

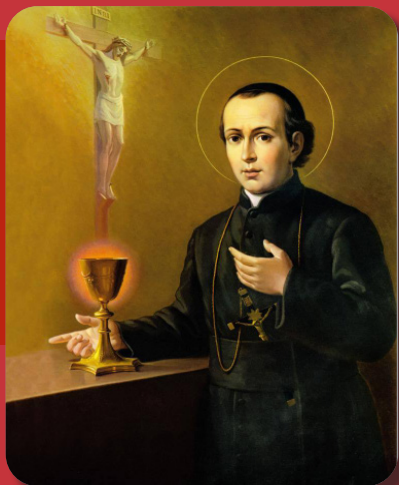
JULY 2025

# THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY

A TRIANNUAL PUBLICATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE  
MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD ATLANTIC PROVINCE



This is my Blood.



## **THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY**

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### **EDITOR**

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

### **GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Gino Marcuzzi

For submissions,  
including questions, articles,  
story ideas, news,  
and suggestions,  
please email  
[cppspublications@gmail.com](mailto:cppspublications@gmail.com).

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# EDITORIAL

**T**his issue of *The Precious Blood Family* appears during the month dedicated to the mystery of our redemption. When exhorting his fellow Missionaries of the Precious Blood to observe the month as fully as possible, Blessed Giovanni Merlini noted, "The month of the Precious Blood should be preached daily in our churches, and we should not be looking for needless excuses." For a long time, that month had been June, but at the suggestion of Merlini to his friend and fellow Spoletan, Blessed Pope Pius IX, the pope extended the feast of the Precious Blood to the universal Church in thanksgiving for the pope's return from exile in the Kingdom of Naples, where he had fled to escape revolutionary movements. Originally celebrated on the first Sunday of July, the feast was later changed to July 1 and, sadly, eliminated from the universal calendar after the 1969 reform in favor of a change to the title of *Corpus Christi* to the *Body and Blood of Christ*. Now celebrated by religious communities and other groups dedicated to the Blood of Christ, July 1 may still be celebrated by any of the faithful with a votive Mass now included in the Roman Missal.

We are happy to welcome in this issue new contributors to *The Precious Blood Family*, stemming from last summer's Eucharistic Assembly, sponsored by the United States Province of Missionaries of the Precious Blood held in St. Louis, Missouri, during the American bishops' Eucharistic Revival.

As it happens, this issue appears a few months after the election of Pope Leo XIV to the papacy. By a happy coincidence, Fr. Sam D'Angelo, C.P.P.S., has contributed an article on recent ecumenical discussions on the role of the Bishop of Rome in the universal body of Christ's faithful. I am confident the latest successor of Peter will continue to prioritize ecumenical and interreligious dialogue as key to global peace after the example of his predecessor Pope Francis.

Finally, this issue of *The Precious Blood Family* appears at the midpoint of the Holy Year, whose theme is *Pilgrims of Hope*, and the last entry for this issue is a poem on that theme. It is certainly my hope that the varied offerings from our contributors will assist you on your own journey as we continue to celebrate this sacred time of jubilee.

FR. JOHN COLACINO, C.P.P.S.

# A View from the Monstrance

## Fr. Barry Fischer, C.P.P.S.

**As** we were immersed in a full-fledged Eucharistic Renewal in the United States, groups of the faithful—youth and adults—took part in processions, carrying the Blessed Sacrament through our city streets and in our countryside. Holy hours, adoration, and emphasis on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist were the principal emphasis of this renewal, sponsored by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops prior to the major event held in Indianapolis.

I witnessed at the university where I ministered for the past five years as campus chaplain how the young generation seems to be particularly attracted to Benediction and the procession with the Blessed Sacrament, in a darkened chapel with a spotlight shining on the monstrance. As the procession passed the students, one could see how they were deeply moved and even how tears would stream down their faces. While respecting their style of devotion, I wonder how this reflects the meaning of the Eucharist.

As I prepared these comments for the homily, I was inspired to look at these processions and adoration from another perspective. Just as the faithful are often moved by the presence of Christ in the consecrated host in the monstrance, I thought: “What does Jesus see when he looks out from the monstrance to each one of us?” “What does Jesus see as he gazes into our face, or what does he see when he walks the streets of our neighborhoods, or looks out at our communities and congregations when we gather for prayer and adoration?”

