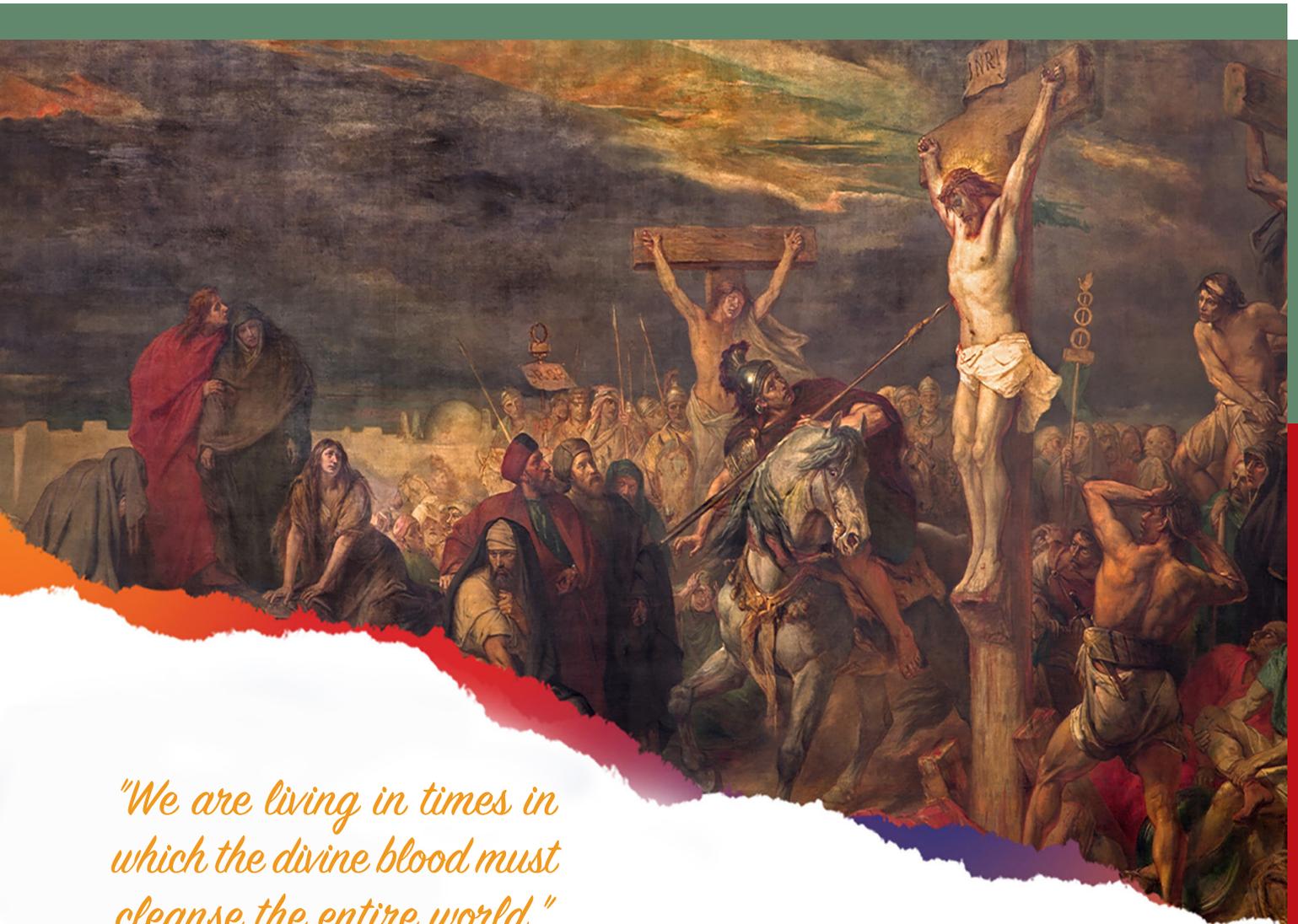


# JULY-THE MONTH OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD



*"We are living in times in  
which the divine blood must  
cleanse the entire world."*

*-St. Gaspar*

**THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY**



## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY

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## EDITORIAL

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Catholics in the United States find themselves in the midst of what their bishops are hoping will be a “Eucharistic Revival.” This is an attempt to revitalize faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and to bolster Mass attendance. Between the results of polls and the ongoing impact of the pandemic there has been a decline in both. Though I could not find comparable statistics for the Church in Canada I suspect things are much the same north of the border. As a small contribution to the bishops’ initiative this issue of the *Precious Blood Family* is focused on the Eucharist.

The website [sanguischristi.com](http://sanguischristi.com) will also be featuring other resources including a series of Eucharistic readings during the month of July. These offerings will hopefully provide our readership with a treasure trove of theological and devotional items designed to enhance faith in the Sacrament of sacraments and draw us ever more deeply into the Mystery we are privileged to share whenever we proclaim the death of the Lord by eating and drinking the Bread of life and Cup of salvation.

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

# 01

## CONTEMPLATING THE EUCHARISTIC FORM OF CHRIST

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

What exactly do the bishops of the United States hope for in their “Eucharistic revival” initiative? That might at first seem obvious. But is it? From some time now, I have been concerned about a seeming imbalance in approaches to the Eucharist I have seen in various venues. It began years ago when I happened to catch the end of a Mass on EWTN. As is their custom, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament took place immediately following the liturgy. At that time the Sacrament was exposed by an automatic curtain which rose to reveal a monstrance—contrary to any liturgical directive I am aware that requires an actual minister to perform this action. This was accompanied by a commentator who said the following in so many words: “The purpose of the Mass is to reserve and adore the Blessed Sacrament.” I was astounded that a media outlet that prides itself on its orthodoxy could have someone in its employ make such an uninformed statement.

Another sign of imbalance I have noted with some dismay is the tendency in Catholic publications to picture the consecrated Host in a monstrance in articles about the Eucharist -- as if the first reference to the Sacrament in the minds of people ought to be Eucharistic devotion outside of Mass rather than its actual liturgical celebration. This invariably reinforces the error made by the EWTN commentator.

