the faithless survivors (Num.32:13). The people's rapid fall from grace reveals another fundamental truth about faith-building that applies both individually and collectively: Overcoming temptation—which always shadows human freedom—is a life-long process that requires constant effort, reinforcement, vigilance, and time. The developmental nature of faith explains why God demands that the people remain in the wilderness until they are spiritually and morally ready to enter the promised land.

With God's providential care and assistance, the people conquer the land (Josh.1-12, 22-24), establish the Davidic monarchy (1-2 Samuel), and achieve considerable prosperity and power in Canaan. But in their quest for wealth and prestige they soon forget the covenant requirements, falling into idolatry, injustice, and internal conflicts that eventually split Israel into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah (1-2 Kings). God's response to the people's ingratitude and sinful rebellion is the gift of the prophets, whose mission is to call the people back to the covenant with God and their covenant responsibilities. With the writings of the prophets, God's faith-building program takes an even darker turn, using "tough love" on a grand scale to reinforce yet another fundamental truth: "Actions have consequences."

God's Program of Faith-Building in Isaiah

Isaiah describes the spiritual and moral decline of the two kingdoms and God's ongoing efforts to redeem them from their self-inflicted disasters. Speaking through the prophet ("For the Lord has spoken"), God indicts the people for their many sins against God and each other, urging them to repent and reform their conduct or face God's righteous judgment, but the

people remain unrepentant (Is. 1:1-25). Echoing the curses in Genesis 3, the prophet describes in vivid and terrifying detail the inevitable consequences of the people's rebellion (Is. 2:6-22; 3:16-26), culminating in God directing the pagan nations of Assyria and Babylon to destroy the two kingdoms and send the people into exile in Babylon (Is. 5:24-30; 7:7-9; 30:8-17; 39:5-7). Like their ancestors, they, too, will be driven from their homes. Yet the prophet's message of doom also contains seeds of hope, for God proclaims the return of the exiles (Is. 27:12-13; Is. 30:18-26; 40:1-13) and the coming of a Messianic King from the Davidic line (Is. 9:6-7) who will defeat Israel's enemies and usher in a new era of peace, justice, and righteousness in a New Jerusalem (Is. 10:20-12:6). To realize this ideal, the people of the post-exilic community must rededicate themselves to their covenant with God and the teachings of the Torah so they may become the priestly kingdom and holy nation God promised at Sinai. But there are crucial differences that change the nature and scope of God's faith-building activities.

The first difference is a shift in Israel's religious consciousness. For the writers of Isaiah, the God of Israel is now revealed as a cosmic rather than tribal or national Deity who demands justice, controls pagan nations, and determines world events. The book of Isaiah thus forges a causal link between the people's spiritual and moral failings and God's power to make pagan nations the instruments of divine retribution and mercy. In Isaiah's theological rendering, the people's exile is not the result of losing regional wars but from their persistent lack of faith that leads to sins against God and each other. Acting against a powerful cosmic Deity indeed has consequences! The second difference has to do with the scope of God's redemptive intentions and activities, which now include all the nations of the earth (Is. 49:6; 56:7). Israel's spiritual and moral reform now have universal implications. With so much at stake, God cannot simply reintroduce the people to the Torah and hope they obey—their track record is far too erratic for that; instead, God provides the post-exilic community with a new model of faith—the servant figure—who brings Abraham's model of faithful obedience and sacrifice to new and powerful levels of meaning.

Isaiah's "Servant Songs" describe the mission, suffering, and exaltation of the Servant of the Lord. (Is. 42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12). The servant's mission is to usher in a new world order of justice to all the nations, not through "might makes right," as pagan nations do, but through gentle persuasion (Is. 42:1-9). God offers the servant "as a light to the nations" so that "salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Is. 49:6).

Not only will the servant teach the nations the ways of the Lord but will also endure great suffering on their behalf (Is. 50:4-9). The rejection, punishment, and brutal death of the servant is wholly undeserved—in fact it is a perversion of justice—and yet the servant freely and graciously accepts his fate so that the guilty may be redeemed (Is. 53:1-9). For his suffering and sacrifice, the servant is greatly exalted (Is. 53:11-13).

Collectively, the servant songs offer the people of the post-exilic community a new understanding of themselves and an important psychological victory when they need it most. They see themselves in the servant and understand that their suffering is not in vain; it has purpose and meaning. Like their ancestors in the wilderness, the people's ordeal prepares them to become "a light to the nations" who invites all the peoples of the earth to learn the ways of Lord in a restored Jerusalem (Is. 55).

