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BLOODLINES

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OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD ATLANTIC PROVINCE



'MESSENGER OF MERCY'



BLOODLINES is a monthly publication by the Congregation of Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Atlantic Province.

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THE FRAGRANCE OF MERCY: FOLLOWING MERLINI'S WITNESS

The newly composed prayer in honour of Blessed Giovanni Merlini names him as a *Messenger of Mercy*. As sons of St. Gaspar and Blessed Merlini, we are invited to ask ourselves: *How am I called to witness and live the spirit of mercy in my daily life, especially with those I encounter each day?*

The foundation of compassion is our relationship with Christ. From this relationship, we learn to be merciful to those around us, becoming ever more Christ-like. Extending mercy is a concrete expression of God's love. We give witness to mercy when we acknowledge our own weakness and rely on Christ to shape our hearts and intentions. This is the most powerful way to teach and embody the gift of mercy.

St. Paul, writing to the Christian community in Corinth, uses a striking image: "*the odor of the knowledge of Jesus.*" The fragrance of Christ is both brilliant and evocative. Pope Francis once suggested that ministers should "have the smell of the sheep." We lead the people we serve by carrying the *perfume of the Good News*. The way we live—our attitudes, choices, and presence—makes us *messengers of mercy*.

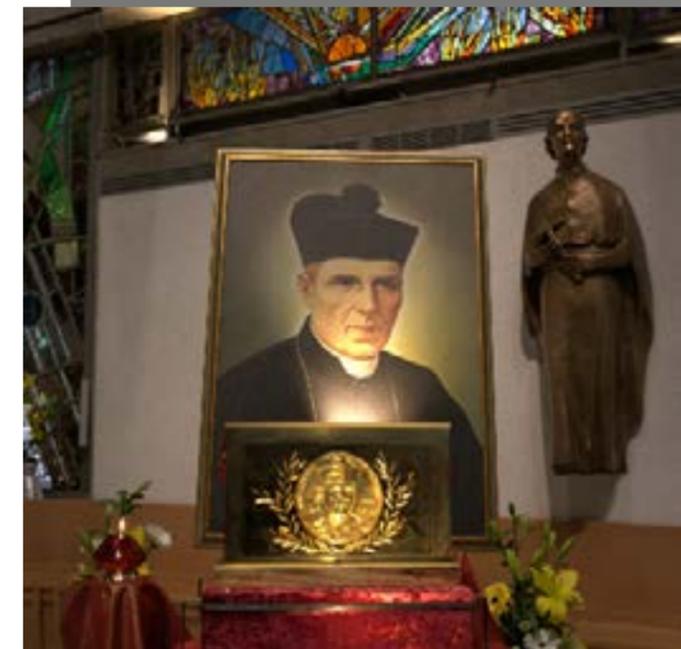
When we depend on Christ through the presence of the Holy Spirit, we become humble, gentle, joyful, trusting, and peaceful. Like Blessed Merlini, we become messengers of mercy. Through a merciful presence, our actions often preach more loudly than our words.

Each day offers a fresh opportunity to be merciful, to be people of hope, to carry the fragrance of Christ, and to proclaim peace, forgiveness, and welcome through His Precious Blood, shed on the Cross.

LET US PRAY:

*Lord, help me to see You in my brother and sister
as I welcome Your salvation into my life.*

Make me a messenger of Your mercy.



The Blood flowing from Christ's wounds becomes a language of mercy spoken directly to the suffering, the weary, and the forgotten.

THE THIRD MYSTERY: THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR

(Fr. Jerome Hologa, CPPS, offers a reflection on the Chaplet of the Precious Blood.)

In the third mystery of the Chaplet of the Precious Blood, Christ stands bound to the pillar—exposed to human violence and surrendered entirely to the Father's will. His body, fashioned in love, becomes the place where sin meets mercy and where cruelty encounters divine patience.

Each blow opens His flesh, and with every wound the Precious Blood is poured out as a wordless proclamation of love that endures rather than retaliates. This mystery reveals a God who enters suffering fully and transforms it from within.

The scourging at the pillar unveils the reality of sin in its rawest form. Sin wounds the body, fractures relationships, and distorts the human vocation. Christ accepts this assault upon Himself, allowing the consequences of human brokenness to strike His own sacred flesh. The pillar becomes an altar, and His suffering becomes an offering of obedience rooted in trust. The Blood shed here testifies that love remains faithful even when violence seeks to dominate. In His obedience, suffering is given meaning and becomes redemptive.

This mystery also reveals the profound dignity of the human body. The body of Christ is



Flagellazione (Christ at the Column), by Italian Baroque painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, c. 1606-1607.

treated as an object—stripped of reverence and subjected to degradation. His Blood answers this desecration by restoring the body to its true purpose as a dwelling place of communion. The Precious Blood falling to the ground proclaims that God enters the most wounded places of human experience and claims them as His own. No suffering endured in love remains empty, and no wound lies beyond the reach of grace.