These tendencies have been well-described by Fr. Louis Cameli of the Archdiocese of Chicago:

The heavy emphasis that [the National Eucharistic Revival] places on eucharistic devotions, such as processions, adoration, Forty Hours and eucharistic miracles—as praiseworthy as these might be in themselves—does not capture the

heart of the matter. The real challenge is not to understand, appreciate and reverence the Eucharist as a sacramental object, which can be a real tendency of eucharistic devotions. No, the real challenge is to enter together the mystery of the Lord’s self-sacrificing love made present and communicated in the eucharistic action—take, eat, drink, do, remember. To enter that mystery is to find ourselves individually and collectively transformed into the very one we celebrate, Jesus who is present among us as our hope of glory.... [Devotions] can lead us to the eucharistic action, and they can lead from it and, in a certain sense, prolong it. In neither case, however, can they substitute for the eucharistic action itself or claim an absolute value in Christian life (*America*; March 21, 2023).

Now lest anyone think at this point that I hold anything less than the full Catholic faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist—his humanity and divinity “really, truly and substantially” present as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it—rest assured that I do. Nor am I in any way opposed to Eucharistic adoration and devotion. Anyone who knows me knows that I have promoted this throughout my priesthood, most notably at the Chapel of St. Gaspar in Toronto. I have, moreover, for many decades been in the habit of making a daily Eucharistic Holy Hour. In doing so, however, I am aware of the liturgical directives governing the practice:

Exposition of the holy eucharist, either in the ciborium or in the monstrance, is intended to acknowledge Christ’s marvellous presence in the sacrament. Exposition invites us to the spiritual union with him that culminates in sacramental

communion. Thus it fosters very well the worship which is due to Christ in spirit and in truth. This kind of exposition must clearly express the cult [viz. worship] of the blessed sacrament in its relationship to the Mass. The plan of the exposition should carefully avoid anything which might somehow obscure the principal desire of Christ in instituting the eucharist, namely, to be with us as food, medicine, and comfort. (*Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*; 1973, no. 51).

Which brings me back to the theological and doctrinal imbalance I mentioned earlier. The tradition of the Church is virtually unanimous that what is signified and effected by the celebration of the Eucharist is the unity of the Church. For example, St. Thomas Aquinas, following the patristic tradition he inherited, taught that the true Body and Blood of Christ sacramentally present brings about the mystical, or ecclesial, Body of Christ. The conversion of the elements of bread and wine achieve their purpose, so to speak, when those gathered are themselves converted into the Body of Christ—the Church—newly united to their Head and to one another by their eating and drinking the one Bread and one Cup. In Thomas' words, “We enter into communion with Christ through the Eucharist; we share in his Flesh and in his Godhead; we enter into communion and are mutually united by it” (ST, III q. 79, a. 1).

Of course, in order for this to have an impact on those present for a given celebration of the Eucharist, the sacred liturgy needs to be of a commensurate quality. All of the elements which comprise the liturgical action must speak to this Mystery of the whole Christ, Head and members. This includes the beauty of the surroundings, the excellence of the music and preaching, the skill of the liturgical ministers who preside, proclaim and serve the gathered assembly so that all might truly engage in that participation called for by the Second Vatican Council. I have often thought how all such persons should be required on an annual basis—perhaps prior to the First Sunday of Advent and the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ—to review together some portion of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* as well as the *Introduction to the Lectionary* to see where their celebrations are or are not in accord with the mind and directives of the Church. I fear too many accommodations are made under the guise of “pastoral needs” which only serve to obscure and diminish the sacred mysteries. It seems to me an authentic Eucharistic revival has to begin

and end with a thoroughgoing liturgical revival or else I fear the bishops' initiative will be for naught.

As for the appropriate and sound practice of Eucharistic adoration, may I suggest supplementing our language with another phrase which I am borrowing from a fellow Missionary of the Precious Blood, the late Fr. Ernest Rally, who published a series of reflections for use in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament entitled *Eucharistic Contemplation* (Liturgical Press, 2003). To “contemplate the Eucharistic form of Christ” is to encounter in silence and awe the Body broken and the Blood outpoured given for us in the Paschal Mystery and sacramentally present under the Species of bread and wine. With a minimum of words and in the silence the Real Presence evokes, we behold in a contemplative gaze what during the liturgy is shown to us “in motion,” namely, the consecration, the elevation and the invitation to Communion. Those moments in the liturgical action are “freeze-framed” so to speak so we can reflect at length on the words, “This is my Body, this is my Blood” . . . . “Through him, with him and in him,” and “Behold the Lamb of God.” But this is no idle contemplation; the Eucharistic Form of Christ makes corresponding demands on us. We are challenged to go forth from a time of adoring contemplation to engage in various forms of Eucharistic action wherein our own bodies become food for others, broken if necessary, and our own blood given for the life of the world, poured out if need be. Or as St. Augustine taught, “This is the sacrifice of Christians: we, being many, are one body in Christ. And this also is the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, known to the faithful, in which she teaches that she herself is offered in the offering she makes to God” (*City of God* X,6).

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02



# EUCCHARISTIC REVIVAL AND ADORATION

Joyce Ann Zimmerman, C.P.P.S.

Sometimes we see billboards posting the idiom “Out of sight, out of mind.” Most of us have pictures in our homes of beloved relatives, living or dead, in order to bring to mind who they still are for us, their love for us, and our love for them. Some of us keep scrap books recounting past events in our lives or keep journals whose words carry us back to a time or place. Keeping in mind or remembering is a special way to be present. The Eucharist is no exception.

When Jesus said, at the Last Supper, “Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19), he was commanding us to do much more than simply call to mind his Self-giving, his unique generosity of being truly present to us under the form of bread and wine. His sacramental Presence is a promise of encounter and of never being out of sight, out of mind. Each time we celebrate Mass we encounter his divine Presence in the living Word and in the heavenly Food of the Sacrament; we encounter the risen Christ in ourselves, the assembly, the Church made visible; we encounter him in the priest, the visible Head of the Church who is the risen Christ (see *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no. 7). As Pope Francis so beautifully reminds us, “The Liturgy guarantees for us the possibility of such an encounter. For us a vague memory of the Last Supper would do no good. We need to be present at that Supper, to be able to hear his voice, to eat his Body and to drink his Blood. We need Him” (Apostolic Letter *Desiderio Desideravi*, 29 June 2022, no. 11). Encounter invites us to be truly present to the risen Christ who chooses to be present to us in many and wondrous ways.