I think of the following possibilities:

- He may see the face of a lonely teenager who is being bullied or shunned by his/her classmates, and suffering from loneliness and a sense of not being loved and accepted by his/her peers.

- He may see a family struggling to keep it all together as a member is suffering some type of addiction.
- He sees a city clearly divided among social/economic lines, houses in great need of repair, streets riddled with potholes, and then neighborhoods of luxury.
- He sees homeless sleeping under bridges or on the sidewalks, some in makeshift homes of tin and cardboard.
- He sees young and old standing in line for a hot meal and, if they are lucky, for a place to sleep at least for a night.
- He sees victims of violence and rape and abuse and mothers who cry for a lost child.
- As he walks our land, he also sees how our greed has exploited and abused Mother Nature.
- He sees a country deeply divided by politics and even on theological and ecclesial questions.
- He sees Christian communities and Catholic ones which exclude those who are different, even while saying that “all are loved!”

So, as Jesus walks our streets and highways and as he is adored in the Blessed Sacrament, perhaps he sees us and our situation and hears the “cry of the poor and needy.” But Jesus doesn’t just lament the situation or “pity” them, he is “moved to compassion” as the Scriptures tell us. He stops and touches, he cures and heals. As his feet and shoulders became bloody as he walked into the misery of our humanity, so now he carries our crosses and makes our suffering his own!

Pope St. John Paul II once said these words to our C.P.P.S. missionaries gathered in assembly at Castel Gandolfo: “Our apostolic activity must begin with contemplation... We need to



contemplate Christ in the Blessed Sacrament “until we can see the face of the suffering Lord in our suffering brothers and sisters.”

In other words, the pope is saying that we are to “live what we celebrate at the Table of the Eucharist.” We are to grow into ever deeper communion with the Lord, until we see with his eyes, hear with his ears, and love with his heart. Our mission is to become the living Body of Christ today... to bloody our feet and our shoulders as we reach out in solidarity to those sitting at the doorstep of our lives, in our families, our communities, and in our society.

In a few weeks the major event [in Indianapolis] will be behind us. Everyone will comment on how beautiful it was, and what great talks were given by well-known speakers. The monstrances will be put back in the sacristies and we will move on, feeling more pious and being good Catholics.

But we need to ask ourselves if we are willing to walk “along the road marked by blood”, following in the footsteps of Christ. Does our “Amen” as we drink from the Cup of Blood strengthen our commitment to “live what we celebrate” as we gather for the Eucharist, to be a life poured out for others? St. Teresa of Ávila said this: “Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses the world.”

As individuals and communities who draw strength and hope from the Precious Blood, may we truly

embody “Eucharistic Communities,” seeing others as Jesus does—beloved sons and daughters of God, created in His image and redeemed through the Blood of Christ. May we also remain dedicated to communicating this most important message in all our relationships. We are a people of the covenant, committed to stretching out our arms as Jesus did on the Cross to draw all others into the circle of God's love—as communities of inclusion and not of exclusion; committed to breaking down the walls of prejudice and racism, building bridges to bring people together and building communities of hospitality and welcoming.

If we commit ourselves to become a living presence of Christ in our everyday lives, then the Eucharistic renewal will have a lasting effect, and our streets and roads and countryside will be blessed as we, with the help of God's grace, live out our “missionary spirituality” of “furthering a new creation brought about through the Precious Blood of Christ.”

***Fr. Barry Fischer, C.P.P.S., is a Missionary of the Precious Blood of the United States Province and a former Moderator General of the Congregation. He currently serves as Local Director of the St. Charles Center, Carthage, Ohio.***



# An Empty Cup

**Sr. Joyce Lehman, C.P.P.S.**

**The** following passages from Scripture resonate deeply with who we are as brothers and sisters in the Precious Blood. In Genesis, Chapters 40-41, Pharaoh's cupbearer initially loses his position but is later reinstated where once again he could hand Pharaoh's cup to him. In First Corinthians, Chapter 11, we find the iconic depiction of the Last Supper with Jesus taking, blessing, and sharing the transformed bread and the wine—the cup of the new covenant—with his disciples. Finally, in the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 9, Jesus warns James and John that their commitment to discipleship will mean a cup of suffering, which, when drunk, may lead to a place in heaven but carries no assurance of sitting at the right or left hand of the Father.