God's "tough love" as a form of faith-building has its intended effect. The people openly confess their sins and fully acknowledge their culpability:

"We wait for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us. Our transgressions indeed are with us, and we know our iniquities; transgressing, and denying the LORD, and turning away from following our God, talking oppression and revolt, conceiving lying words and uttering them from the heart" (Is. 59:11-13).

These verses express the guilt and soul-searching that characterize genuine remorse. The bitter experience of conquest and exile has made them a chastened and humble people who fully understand the seriousness of their offenses against God and the need for repentance (Is. 63:7-19). Their confession is a turning point in their spiritual and moral journey and marks the beginning of wisdom born from painful experience, confirming the complex, turbulent, and evolving nature of faith.

Faith-Building and Revelation

Our brief exploration of God's faith-building activities in Genesis, Exodus, and the book of Isaiah reveals a dynamic process in which the people of Israel encounter God, learn to trust God and God's promises, and respond appropriately. Taken as a revelatory whole, the narratives are the witness and verbal expression of God's self-disclosure and self-communication to Israel.

Biblical writers convey these revelations and as participants in the faith-building process they interpret and articulate their meaning to the faith community,

ever watchful for the emergence of new revelations from God. God's self-disclosure as a cosmic Deity who promises universal redemption through the Suffering Servant is a pivotal moment in Isaiah and in the Judeo-Christian tradition, for the early followers of Jesus have a new revelation of their own that reimagines these theological constructions.

“Who do people say that I am?” is the central question Jesus of Nazareth poses in the Gospels.

The answer is found in the formation of the Gospel narratives, which are the product of a process of faith-building that begins with the death of Jesus and continues for decades afterward. The crucifixion of Jesus was a devastating blow to his early followers, but their devastation quickly turns to joy when Mary Magdalene announces the empty tomb and his resurrection (Jn.20:18). From that moment on, his followers—who were Scripture-reading Jews—begin connecting the “theological dots” between the Jewish Scriptures and their own experiences of Jesus as Jewish prophet and teacher, expressing their convictions about him through the stories they tell among the early faith communities. Eventually, the stories are written down, collected, and crafted into chronological narratives, offering a detailed portrait of Jesus that reveals the theological significance of his entire life, from his birth to the eschaton. The Jesus of history emerges as the Christ of faith only after his followers have the time to reflect on all that has happened and express the meaning of the events for themselves and for their faith communities. The formation of the Gospels thus replicates the very process of faith building revealed in the biblical narratives, enabling the early followers of Jesus to grasp the truth and magnitude of their encounter with the crucified and risen Christ.

For these early followers of Jesus, his humiliating death on the cross serves as a catalyst for a new and expansive understanding of the Jewish Messiah that shifts the emphasis away from the restoration of Israel toward more ultimate ends. In this new theological construction, Jesus is the new Messiah and God's Suffering Servant, whose sacrificial death and resurrection will defeat the powers of evil, sin, and death. At the eschaton, God will send Jesus to defeat Satan and his forces and to judge the living and the dead. The faithful will be spared from God's righteous wrath and will dwell with God and Jesus in a glorious New Jerusalem (Mk.13; Mt.24-25; Lk.21; Rev.21).

“Who do people say that I am?” Jesus is the Son of God and God's gift of salvation for all those who have faith in God and in what God has accomplished in Jesus Christ. This new revelation is the product of

the dynamic exchange between God's faith-building activities in the biblical narratives and the lived experience of God in the faith communities. The season of Advent is thus a natural extension of this revelatory process, celebrating and reflecting on God's gift of Jesus Christ with hope, peace, joy, and love.

The “Fifth Gospel” of Isaiah

As noted in the introduction, the book of Isaiah is frequently the focus of Advent because of its messianic prophecies and its influence on Jesus' ministry and the language and imagery of the Gospels, but the “good news” of Isaiah is more than theological allusions and correspondences with Jesus. It is the joyous assurance of God's unceasing efforts to nurture faith within human beings, a faith that moves us toward spiritual excellence so that we have the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the heart to feel, and the mind to understand what it means to be a faithful covenant partner and have the religious awareness to recognize and respond to God's self-disclosures and communications.