The enemy of presence and encounter is familiarity. Even with something as sublime as our Eucharistic celebration, if we are not careful it can become familiar, routine, an occasion to

be there but not truly present to our Triune God and each other. To shake us out of familiarity we must stop, ponder, renew our commitment to the encounters that are possible. As Pope Francis reminds us, “[W]e are required every day to rediscover the beauty of the truth of the Christian celebration” (*Desiderio Desideravi*, no. 21).

If we are to keep the Eucharistic liturgy fresh so it is truly an encounter with the risen Christ, then we must do all we can to revive it, enliven it, celebrate it so that Presence and encounter constantly emerge with more depth and love. To this end, the United States Bishops inaugurated a three-year Eucharistic Revival on June 19, 2022, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. These three years are to focus on deepening our relationship with the risen Christ in the Holy Eucharist so that we, being sent forth from Mass, continue his saving mission in love and service to God’s holy people. This three-year Eucharistic Revival will conclude on July 17-21, 2024, at a national Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis.

Two reflections might help us to enter into this Eucharistic Revival process so that the Eucharist can never be out of sight, out of mind for us: Eucharist as an action transforming us, and Eucharist as the object of our adoration.

## Eucharist as an Action

Jesus told us to *do* this. It doesn’t take long for us to recognize all the doing, all the action, at the Eucharistic liturgy. We assume many postures: sitting, standing, kneeling, genuflecting, bowing, crossing ourselves, to name a few. We engage in many interactions: processing, greeting each other, offering a sign of peace, reaching out our hands to receive the risen Christ’s Body and Blood, to name a few.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a mutual encounter between Lover and beloved.

It is a privilege of grace-filled Presence that ensures our Beloved is never truly

out of sight and certainly not out of mind. Oh, what a Mystery!

We activate our voices: singing, responding, professing, proclaiming, acclaiming, petitioning, offering, to name a few. All of this doing, especially with a conscious surrender of ourselves to the celebration, draws us more deeply into the heart of the Eucharistic action. In all of this variety of doing, we are using our whole selves to participate in the celebration: our bodies, emotions, minds, spirits. However, our doing cannot stay at the external level of observable participation. Encounter and transformation emerge at a much deeper level.

The most obvious transformation that takes place during Mass is the transformation (transubstantiation) of our gifts of bread and wine into the very Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our humble gifts of bread and wine are offered to God, who then returns them to us through the work of the Holy Spirit as the real Presence of the risen Christ. Our offering is given back to us as Gift from God for our nourishment. But another, not-so-obvious transformation takes place at Mass. We take and eat and drink. Through this extraordinary divine Food we ourselves are transformed into being more perfectly the very Body of Christ.

Eucharist as an action calls us to surrender ourselves to God's transforming us. By God's grace, we are equipped by the Word we hear and the risen Christ's very Body and Blood we receive to pursue the good of all those we encounter in our daily living. By responding faithfully to the Eucharistic action, we continue Jesus' saving mission. We make visible through our very being the Presence of Christ that we are. We bring Christ to the world.

This mystery is surely beyond our complete understanding, beyond our imagination, beyond our ability to render God proper thanks for the divine Gift given to us so freely and lavishly. We are given in the Eucharistic rite some time as a community after we receive Holy Communion to dwell on this great mystery and lift our hearts in thanksgiving. But this is not nearly enough time for gratitude in face of such a great Gift. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in a tabernacle for the sake of the sick and dying, and also for the privilege of our being present to the risen Christ for adoration, contemplation of the Eucharistic mystery, and thanksgiving.

## Eucharist as the Object of Our Adoration

The Second Vatican Council clearly endorsed the primacy of the Eucharistic *action* (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 13). Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is to be seen as *connected* to the Eucharistic celebration: flowing from it and leading us back to it. We might think of Eucharistic adoration as an extension or continuation of the brief time of adoration and thanksgiving given us after Communion during Mass.

Eucharistic adoration is a response to God's gift of love that rouses deep thanksgiving to well up in our hearts. During Eucharistic adoration we give ourselves over to the mystery of the risen Christ's Self-giving to us, open ourselves to encounter the Mystery, and receive and embrace our Beloved. Our focus during Eucharistic adoration is on the mystery of the Body and Blood given to us, indeed, on the whole mystery of Christ. Adoration is an extended time during which we choose to surrender ourselves to the Eucharistic Presence and enter into spiritual communion with our Beloved. We don't need to say anything or do anything. We simply bask in our Lord's divine Presence to us.

Surely, during our times of Eucharistic adoration we might beg God to hear our needs and lift up our loved ones in prayer. But these concerns are uttered in the context of the Blessed Sacrament, bringing to mind the risen Christ's continued care for us through his Self-giving. Praise, thanksgiving, and adoration are our response to the encounter with our Beloved. The reserved Blessed Sacrament is far more than an object to be adored. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is an occasion for divine encounter that instills in us a deeper hunger for participation in the Eucharistic celebration. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a mutual encounter between Lover and beloved. It is a privilege of grace-filled Presence that ensures our Beloved is never truly out of sight and certainly not out of mind. Oh, what a Mystery!