As I reflected on the cup in these passages, what almost immediately came to mind was a retreat our parish adult education committee offered where I was a pastoral associate. We had come up with a retreat entitled, “An Empty Cup” and asked anyone who registered to bring an empty cup with them. In the first reflection, we asked them to look into their empty cup, and we invited them to explore the figurative cup of their heart. What needed to be named and then emptied out for the cup to be able to be filled up?

Different people named different things: grief, loneliness, gossip, impatience, anger, depression, grudges. One woman's insight resonated with nearly everyone present, leading to a moment of silent reflection. She expressed her struggle with forgiving herself for a particular sin in her past, and the conversation that followed revealed a shared truth—that we all carry some form of emotional baggage, burdened with shame and guilt over past mistakes we struggle to forgive ourselves for.

Even when we think we have emptied our cup, have our life in order, we too often avoid naming and claiming those sins. These unnamed, unclaimed sins are like

stains in our cup that we just get so accustomed to seeing we no longer really see them. But they affect the taste of whatever we drink. To enable ourselves to be freed of this, we need to open ourselves to the mercy of God and the liberating power of the Precious Blood.

If we take time when reading the scriptures, especially the prophets and psalms, and the Christian Testament, especially the Gospels, and if we listen carefully to the prayers of the liturgy, we will begin to understand that we are the only ones holding on to our sins and sinfulness. Over and over, we are told that God bestows mercy on us, that God forgives our sins. Like in Isaiah's prayer: “O God, you have cast all my sins behind your back,” or when Paul reminds us in Ephesians, God is “rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us.” Luke records Jesus saying: “Therefore, be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” The Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation proclaims, “For you, O God, do not cease to spur us on to possess a more abundant life and, being rich in mercy, you constantly offer pardon and call on sinners to trust in your forgiveness alone.” God waits patiently just outside the closed door of our hearts—a door that can only be opened from within. Yet, we often lock it with a double bolt, convinced that His forgiveness is beyond our reach.

Mercy does not, however, negate the consequences of our sin, but it does give us the grace to ask for



forgiveness, to express our sorrow, and to bear those consequences so that we are freed to return to right relationships with those we've harmed, including ourselves.

The thirteenth century Dominican preacher, theologian, and mystic, Meister Eckhart, as paraphrased by Jon Sweeney and Mark Burrows in their *Book of Darkness and Light*, offers this reminder:

***So you feel remorse for what you've done  
or failed to do?  
Remember that God is the God of the present,  
and takes you as you now are,  
and not as you once were.  
If God holds no anger toward you,  
and refuses to blame you,  
and doesn't even remember your failings,  
who are you to hold onto your shame?...  
Your sins are your problem, not God's.  
Since love covers over them  
and knows nothing of them,  
why do you hold onto them?  
Listen to me: lighten your load!  
Do you imagine you know who you are  
and what you need better than God does?  
Or do you think your sins are so important  
that they're greater than God's forgiveness?  
If so, think again.***

The power of the Precious Blood of Jesus is liberation and redemption: the freedom of the daughters and sons of God from all that binds us. Jesus' shedding of his blood, to the last drop, epitomized his gift of self to accomplish this liberation and to show us how to live in it. The face of God's mercy is the face of Jesus.

The cup of the new covenant in the Blood of Christ calls us, urges us, demands that we walk in freedom, not tied down to our guilt or shame. This freedom allows us to be our very best self, the self that God created and gifted to be able to love and be loved. This freedom allows us to proclaim God's love in words and actions in whatever situation

we find ourselves. It opens our eyes to the Divine Spark—the image of God that dwells within each person, no matter who they are or what they have done. We are liberated from judging others by some truth, some rule we think we know and understand. With what can our cup be filled? The liberation of the Precious Blood blesses us with holy curiosity when confronted by someone who looks different than we do, who speaks a different language, or who holds beliefs different than ours. It allows us to see beyond the difference to the presence of God's own self in that individual. It allows us to listen carefully and fully to what they say, without beginning to build our responses, especially when we think we are right. It gives us the courage to let the first thing out of our mouths be, "Can you say more about that?" rather than, "You're wrong." Holy curiosity convinces us that we do not always know why another person thinks the way he or she does, why they have made the choices they have, why they have done what they have done. Holy curiosity starts with being convinced that this person is a child of God, is our brother or sister, is someone in whom God dwells, this frees us to treat *them* with respect and reverence, without judgment, even if we totally disagree with their ideas or actions.