As we have discovered, the narratives in Genesis, Exodus, the Book of Isaiah and the Gospels are all drivers of this spiritual journey. For this season of Advent, we would do well to focus our reflections and preparations on the faith-building process revealed in Scripture that makes salvation possible.

Dr. Linda MacCammon is professor emerita of religious studies from St. John Fisher University, Rochester.



Face t

Antonio

*– face to face –
the Spirit lifted me up
and I died in Christ,
for that is the price of faith,
when face to face,
by Cross and grace.*

On the third day the Living Temple
had arrived at Cana in Galilee.
The disciples had secured a seat at table with the Lord Jesus.
It was a wedding feast with good cheer,
and the Handmaiden of the Incarnate God was there too.

*– as if to stare at the wall – He,
the theatre of life – takes the fall.
Virgins dance across the banquet hall with
breathless sweeps of luscious hair frolicking in the air.
I inhale inebriating wafts of their lily fragrance so fair.
Waves of fallen palm fronds blanket the floor,
and empty wine-stained vessels call out for more!
"Do whatever he tells you," and believe.*

Behold, from generation to generation wine will run out.
Bedeviled with eschatological ramifications,
the Annunciation is the joy of a new dawn filled to the brim –
conceived in the Woman's meritorious magnificent form.
The Virgin's incarnate consent expunged the dragon's river of enmity
in all of his ominously contorted, slithering, and shifting forms.

Yes, Lady Advocate, Yes is the answer to all my problems;
humble prayer the antidote to all my troubling ills.
The Spirit lifts me up,
face to face, like bride to bridegroom,
and I rejoice in my lover's covetous embrace.
Yet, fine fissures appear along the gnarly grain of a highly prized
olive wood paten – carved out from a hidden Nazorean life.
Blessed are the apron strings that come undone,
and the fawn freed from mother's milk.

Her soul now magnified, the Virgin exposes Him through revelation.
His hesitation fraught with apocalyptic apprehension.
Shadows on the wall reel his future Messianic mission.
Like an iron rod, filial love obeys mother's discretion,
and the Lamb of God surrenders water for wine. How divine!

o Face

Selvaggi

Face to face with my own illness,
space and time merge into a soulful silent stillness.
With eyes wide open I peer into my empty glass,
and see the infinite pit from a sinful past.
And from the womb, let there be light,
that faith brought forth for the whole human race.
Our star of hope born Bethlehem
will raise the temple Jerusalem,
and their fiat will forever be companions in faith.

Like the unhurried gesticulate sap from the supple stigmatic cup of a lily,
delicately sensitive to the tender stem
of an empty receptacle that I have become,
Our Lady's instinct intercedes for me like a benign wind,
weaving through the tall wheaten grasses;
gently turning my bowed head
upward toward the risen honeydew sun.

Mother calls out to Flesh – pure, ripe, pliable bulbs plucked and palpable. Life-blood drained away; fluidity consumed by the hour
like a fine wine over a warm breezy Friday afternoon.
Jesus' glory now revealed, the Master winemaker
can nurture fruitful servants made from the choicest globes
of the hardiest vines, crafting exquisitely fragrant mystery;
sweet to taste, flavorful, full bodied;
a euphorically delectable balance of
submission and mercy, obedience and love.

With the Virgin's sword sheathed deep within her hallowed soul,
and the Lamb's body draped over her tender sorrow like a swath of limbs –
lacerated memories strike the embers of her sacred heart aglow.
Shielded with the silver cloak of the three-ringed Sphere,
She – the Ark of God – immaculate, strong, and true,
sets sail on her heroic voyage beyond cosmic shores,
rendezvousing with her celestial Son
at Baptism's bitter crossing:
O Woman, much fruit have you to bear.

*– face to face –
the Spirit lifted me up
and I died in Christ,
for that is the price of faith,
when face to face,
by Cross and grace.*

Antonio Selvaggi resides in Toronto, Canada.