*Sr. Joyce Ann Zimmerman C.P.P.S. is a Sister of the Precious Blood and the Director of the Institute for Liturgical Ministry in Dayton, Ohio.*

**Happy Feast of the  
Most Precious Blood  
of Jesus!**



*Celebrating Fr. William's 50th anniversary of Priesthood*

# A VOICE FROM TRADITION

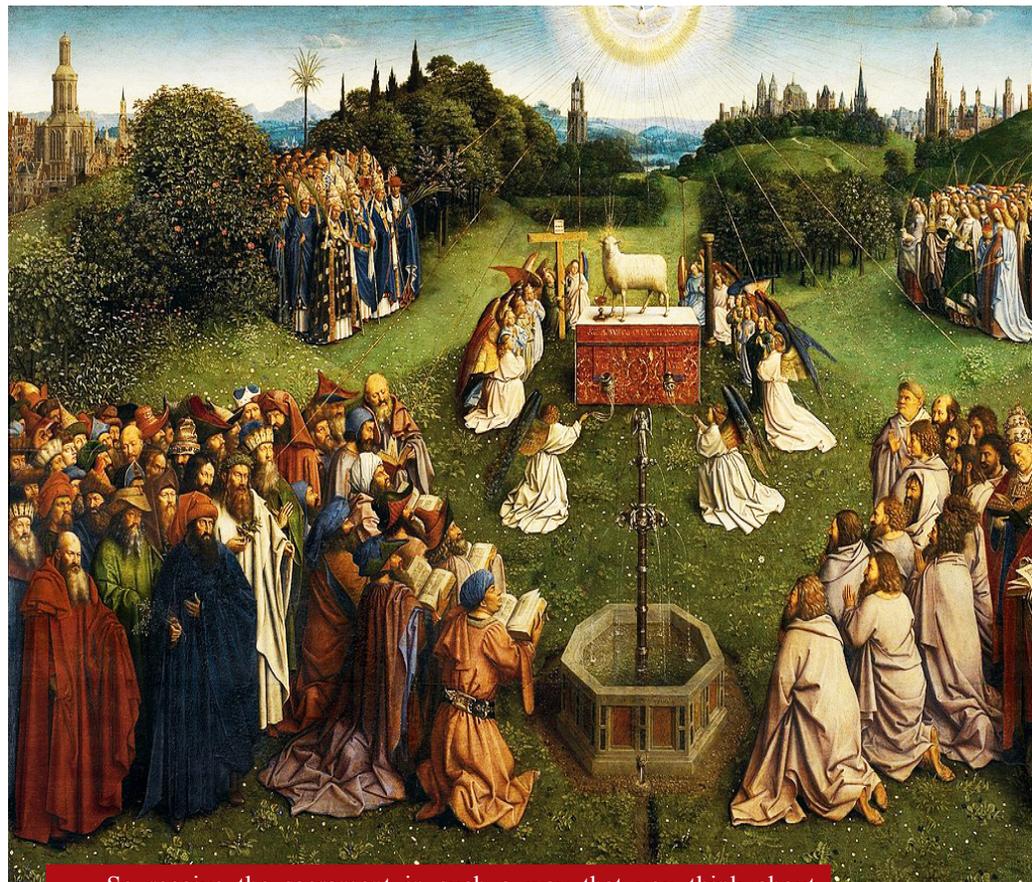
## ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (+430), BISHOP AND DOCTOR

### FROM SERMON 227, PREACHED TO THE NEWLY-BAPTIZED

**Y**ou ought to know what you have received, what you are about to receive, what you ought to receive every day. That bread which you can see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. That cup, or rather what the cup contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ. It was by means of these things that the Lord Christ wished to present us with his body and blood, which he shed for our sake for the forgiveness of sins. If you receive them well, you are yourselves what you receive. You see, the apostle says, *We, being many, are one loaf, one body* (1 Cor 10:17). That's how he explained the sacrament of the Lord's table; one loaf, one body, is what we all are, many though we be.

In this loaf of bread you are given clearly to understand how much you should love unity. I mean, was that loaf made from one grain? Weren't there many grains of wheat? But before they came into the loaf they were all separate; they were joined together by means of water after a certain amount of pounding and crushing.

Unless wheat is ground, after all, and moistened with water, it



So receive the sacrament in such a way that you think about yourselves, that you retain unity in your hearts, that you always fix your hearts up above. Don't let your hope be placed on earth, but in heaven.

can't possibly get into this shape which is called bread. In the same way you too were being ground and pounded, as it were, by the humiliation of fasting and the sacrament of exorcism. Then came baptism, and you were, in a manner of speaking, moistened with water in order to be shaped into bread. But it's not yet bread without fire to bake it. So what does fire represent? That's the chrism, the anointing. Oil, the fire-feeder, you see, is the sacrament of the Holy Spirit.

Notice it, when the Acts of the Apostles are read; the reading of that book begins now, you see. Today begins the book which is called the Acts of the Apostles. Anybody who wishes to make progress has the means of doing so. When you assemble in church, put aside silly stories and concentrate on the scriptures. We here are your books. So pay attention, and see how the Holy Spirit is going to come at Pentecost. And this is how he will come; he will show himself in tongues of fire. You see, he breathes into us the charity which should set us on fire for God, and have us think lightly of the world, and burn up our straw, and purge and refine our hearts like gold. So the Holy Spirit comes, fire after water, and you are baked into the bread which is the body of Christ. And that's how unity is signified.

Now you have the sacraments in the order they occur. First, after the prayer, you are urged to lift up your hearts; that's only right for the members of Christ. After all, if you have become members of Christ, where is your head? Members have a head. If the head hadn't gone ahead before, the members would never follow. Where has our head gone? What did you give back in the creed? On the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father. So our head is in heaven. That's why, after the words Lift up your hearts, you reply, We have lifted them up to the Lord.

And you mustn't attribute it to your own powers, your own merits, your own efforts, this lifting up of your hearts to the Lord, because it's God's gift that you should have your heart up above. That's why the bishop, or the presbyter who's offering, goes on to say, when the people have answered We have lifted them up to the Lord, why he goes on to say, Let us give thanks to the Lord our God, because we have lifted up our hearts. Let us give thanks, because unless he had enabled us to lift them up, we would still have our hearts down here on earth. And you signify your agreement by saying, It is right and just to give thanks to the one who caused us to lift up our hearts to our head.

Then, after the consecration of the sacrifice of God, because he wanted us to be ourselves his sacrifice, which is indicated by where that sacrifice was first put, that is the sign of the thing that we are; why, then after the consecration is accomplished, we say the Lord's prayer, which you have received and given back. After that comes the greeting, Peace be with you, and Christians kiss one another with a holy kiss. It's a sign of peace; what is indicated by the lips should happen in the conscience; that is, just as your lips approach the lips of your brothers or sisters, so your heart should not be withdrawn from theirs.