Bound to the pillar, Christ reveals a strength that the world struggles to recognize. This strength stands firm without hardening and remains faithful without seeking escape. His endurance speaks of freedom rooted in surrender and of authority born from love. The Precious Blood shed in this mystery teaches that redemption flows through fidelity under pressure and through perseverance shaped by hope.

To contemplate the scourging at the pillar is to confront the mystery of the body offered rather than protected, and a self entrusted rather than asserted. The Blood flowing from Christ's wounds becomes a language of mercy spoken directly to the suffering, the weary, and the forgotten. It proclaims that God remains present where pain repeats and where endurance feels unseen.

This mystery calls for concrete response in daily life.

One way of living it is through the offering of our physical and emotional suffering. Daily life carries hidden forms of scourging—illness, exhaustion, grief, disappointment, and interior wounds that return again and again. Living this mystery means consciously uniting these experiences to Christ bound at the pillar. When pain is accepted with trust and offered to the Father, it becomes prayer. A simple interior offering transforms endurance into communion. The Precious Blood then flows through ordinary suffering, giving it eternal significance and quiet fruitfulness.

Another way of living this mystery emerges through reverence for the body and disciplined freedom. The scourging wounds the body of Christ, and this mystery invites a renewed respect for our own bodies and the bodies of others. Practices such as moderation, fasting, and restraint train the soul in true freedom by loosening the grip of impulse and comfort, restoring desire to its proper order. Each act of restraint offered faithfully participates in Christ's endurance at the pillar. The Precious Blood sanctifies these hidden choices, forming a heart capable of authentic freedom.

The Blood of Christ shed in the scourging at the pillar reveals a love that remains steadfast when escape seems attractive and endurance feels costly. In this mystery, suffering becomes a place of encounter, the body becomes a sanctuary of grace, and perseverance becomes a proclamation of hope. Those who live this mystery learn that every wound embraced in love is gathered into eternity, where the Precious Blood continues to speak healing, mercy, and life.



WALKING THE LENTEN CAMINO

On February 24, Fr. Peter Poole, OFM Cap., offered a day of Lenten reflection for the



Toronto District members. His wonderful and insightful stories wove together his personal faith journey and his experience on the Camino in Spain. Our lives, too, are a *camino* toward heaven,

and when we finally arrive, we rejoice with the same joy we feel at the end of the Lenten walk. Keeping our eyes and hearts on Jesus and the Cross brings us peace and faithfulness. Fr. Peter remained for a social and dinner. The day of prayer nourished us spiritually and strengthened us for the Lenten days ahead.

OF ONE MIND AND ONE HEART: PAUL'S INVITATION TO FRATERNAL LOVE

At the Last Supper, Jesus gave His apostles a new commandment: "As I have loved you, so you also should love one another" (Jn 13:34). We live in a world that has forgotten this simple message. We see division, jealousy, and a sense of superiority among nations; hatred in our streets; and sorrow in our homes.

In the New Testament, St. Paul offers a beautiful hymn to Christian fraternity in his letters to the Philippians and the Colossians. His words form a prayer for unity. St. Paul goes straight to the heart of his message—practical, direct, and concrete—inviting us to apply it to the way we see and treat one another: "If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart. Do nothing out of selfishness or vanity; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves."

And to the Colossians he writes: "Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and forgive one another, just as the Lord has forgiven you. And above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts... Teach one another in all wisdom, and with gratitude in your hearts..."

To love is a choice, not merely an emotion. God loves each of us unconditionally and gives us what we need to embrace Him and to welcome our brothers and sisters. Let us ask for the grace to forgive, the wisdom to understand difficult situations, and the

humility to accept a helping hand—from a friend, a family member, or even from the gentle nudge of our own conscience calling us to repentance: I can do better. I can listen. I can accept their advice.

Sébastien Lacroix, Pine Point, ON

FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND THE SPIRIT OF BLESSED MERLINI

Blessed Giovanni Merlini is remembered as a saint for ordinary people—the neighbour next door, the familiar face in our community. Yet he lived the ordinary with an extraordinary spirit, moved by a deep desire to love God. Many of us grow up in simple, hardworking families, and it is both good and necessary to pause, enjoy one another's company, and recognize the goodness present in each person. When Merlini returned from his preaching missions, he made time to be truly present to his community. He intentionally honoured those with whom he shared life and ministry. His example invites us to reflect: How do I honour the people with whom I live?

On February 15, Ontarians celebrated Family Day—a moment set aside to enjoy time together, whether through winter outings, preparing a special meal, visiting a museum, or taking a long walk in the park. A healthy family life grows from respect, shared time, appreciation, trust, generosity, and the willingness to face and resolve conflicts as they arise by adapting with hope to life's challenges.

St. Roch's Church Knights of Columbus marked the occasion by hosting a delicious luncheon where



Families coming together in joy and gratitude as St. Roch's Parish celebrates Family Day.

families gathered to enjoy one another's company. Frs. Jerome, Peter, Brendan, and Lui joined in this festive and relaxing afternoon, sharing in the joy of the celebration alongside many parishioners.