Voice from Tradition

St. Maximus the Confessor

The divine Logos [i.e. the Word], who once for all was born in the flesh, always in His compassion desires to be born in spirit in those who desire Him. He becomes an infant and moulds Himself in them through the virtues. He reveals as much of Himself as He knows the recipient can accept; He does not diminish the manifestation of His own greatness out of lack of generosity but estimates the receptive capacity of those who desire to see Him. In this way the divine Logos is eternally made manifest in different modes of participation, and yet remains eternally invisible to all in virtue of the surpassing nature of His hidden activity. That is why the apostle, when wisely considering the power of this hidden activity, says, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and throughout the ages' (Heb. 13:8); for he sees the hidden activity as something which is always new and never becomes outmoded through being embraced by the intellect. Christ our God is born and becomes human by adding to Himself flesh endowed with an intellectual soul. He who from non-being brings created things into being is Himself born supranaturally of a Virgin who does not thereby lose

her virginity. For just as He Himself became human without changing His nature or altering His power, so He makes her who bore Him a Mother while keeping her a Virgin. In this way He reveals one miracle through another miracle, at the same time concealing the one with the other. This is because in Himself, according to His essence. God always remains a mystery. He expresses His natural hiddenness in such a way that He makes it the more hidden through the revelation. Similarly, in the case of the Virgin who bore Him, He made her a Mother in such a way that by conceiving Him the bonds of her virginity became even more indissoluble.

St. Maximus the Confessor (580-662) was a monk, theologian, spiritual writer and confessor of the faith who suffered much in its defense, upholding especially the full reality of the Incarnation. His works are highly regarded especially in the Eastern Church and is the last of the church fathers to be recognized by both the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

I. “Adventory”

Renée Tembeckjian

During my high school and college years, I held quite a few jobs, some of which I enjoyed more than others, of course. No matter what work I was doing, I usually managed to find a bright side to things, although, that was especially challenging during my time as a salesclerk at Saks Fifth Avenue when a voice over the public address system announced that it was time for Inventory, when every single item in the store had to be counted and listed. This was in the days before merchandise was computer catalogued, so it was all done by hand and every employee involved. A period of two days was set aside, as business as usual was paused and the store closed to complete the work.

It was painstaking, yes, but also satisfying in its way, surveying everything so the higher ups could decide what should be kept and what could go, to make room for a new season. You can probably sense why this memory returns to me in Advent, because this is time when we are invited to pause our “business as usual” and contemplate all that we carry in store, so to speak – to undertake our own personal inventory of heart, mind, and spirit.

Advent can be a time for an honest look in the spiritual mirror, helping us discern what is worth holding and what to let go – whatever clutters or burdens our capacity to make room for a new season, to prepare ourselves to welcome new life and new possibility.

This kind of personal inventory, or Adventory is not easy, because that look into the spiritual mirror may reflect dimensions of our being that are tough to acknowledge and hard to confess, especially when they conflict with our faith or stated beliefs which brings us to the iconic herald of this message, the one whose announcement we hear across the public address system of time and generations. It is the wild and wooly John the Baptist who proclaims that the time is nigh, that we must prepare the Way (to prepare ourselves) in order to repent, or turn, from any thoughts, words, and deeds which run contrary to the message and mission of the One whose advent we await.

Of course, the time for that preparation is always nigh, but in the Advent season, we might understand it as a call to look inside and turn aside from anything which makes our hearts a less-than-fitting home for a holy infant.

We might find ourselves willing to prioritize our own desires over the needs of others, to tolerate incivility, worship celebrity, ignore science, or accept the revision of history. We might defend a lack of personal accountability, downplay democratic ideals, or forget that the rule of law is the luminous foundation of the integrity of the social contract.

We might remain silent when presented with an opportunity to support or speak for the ones Jesus most often implored us to uphold and protect – the afflicted and dispossessed,

the sick and hungry, and those without voice and welcome in too many places and circumstances, including children, elders, women, and those deemed outsiders.

But we as Christians are called to something more and if we will honestly confess and truly repent of any such darkness within us, then the light of justice, peace, mercy, and love will be more purely reflected through us, conveyed through our thoughts, words, and deeds. And taken together, the power of that light can spread and illuminate the whole of creation – bringing to life the vision of divine promise heard in those timeless, cherished words of the prophet Isaiah:

*Comfort, O comfort ye, my people...
in the wilderness, prepare the way of
the Lord; Every valley shall be raised
up, the uneven ground made level and
he rough places a plain...
...and all people shall see it together.*

This is why we light Advent candles – the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. We

light those candles and hold this time to acknowledge how deeply we long for that divine promise, how dearly we pray for that dream of God to become expressed in human life, so that *all people shall see it together*. Such is the message of the Advent season: to prepare the Way of the Lord, which is to prepare the Way of Love, in the wilderness of our own lives and within this world.

Granted, this practice is way tougher than counting merchandise in a department store, because we are not, of course, examining material goods, but the spiritual, psychological, theological, and behavioral dimensions of our being.