So they are great sacraments and signs, really serious and important sacraments. Do you want to know how their seriousness is impressed on us? The apostle says, *Whoever eats the body of Christ or drinks the blood of the Lord unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord* (1Cor 11:27). What is receiving unworthily? Receiving with contempt, receiving with derision. Don't let yourselves think that what you can see is of no account. What you can see passes away, but the invisible reality signified does not pass away, but remains. Look, it's received, it's eaten, it's consumed. Is the body of Christ consumed, is the Church of Christ consumed, are the members of Christ consumed? Perish the thought! Here they are being purified, there they will be crowned with the victor's laurels. So what is signified will remain eternally, although the thing that signifies it seems to pass away. So receive the sacrament in such a way that you think about yourselves, that you retain unity in your hearts, that you always fix your hearts up above. Don't let your hope be placed on earth, but in heaven. Let your faith be firm in God, let it be acceptable to God. Because what you don't see now, but believe, you are going to see there, where you will have joy without end.



03

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# “EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE” — A EUCHARISTIC PERSPECTIVE

By Fr. Peter Santandreu

The Eucharist is many things. So many things in fact that it can be said to be everything. The Lord himself, incarnate of the Virgin Mary, the crucified one who is risen from the dead, Jesus Christ the King of the Universe is present in the Eucharist. God, who is Being itself, is present in the Eucharist. Yes, the Eucharist is everything. The underlying doctrine of transubstantiation has been hotly debated, passionately defended, and deemed so central that supporting it has merited many a martyr’s witness. If one is a committed Catholic, this goes without needing further defense. If one is less convinced of its truth, he or she will not find a systematic argument for this fact here. What follows is for those who profess faith in the Bread that is no longer bread and thus takes for granted this simple and foundational truth that the Church has consistently held. I do not intend here to dwell on the incomprehensibility of such a truth, rather I wish to develop a few points about what that truth makes possible.

Because the Eucharist is everything it gives those who have a relationship with it access to realities beyond what is immediately present in our physically limited world. It is a path that leads beyond our earthly constraints and, when traveled, prepares us for that future life lived in the presence of the Almighty for all time. Christ, now existing beyond the confines of the created world, has the power to serve as a link between us and God. The Eucharistic Christ puts us in contact with God in a way that makes us part of His body.

“But wait just a second,” one might object, “isn’t that baptism you mean?” Quite right — the sacrament of baptism is the foundation of our relationship with God, but it is not the last word. St. Paul compares baptism to being grafted onto the tree of God’s family (Rom 11:17). By receiving the offer of new life by water and the Holy Spirit, we are irreversibly joined to the mystical body of Christ. Being grafted onto this tree means that we both receive and contribute to the life of God active in the world. We receive the grace that flows from the roots through the trunk and share in the expectation that our branch too will flower and bear fruit. In consuming the Eucharist, we reaffirm our desire to receive from the Lord and remain connected to the source.

Through baptism we share a common dependence on the life flowing from the tree and share the responsibility to flower and bear fruit. Engrafted onto the tree of life, we are simultaneously connected to everything else its branches contain beginning with the connection we all share as members of the human race. People can also be connected by common interests, memberships in organizations, and citizenship. All of these connections, chosen or not, can never compare, however, with the connection we have in common with Christ. Although we may feel no kinship whatsoever with certain members of the Church throughout the world, the truth is we all drink from the same well. We are all held to the the same standard of responding to the invitation of the One who gives us to drink. In the Eucharist we are reminded of this fundamental truth and challenged to live it in ever clearer ways. The sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood fills us with life, but it also asks us to use that life for the benefit of our brothers and sisters.

# 04

One way to think about this is through the various ways we can speak of “consuming.” First, we have the example of Christ who, while in the flesh, was consumed with zeal for His father’s house. This desire to complete the will of the Father is what brought Him to the cross and, before that, to the Last Supper. Secondly, Jesus offered His Body for consumption by the Apostles at the Last Supper and commanded them to “do this in memory of me.” Being consumed with love for the Father, He further offers Himself to be consumed sacramentally for all time. He shares the Father’s love for humanity and willingly submits Himself to become the perpetual bridge that gives access to the grace of the Spirit and citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Third, when we consume the Bread of Life today, we take into our bodies the very substance of the Risen One. As His presence is diffused into our bodies we are consumed by what we consume. While we are joined to the life of God through baptism, in consuming the Flesh of Christ we are taken up into that life in an ever deeper and transformative way. If we allow the Eucharist to work within us, if we are docile to the effusion of God’s grace, we too will be consumed by love for the inner life of the Trinity. The fourth consummation is the result of all these previous instances. When we consume the One who was consumed with zeal, and thus come to share in His state of being consumed, we find that the only way forward is to be consumed ourselves in service to our fellow Christians and the world. It is here that the Eucharist has its final cause, to recreate in us the likeness of God by remaking us into the image of His Son. This only happens by maintaining the vertical connection with the Divine (sacramental Eucharistic worship and reception) and building up the horizontal connection with our brothers and sisters in the manner of Christ the Lord (cooperating with the grace offered in the Eucharist which motivates us to live lives of other-centered service).

So the Eucharist doesn’t just function as some spiritual superfood for our personal growth, it also serves to actualize our connection with one another. I have been blessed to share friendships with fellow Christians around the world. Some of these people I will likely never see again this side of the Parousia. Of these, a few have grown accustomed to using the phrase “see you in the Eucharist.” This was often spoken on the occasion of our last meeting, when we knew that this was “goodbye,” not “see you later.” This hopeful formulation gave expression to the fact of our fundamental Christian connection and, by way of edification, encouraged an ongoing commitment to remaining close to Christ in the Eucharist. Because we recognized our temporal relationship as being caught up in the transhistorical relationship of Christ with each of us, it was possible to be reassured that we would never be far from each other if we stayed close to Christ.