Blessed Giovanni Merlini also offered wisdom on family life. In a letter to his confreres, he wrote that each house—each community—is called to manifest a spirit of *caritas*, a family-like love. He asks:

- ▶ How do we think of each other?
- ▶ How do we treat each other?
- ▶ How do we bear with one another?
- ▶ How do we respect one another?
- ▶ How do we help each other?

In short, he asks: How do I love another?

It is within each of us to show love, just as we are loved by God (*Circular Letter 13*, G. Merlini). This virtue, Merlini reminds his brothers—and us—is not only for those to whom we preach, but for ourselves as well.

Merlini's warm, witty spirit often drew others to share a simple morning coffee with him. In the same vein, St. Gaspar frequently ended his letters with a gentle reminder: *My beloved brothers, let us examine ourselves well and reflect on the account we will have to render to God.*

HOSPITALITY AND WELCOME AS PATHS TO CHRISTIAN UNITY

Fr. Gerardo Laguartilla, CPPS, welcomed the People of Grenada, interfaith dignitaries, and government representatives from the Consulates of Grenada, St. Lucia, Haiti, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Barbados on the occasion

of the 52nd Anniversary of Independence. Rev. Dr. Wendell Gibbs, pastor of First Baptist Church in Toronto, members of the Toronto Police Service, and other distinguished guests were also present.

▶ Fr. Gerardo led the opening prayer and participated in the ceremonies celebrating faith, culture, and unity. We thank Fr. Gerardo for his openness and hospitality—a true messenger of mercy and a builder of peace.



OUR MARCH CHALLENGE

We have been given a simple yet profound challenge: COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS and reflect on Psalm 34:1–3. We are encouraged to embrace this wisdom from Scripture with sincerity and integrity, allowing gratitude to shape our hearts and guide our daily living.

DATES TO REMEMBER

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

MARCH 3

John Colacino

REQUIESCAT IN PACE

MARCH 17

Joseph Gentile

LOOKING AHEAD

JUNE 8 TO 12

ANNUAL RETREAT

**Mount Carmel Retreat Centre,
Niagara Falls**

**If you are unable to attend,
please inform the Provincial.**

WORDS OF OUR FOUNDERS

The sea has its storms and its periods of calm. So too is it so in the life of the spirit. Storms will not be lacking; but the ship of the heart will not be wrecked because Jesus is there as its guide, and if he sees that we are disturbed, he says to us, why do you fear?

— ST. GASPAR DEL BUFALO *Letter 2161*

Put all your fears in the hands of God. He will take care of them. And let us meanwhile serve him with pure love and let us willingly work for his glory. Let us pray to him in times of necessity.

— BLESSED GIOVANNI MERLINI *Letter 12*

Vocation Calendar

- 1**
ALAREY ABELLA
- 2**
MARIO CAFARELLI
- 3**
BROTHER ANTHONY CANTERUCCI
- 4**
RENÉ CERECEDO
- 5**
JOHN COLACINO
- 6**
SAMUEL D'ANGELO
- 7**
BRENDAN DOHERTY
- 8**
JOSEPH GRASSO
- 9**
JEROME HOLOGA
- 10**
DOMINIC JUNG
- 11**
GERARDO LAGUARTILLA
- 12**
GARY LUIZ
- 13**
RON MAHON
- 14**
WILLIAM MNYAGATWA
- 15**
PETER NOBILI
- 16**
LUI SANTI
- 17**
GERMÁN SANTIAGO
- 18**
RON WIECEK
- 19**
WORLD PEACE
- 20**
USC MEMBERS
- 21**
DECEASED CPPS MEMBERS
- 22**
OUR BENEFACTORS
- 23**
OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS
- 24**
SICK MEMBERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS
- 25**
OUR BISHOPS
- 26**
AN INCREASE IN RELIGIOUS AND MISSION VOCATIONS
- 27**
CANCER PATIENTS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS
- 28**
RESPONSIBLE CIVIC AND FEDERAL LEADERS
- 29**
REFUGEES, MIGRANTS, AND ALL SEEKING SAFETY
- 30**
THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH AND HEALING OF DIVISIONS
- 31**
THOSE STRUGGLING WITH LONELINESS, ANXIETY, OR INTERIOR BURDENS

Prayer for Vocations

LORD GOD,
In Jesus Christ You shared with us the eternal Word.
He took up His Cross for our salvation
and invited us to take up the Cross and follow Him.

He shared the cup of His Precious Blood with His disciples,
and He shares it with us each time we gather for the Eucharist.
Help us to share in His mission:
to proclaim the Good News
of our salvation to all the world.
Strengthen us to share in His life
as we live out our faith each day.

In Your mercy, send men to serve as missionaries,
to preach the Word and to offer the Cup.
Give us His Spirit now and always.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.
Amen.