I know it's tough for me, at any rate, as I try to undertake this practice myself – to use the gift of this time for my own Adventory – to prepare the Way of the Lord, to make room for the Way of Love which longs to be born in the manger of my very own, very fallible, very human heart and which longs to be born in yours. Amen.



II. Children of Light

For many of us, the poetry and prose of Advent and Christmas are so laden with imagery around pregnancy and birth, that they evoke connections with our own experiences. As someone who always dreamed of motherhood, this season brings me back to my own pregnancies, those days of anticipating and imagining the moment my child would be presented into my arms and we would finally meet one another face to face.

And when that time came, my heart was so magnified I could barely believe it would still fit inside my chest. My dreams of motherhood now became a prayer – not only for the health and well-being of my child, but for the world. I prayed as I never had before: I longed for a safe world, a green world, a beautiful world in which my child could live and grow. I wanted peace, not war. I wanted justice, not cruelty, hope, not ugliness.

But I also knew I could control none of that. As strong and fierce as my devotion for his sake, my heart was more vulnerable than ever. To see him hurt would pierce my heart. I would look up to the heavens and seek hope for this world... ..until I looked into that sweet little face and realized that the divine hope I was seeking was actually right there

in my arms, right in front of my very own eyes...because a child is a sacrament – an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. In other words, a child is a living window through which we glimpse God's hope and prayer for *us* – to be a people of love, mercy, joy, and peace.

Who among us would look upon the face of any child and dare to claim anything else?

It is risky to even dare suggest such a theological possibility – that *every* child is a sacrament through which we see the holy Light, and every mother, therefore, by definition, a light *bearer*. If that sounds romantic or far-fetched, well, just ask any mother.

Just imagine what a world that would be – every human being committed to the Way of Love, every child honored and protected as a holy sacrament, and every mothering heart *finally* and forever spared the piercing sword of sorrow...just as God sees and dreams it. Amen.

The Rev. Dr. Renée Tembeckjian is rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Fayetteville, New York.

The Beatification of Don Giovanni Merlini C.PP.S.

On May 23, 2024, Pope Francis accepted a miracle attributed to Venerable Don Giovanni Merlini, priest and Moderator General of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and second successor of St. Gaspar del Bufalo, thus paving the way for his beatification. Merlini was born in Spoleto, Italy on August 28, 1795, and died in Rome, Italy, on January 12, 1873. The miracle involved a 68-year-old Italian man suffering from severe gastrointestinal bleeding, which led to anemia and then to renal failure and heart disease. His granddaughter, who attended a parish run by the Precious Blood Missionaries, began praying for Father Merlini's intercession and soon, the man experienced the required "rapid, complete and lasting" healing. The Rite of Beatification will take place in Rome on January 12, 2025 in the papal Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran presided by Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, representative of Pope Francis and prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints.

A man of profound discernment and wisdom, as an Apostolic Missionary Merlini announced the Mystery of

Redemption to entire populations in the Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples, favoring the wretched and the outcast. A living witness of that Mystery at the heart of the Church, he sought and lived out God's will in his daily life, pointing out the peace signified by the Blood of Christ as the royal way to holiness. Rooted, day after day, in the asceticism of prayer in the bond of fraternal charity — nourished by a universal vision — Giovanni Merlini's life had the flavor of the Gospel.

A renowned spiritual director, most notably of St. Maria de Mattias, foundress of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, he was also spiritual counselor to Pope Pius IX and helped convince the pope to establish the feast of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, now celebrated on July 1. He also oversaw the establishment of the Pious Union of the Precious Blood, now known as the Union of the Blood of Christ, the lay branch of the vast movement of devotion to the Precious Blood which originated in the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood established by



Bishop Francesco Albertini with the assistance of St. Gaspar.

This event of grace, placed at the beginning of the Jubilee Year 2025 will see the Precious Blood Family united in pilgrimage from all parts of the world celebrating a liturgical and ecclesial action to the glory of God in veneration of his faithful servant, Giovanni Merlini. With all God's people, we invoke the Holy Spirit to walk the *via sanguinis*, the *new and living way that Christ inaugurated for us to maintain, without wavering, the profession of our hope* (cf. Heb. 10:20,23). Such news is a source of great joy and feelings of deep gratitude to God for the gift of holiness offered to his Church in the person of our beloved Fr. Merlini.