Because the Eucharist is “everything, everywhere, all at once,” my friends are all there somehow when I partake of the Lord’s Body or when I gaze upon Him in the monstrance or sit before the tabernacle. Beyond these friends I have personally interacted with, there are also all those other grafted branches that I have not met and will never meet. There are all of my past relatives, all the numberless generations of my direct line stretching back to the first baptism when the faith first came to the land of my ancestors. There is that nameless priest who performed that first ancestral baptism hundreds of years ago and all the others he grafted onto the tree of life by his hands. There are all those countless people who came to Christ out of the preaching of the Twelve throughout the world and throughout time. All of these are there, all of them “seen in the Eucharist.”

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# EMERGENT HEART: PART II

By Sharon Miller

Life continued to offer an inner and outer journey, with pinnacles and valleys ever birthing and spiraling with fresh expressions—a pilgrimage of an emerging heart. Meditation, introduced to me during the 1970's, nurtured an invaluable practice with an ongoing cumulative effect that inspired prayer, reflection, and direct experience with sacred silence. However, I remained ignorant and asleep to the Paschal Mystery and Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Life's pilgrimage, afar, included extensive travel to regions of unbridled natural landscapes—harsh and resplendent. I stood on mountain summits, hiked into rock-faced canyons, and contemplated in the desert—breathing rarified air in vast silence. One had only to notice that nature offered active reflections of the Divine I eventually came to know as “reflective mysticism.” During those suspended moments of non-time, I encountered “As above, so below.” Travel continued to influence my perceptions as I was repeatedly drawn to remote solitude beyond borders—blending geographic beauty with the diverse attributes of world cultures.

I honored the enacted devotion of Buddhist and Hindu pilgrims. Clearly remembered was joining a perpetual stream of devotees murmuring chants and making humble offerings before candle illuminated altars, within the dim recesses of Tibetan temples in Lhasa.

Stifling air held the rancid scent of ghee used in rituals and ceremony. A continuum of the ancient lineage and Vedic history was venerated while inspiring a generative spirit of hope. I witnessed the pilgrims' unwavering obeisance. Om Mani Padme Hum was a resonant and pervasive chant: “The jewel in the lotus.” I was astonished and mystified when the atmosphere in the temple awakened my heart to the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist.

Yes, the jewel in the lotus! Acute noticing of connections was a life-time intention; I was alert to subtle messages. On another occasion, I entered a small book store in Kathmandu, Nepal. So many selections! My eyes focused upon the “Autobiography of a Yogi” written by Paramahansa Yogananda, who danced the spirituality of East and West — with proclaimed devotion to Christ-consciousness. The Benedictine monk Bede Griffiths commented that Paramahansa Yogananda focused on the “importance of developing a personal relationship with God through the practice of yoga and meditation.” Paramahansa Yogananda's wisdom and yogic practices transcended duality and ego identifications to the freshness of one's alignment and union with God.

Years elapsed. Paramahansa Yogananda reentered my life when I visited the Assisi Institute located in Rochester, New York. Craig Bullock was spiritual director and a master teacher. Assisi Institute was devoted to the Heavenly Father/Divine Mother and to Jesus; balanced with the wisdom/science of Paramahansa Yogananda, the teachings of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare — an inclusive blend of East and West. My meditation practice and commitment deepened as I immersed in stillness, prayer, and study. I was home.

Then awe. I stood before the San Damiano cross, painted during the 12th century, located in the Basilica of Saint Clare in Assisi, Italy. St. Francis had prayed before the cross when it hung gloriously in the small San Damiano chapel and he received a commission from God to rebuild the “church.” The inspiring icon represented the Easter of death and resurrection.

# 05

My thoughts traveled to Jesus' insufferable agony during the processional route from Jerusalem to the hill of Calvary — as though carrying each of our lives with an abiding hope of sanctification and sublime remembrance of the Eucharist. The sacrament of Holy Communion was a substantive gift of the Last Supper — unity with God's grace, “two becoming one as two.” Through Communion, Christ entered our lives.

That cross spoke without words — an intimate portrayal that remained in my heart. The horizontal limb of the cross represented every human journey — yet without support. The vertical limb was rooted in God's love and offered hope to one's commitment to align with the Divine order. Jesus' ultimate suffering during the crucifixion inspired a wondrous axis mundi: the horizontal and vertical limbs of the cross intersected at the lotus of the pulsing heart of Jesus' unconditional love and the involution of grace. The San Damiano icon depicted Jesus with tormented yet opened arms — a facial countenance that registered His surrender, His wounds lifting up hope.

## ***The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory (Jn 1:14)***

Five years ago, I “happened” to visit the Mission House of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in Rochester NY — a seasoned setting for Mass and worship, reverently directed by Fr. John Colacino: a “home church.” During Lent a few seasons ago I attended a two-hour silent Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the mission house chapel. Although Fr. John had broadly announced the occasion, he and I were the only ones present. I felt a tad strange but my self-consciousness quickly dissipated. I settled into the curvature of a couch, my legs in a half-lotus position readied for meditation. The chapel was softly illuminated and we slipped into prayer and silence. Dusk descended. Two peaceful hours elapsed without an awareness of time or the external world. Much to my surprise, I yearned to approach the altar located in an arched alcove. I obliged my soul's prompting and walked forward with hands in prayer. I lovingly made a sign of the cross and whispered my gratitude as I bowed. Prior to that holy season, Lent and Holy Week had a superficial meaning to me. That year, I felt an abiding pledge to “empty” and open fully to the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Sacred Heart. My eyes softly gazed upon the Blessed Sacrament when suddenly, mist emerged and formed a cross in the foreground. At the junction of the horizontal and vertical, a blood-red Heart appeared in distinct contrast to the suspended cloud-like cross. The essence circulated and imprinted my open heart: Communion.

I bowed and turned from the eternal pause and walked toward Father John who met my eyes-seeming to know “something” had occurred. As we faced one another, words were not necessary. With surrender and joy, a true heart raised a prayer of gravitas and gratitude to the Sacred Heart of the Beloved.

*Sharon Miller is a member of the Rochester Mission House and the Assisi Institute in Rochester NY.*

# THE FIRST YEAR OF PRIESTHOOD: A REFLECTION

By Fr. Gerardo Laguardilla, C.P.P.S.