This article contains material from the Moderator General of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, the Very Rev. Emmanuele Lupi C.P.P.S., as well as the editor's and other compiled sources.

Keeping in Touch

The following resources are available to help the Precious Blood Family keep in touch:

Digital Edition

A biannual alternative to the print edition will appear on the website of the Atlantic Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood where past issues of the magazine can also be found (<https://preciousbloodatlantic.org/>). A notification will appear at sanguischristi.com when a new issue becomes available.

sanguischristi.com

Fr. John Colacino's blog will feature the following in 2025:

Sunday Liturgy -- a weekly resource to help prepare for the Sunday liturgy including the proper chants, collect, readings (NRSV translation), homily, intercessions and music along with a series of quotations — the *Catena Nova* — a homage to the classic collection of patristic quotes on the Sunday Gospel by St. Thomas Aquinas.

Acta Sanctorum and Feast Days — weekly entries on the lives of the saints in homage to the encyclopedic work of the Bollandists. Saints are featured both from the General Roman Calendar and the Roman Martyrology containing all the saints and blessed

commemorated on a given day. Entries include a biography, scripture reading, selection from their writings, a musical selection and collect. Entries for feasts and solemnities of the Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary are also provided.

Advent -- the fourth and last in a series on the *Apocalypse of John (Book of Revelation)* guided this year by Russian Orthodox theologian Fr. Sergei Bulgakov.

Church Unity Octave — Entries will be provided to observe the week of prayer for Christian unity from January 18-25.

Lent -- Each day of the Lenten season will feature an entry from the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament with commentary, a musical selection and collect. A weekly devotional service will also be provided suitable especially for the Fridays of Lent.

Month of May — the second in a series of daily entries providing a Scripture passage, reading, musical selection and collect in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Month of the Precious Blood — each day of July will include an entry on the Precious Blood of Christ including readings from scripture and other authors with a musical selection and collect.

Season of Creation (*September 1-October 4*) — a daily entry guided by the poetry of the English Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins (+1889) and Denise Levertov (+1997) along with art, a psalm verse, a musical selection and prayer.

Month of the Holy Souls — the third in a series of Scripture and other readings, music and collects for each day of November for reflection and prayer on behalf of the faithful departed.

Precious Blood Gems -- a daily quotation on the Blood of Christ either from the saint commemorated that day in the General Calendar, the Martyrology or another author.

Devotions -- Interspersed throughout the year will be devotions including the Novena to St. Joseph (*March 10-18*); the Pentecost Novena (*May 30-June 7*), and the Novena to the Transforming Light from the feast of the Transfiguration to the Vigil of the Assumption (*August 6-14*)

Catholic Calling App

This app is designed, not only to help Roman Catholics discern their life's calling, but also to introduce the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Atlantic Province, their mission, community and spirituality. There are links to official provincial, vocational,

and mission websites, in addition to a host of prayers from the Manual of Prayer used by the Missionaries. Prayer requests or requests for other forms of ministry are also on this app. Daily quotes from our founder, St. Gaspar, and from various scriptural passages that speak about the power of the Precious Blood or the Congregation's charism of reconciliation can also be found. These quotes are sent as notifications to your cell phone each day as a way to start your day in the Lord's service. Lastly, for those who would like to be included in the annual offering of 4,000 Masses for someone--- living or deceased — an online certificate of enrollment can be sent to your or another person's email. There is a one-time charge of \$10.00 Can per mass card. These Masses will be celebrated by members of the Congregation worldwide. We hope you enjoy the app as much as we do, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, and we look forward to your interaction with us online. The app can be accessed at Google Play and the Apple Store.

OUR APOSTOLATE



C.P.P.S. MISSION PROJECTS

C.P.P.S Mission Projects is a charity founded by the congregation of Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Atlantic Province. Its mission is to spread the Good News that Christ has redeemed us all through the shedding of his Most Precious Blood, by helping those in need.

Since 1976, C.P.P.S. Mission Projects has focused working toward the uplifting of human dignity, and toward better living conditions of Tanzanians. Our missions in Africa support 2.5 million people a year. We help the people and communities we serve lift themselves and their families out of poverty. We partner with donors and the local people to develop solutions to tackle challenges facing them like poverty, lack of access to clean water and education, climate change, economic empowerment, and food security.

We are based in Dodoma-Tanzania and our approach to tackling problems is inspired by the flavor of the Gospel and the Spirituality of the Precious Blood. Our missions give priority to the poor, children, girls and women. May we always be ready to help the poor and the vulnerable. Find us at cppsmissionprojects.ngo

Wise Counsel from Blessed-elect Don Giovanni Merlini

"If we are still alive, it is by the grace of a kindly God who gives us a new opportunity to prepare ourselves for the great rendering of accounts."

*"Internal and external travails are a hedge to the soul like in a vineyard....Consider them this way and accept them **in peace and humbly: resignation, hence trust in God.**"*

*"One day we will understand the order God has maintained to lead us to salvation, and **we will not cease thanking Him!**"*

"If your soul cannot find Jesus, just stay with Jesus. Those who are in a dark room do not see the companion, but they know he is there and that is enough for them not to be afraid!"

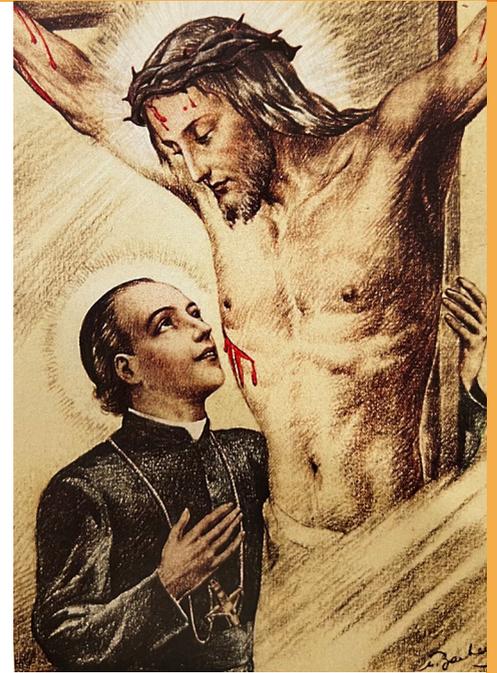
"One should abandon oneself totally to the divine will, not wanting to do anything if it is not what God wants. The afflictions, the perplexities, the agitations and everything else, as long as they come with peace and with peace are directed to the foot of the cross, it will go well..."

"As much as you can, promote mercy with its companions: **pitying, consoling, comforting, encouraging, helping, foreseeing** ... and with this exercise say: My God, deal with me mercifully as I strive to show mercy to others. In this we will experience great comfort, and while examining ourselves will find that we have a heart for our neighbors."



UNIO SANGUIS CHRISTI

Founded in 1851 by the Ven. Giovanni Merlini, third Moderator General of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, and approved by Pope Pius IX, the Union serves to promote the spirituality of the Blood of Christ through a variety of activities.



THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY

We appreciate any donation to help defray the postage and printing costs of this publication. The suggested annual offering is \$25. Please make cheques payable to Unio Sanguis Christi. Tax receipts are issued in January of each year.

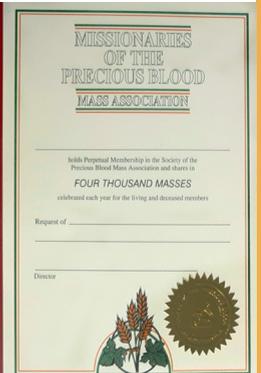
MASS ASSOCIATION

Since 1883 with the approval of Pope Leo XIII the Missionaries of the Precious Blood throughout the world have offered 4000 Masses annually for those enrolled in their Mass Association. Enrollments may be made on behalf of the living and the dead. These may be made in person or by mail at the Shrine of St. Gaspar, 540 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto ON M6C 1A4. Requests are also accepted by telephone

at 416-653-4486 or through the Atlantic Province website. The suggested offering is \$25.00 plus \$4.00 postage if the certificate is mailed.

You may also access the website - preciousbloodatlantic.org - click on Donations for more choices, like requesting a single Mass, a Mass Association or make a donation for spreading the spirituality of the Precious Blood

or the work of the Missionaries by completing all the required fields.



VOCATIONS

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood continue St. Gaspar's Ministry of the Word by preaching renewal and conversion through missions and retreats. We bring that love of God also to parishes, schools, hospitals, and prisons. As missionaries, we work where the Church needs us

most and where the Good News has not been heard. We walk with Jesus by sharing the joys and sufferings of the people with whom we work.

For information, contact Precious Blood Vocations at 416-829-6717 or e-mail alareyab@yahoo.ca.



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