*God reminded me not to be afraid. He is in control of everything. I just needed to be open to his grace and will.*

The gift of the priesthood and my consecrated life are sources of great joy to me, and I hope to the people entrusted to my care as well. During this year many things have occurred to help me appreciate the simple moments with the people of God — my beloved parishioners and fellow clergy. As a result, I have learned one important thing: that events in one’s life need to be appreciated and celebrated. It is in this context that I reflect on my first year as a priest of Jesus Christ.

Weeks before my ordination on December 3, 2021, I received a call from the Clergy Personnel Director of the Archdiocese of Toronto to tell me that the Cardinal Archbishop of Toronto was appointing me the Associate Pastor of St. Margaret of Scotland Church with specific responsibilities to minister at St. Eugene’s Chapel effective December 16, 2021. I knew nothing about the parish, but I said “Yes” (*Adsum*) to the appointment. St. Eugene’s Chapel was established on September 8, 1942 and built by Italian immigrants in the area north of the Bathurst-Lawrence crossroads. The closest Catholic churches were Our Lady of the Assumption (1951), St. Margaret of Scotland (1951), St. Charles Borromeo (1948) and St. Norbert.





I came to meet the small, worried, and divided community a week after my ordination. The church structure was falling apart. They had fewer and ever-dwindling parishioners. The lay organizations were divided and not organized. There was no pastoral program or plan of action. There was a possibility of closing the church if issues like the deteriorating physical structure of the building, as well as safety and financial issues were not addressed. The bishop asked me to establish a consultation committee to help me address these issues. There were suggestions to close and sell the chapel or else to fundraise between \$1.8-2.5 million in order to it tear down and rebuild. I was so fearful. We did not have money. I was a newly-ordained priest with no support from anyone. But God reminded me not to be afraid. He is in control of everything. I just needed to be open to his grace and will. He then sent me people to work with me in this ministry for which I am very thankful and grateful.

So these first six months of priesthood were a rough go in some senses, but they were also incredibly grace-filled. Certainly there were moments of questioning and doubt: Where to start and how to raise funds? Who will do the work? I could not pay architects, engineers, or labourers. But God is good to us at St. Eugene's. He sent the people we needed to work for free. God sent generous people to sponsor materials and provide food for the volunteer workers who came every night to work from July to September. Our Friday devotions to the Precious Blood of Jesus gave me and the community hope, courage, joy, and excitement. All of which reinforced a positive perspective of the church's transformation and revitalization.

With strength and inspiration from Mary our mother and St. Gaspar our Founder, I was able to lead the community of St. Eugene's to become active and rejuvenated, re-building the community after almost two difficult years of pandemic lockdown. Re-organization and revitalization of the pastoral council, pastoral plans and a calendar of activities were my priorities. The chapel became a hive of spiritual, pastoral, socio and multicultural activity. It once again became a welcoming church and place of prayer and devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus and Eucharistic adoration. While English, Filipino, Italian and Spanish have become the main languages spoken by church members, many more cultures have come to make up the people of St. Eugene's.

In 2022 the parish celebrated its 80th anniversary last year with the theme "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, Many Cultures." Among other things, the faith community re-established the patronal feast of St. Eugene on August 23 and in September, Bishop Robert Kasun together with a number of concelebrating priests lead the community in thanksgiving.

I am very thankful that I am assigned to this loving and vibrant community. I am excited to see where Jesus wants to lead me during this year as I pray, "O Lord, everything is your grace, everything is your gift, everything is changing. You are full of surprises. Show me the priest you want me to be in these people you entrusted to me." God allows trials just as Jesus allowed his disciples to venture into the tumultuous storm at sea to help bring about their conversion. As I journey through this second year of priesthood, I turn to our almighty and loving God, not in frustration and despair, nor in anger and tears, but in faith. I know that God's Spirit, through the intercession of Mary, St. Gaspar and the saints, will continue the journey with me: loving, guiding, caring, supporting and inspiring. Glory to the Blood of Jesus, now and forever. Amen.

*Fr. Gerardo Laguartilla is a Missionary of the Precious Blood of the Atlantic Province*

# “Take; this is my body”

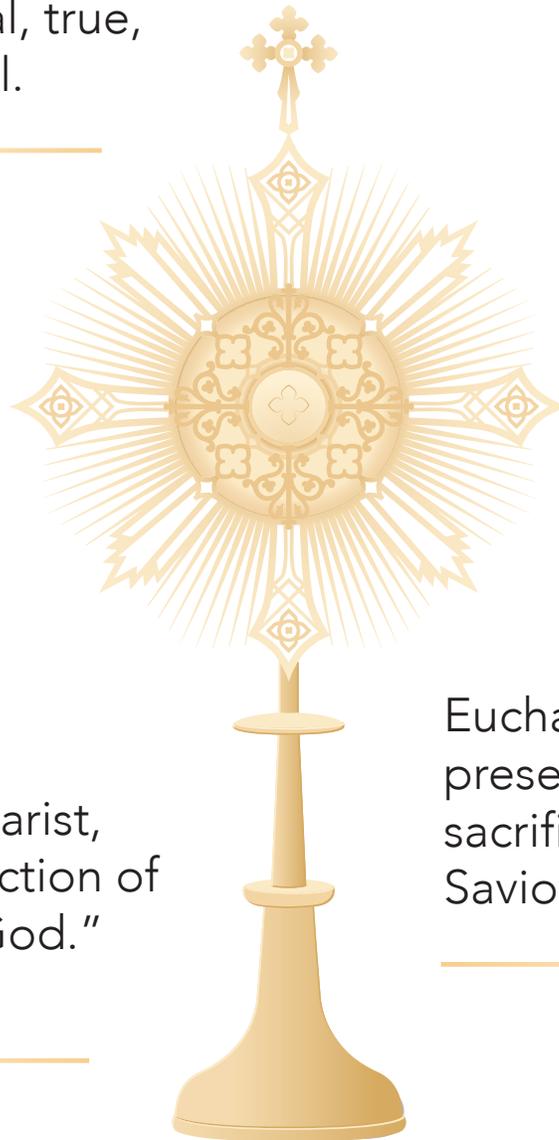
—Mark 14:22

The presence of Christ in the Eucharist is real, true, and substantial.

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“Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love.” (St. John Paul II, *Dominicae cenae*, no. 3)

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“It is called: Eucharist, because it is an action of thanksgiving to God.” (CCC, no. 1328)

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Eucharist “makes present the one sacrifice of Christ the Savior.” (CCC, no. 1330)

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# THE EUCHARIST IN THE LIFE OF A NEWLY-ORDAINED PRIEST

By Fr. Jerome Hologa, C.P.P.S.

07



**A**t my first Mass as a priest, I trembled a little when I held Jesus in my hands and raised him for the people to see. Apparently the trembling rose my bpm (“beats per minute”) significantly to the point where it triggered a health app to send me a high heart rate notification! If St. John the Baptist leaped in the womb at the approach of Mary, how could I not tremble when I am literally holding Jesus in my hands? The app missed that part—the best part. The distress it picked up was joy-filled. A supernatural event had taken place at that Holy Mass and I was joyful and grateful to repeat Jesus’ words, “Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you. Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me”. The Last Supper renewed. How marvelous is this gift of priesthood! How privileged is a priest to be a mediator between people and God acting *in persona Christi Capitis!* It was a moment I will never forget.

The experience left in me a glorious awe. It made me hunger and thirst for the Eucharist. Words cannot express the sense of deep joy and satisfaction I felt — but I will try. It was like time came to a standstill. Not like when time and eternity meet, but more of an invasion of the timeless Divine into my broken temporariness. Shocking. Amazing.

I remember I had an inner monologue: “Why is this granted to me to take, bless, lift up, eat and drink the body and blood of our Lord?” Mystery. I also considered his generosity. He purchased me by his blood and now he utterly and magnanimously gives himself as food, again and again. Imagine.

A year later I still look, take, touch, lift up and consume the Eucharist with the same loving heart, burning with love for Christ and the salvation of the world. Oh how I look forward with excitement to each celebration of the Eucharist. Oh how I wish to epitomize the sacrifice of this great sacrament, as St. Francis de Sales exhorts, “when you have received him, stir up your heart to do him homage; speak to him about your spiritual life, gazing upon him in your soul where he is present for your happiness; welcome him as warmly as possible, and behave outwardly in such a way that your actions may give proof to all of his presence”.

As I am penning this experience, I have not yet reached the goal; “but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own” (Philippians 3:12-14). As I press on, I also ask the Lord to keep my thirst and hunger for him alive. I am aware of the many challenges and powers that can extinguish the fire of Christ in me and what I consume could become increasingly mundane. My sinful nature is capable of making the real and true presence of Jesus rather tame and bland. I am afraid that’s what is going to happen if I fall into the habit of consuming him daily without grasping the depths of the “Amen” I give in response to his proposition to come down and stay with me. This worst fear will definitely become a reality if I allow myself to become a seasoned Catholic like those found in the 2019 Pew Forum study who have come to domesticate the mystery of the Eucharist to a vague symbol. And as I become a seasoned priest, I would want to be mindful not to reduce the true body and blood of Jesus our Saviour that I consume into a casual meal. I do not want to let my heart become numb and indifferent to his presence.

What I want instead is to encounter the one true love that heals and makes my vicious lips, tongue and mouth into instruments of peace, reconciliation, praise, glory and thanksgiving. I want his living Bread and Wine to destroy every sin within me. All I want is to submit to his love and be conformed to Christ. Jesus, in your great love grant me this desire. I also pray for the people you have entrusted to my care, renew them with the wonder of your encounter at the table of the Eucharist. How marvellous is this gift of priesthood. Amen.

*Fr. Jerome Hologa is a Missionary of the Precious Blood of the Atlantic Province and graphic designer for The Precious Blood Family*



## 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](http://cppsmissionprojects.ngo)

## LITANY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

Lord, have mercy. *Lord, have mercy.*

Christ, have mercy. *Christ, have mercy.*

Lord, have mercy. *Lord, have mercy.*

Christ, hear us. *Christ, hear us.*

Christ, graciously hear us. *Christ, graciously hear us.*

God, the Father of Heaven, *have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *have mercy on us.*

God, the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, One God, *have mercy on us.*

Blood of Christ, only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, Incarnate Word of God, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, of the New and Eternal Testament, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, falling upon the earth in the Agony, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, shed profusely in the Scourging, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, flowing forth in the Crowning with Thorns, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, poured out on the Cross, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, price of our salvation, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, without which there is no forgiveness, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, Eucharistic drink and refreshment of souls, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, stream of mercy, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, victor over demons, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, courage of Martyrs, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, strength of Confessors, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, bringing forth

Virgins, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, help of those in peril, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, relief of the burdened, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, solace in sorrow, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, hope of the penitent, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, consolation of the dying, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, peace and tenderness of hearts, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, pledge of eternal life, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, freeing souls from purgatory, *save us.*

Blood of Christ, most worthy of all glory and honor, *save us.*

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*

V. You have redeemed us, O Lord, in your Blood.

R. And made us, for our God, a kingdom.

### Let us pray

Almighty and eternal God, you have appointed your only begotten Son the Redeemer of the world, and willed to be appeased by his Blood. Grant we beg of you, that we may worthily adore this price of our salvation, and through its power be safeguarded from the evils of the present life, so that we may rejoice in its fruits forever in heaven. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

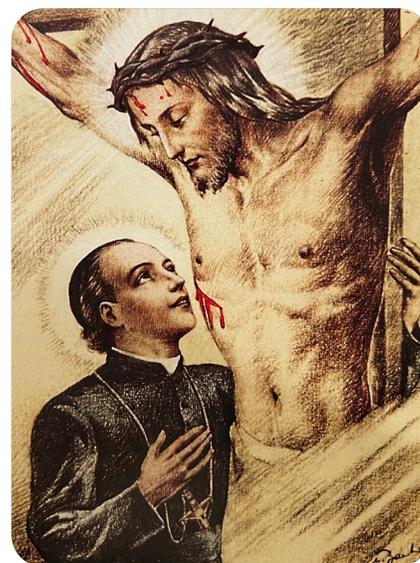
## UNIO SANGUIS CHRISTI



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](http://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](mailto:alareyab@yahoo.ca).



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