One gift of liberation that we can ask for our cup is that of the ability to *see* those who are suffering, not just look at them, but see them with the eyes of the heart, see the daughter or son of God who is now joined in their suffering with Jesus on the Cross. The mother who has lost six of her seven children to war, the teen who lives daily with the fear that he will be the next one shot down on the street, the husband whose wife has left him and who now bears the full responsibility of four small children. We tend at times, when the suffering of others keeps adding up, to begin to look away, to have had enough. Our family, our friends, those around us, those in the world starving for peace, freedom, food, and safety. Their burden is heavy for us to bear, but by being freed to see them as a tabernacle where God dwells, we find growing within ourselves the gift of compassion's energy.



# *Liberation in the Precious Blood gives us the courage to accept and support.*

We recognize that there are many things we can do, not the least of which is to honor their dignity and hold them in daily prayer. We can then search for ways to assist in what might seem like small things, but which may make a world of difference to them.

Another fruit of liberation in the Spirit is courage. It is the courage to assist the oppressed while at the same time realizing that the oppressor needs our help as well. A prayer for the oppressed needs to be accompanied by a prayer for the one who is oppressing. A prayer for the shattered people of the Gaza Strip must also include a plea for the Prime Minister and Defense Forces of Israel to recognize the devastation and deprivation their actions bring, as well as for the leaders of Hamas, who are inflicting this suffering upon their own people. A prayer for the war-weary people of Ukraine, Myanmar, Burkina Faso or Nigeria should remind us to pray for those who are persecuting, that their hearts and minds be converted to see the harm they are doing to their own people and to seek reconciliation.

Our intercessions for the homeless, those living in poverty, those who cannot put food on their table, need to be accompanied by actions that call those who are blind to these burdens to work to change what must be changed. People excluded because of sex or gender need our prayers, not that they do what we think they should, but so that they remain faithful to the person God is calling them to be. Liberation in the Precious Blood gives us the courage not to judge, but to accept and support.

Liberated in the Blood of Christ, our cup will be filled with the ability to live and speak freely of God in our lives. This, of course, isn't a conversation for every situation we are in, but we know those moments of hesitation, or weakness, or self-imposed silence when we could have shared the important role that God, that Jesus, that the Holy Spirit play in our own lives and we don't,

or we could have defended someone, or called out a speaker for an unchristian attitude and we remain silent. You're likely familiar with the saying attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: "Proclaim the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words." Sometimes walking away from an offensive conversation is as effective as intervening. We Catholics are too often tentative about speaking our truth for fear of proselytizing. Speaking up may not be easy, but Jesus invited us to drink from the cup that he would drink even as he was crucified for the truth he spoke. If we live in the freedom of the Blood of Christ, we will share our heart's beliefs in a way that leaves the other free to respond to God's call in their own way.

There are so many gifts that our cup can hold. Before going to sleep, maybe we could remember to empty our cup of the day's words and actions, of the burdens we carry, of our failures to be the face of Christ, of any sin we cannot forgive ourselves for. Then, we can ask the Holy Spirit to cleanse our cup with the Blood of Christ and the mercy of God, filling it with the gifts we will need tomorrow. As liberated daughters and sons, we can step into each day with confidence, fully aware of the power that is ours. Let us also rejoice in our liberation in God's love when we celebrate the liturgy of the Eucharist, and experience again Jesus taking, blessing, and sharing the bread of life and the cup of the new covenant. We unite that cup with our own cup which we take and bless and share. And when we leave the space of celebration and the priest or deacon says, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord," let us go in the freedom and power of the Blood and spend lavishly the gifts we have been given.

***Sr. Joyce Lehman, C.P.P.S., serves as president of the Sisters of the Precious Blood, a congregation founded by Maria Anna Brunner, with its central house located in Dayton, Ohio.***



# Voice of Tradition

## ***From the encyclical letter “*Evangelium vitae*” (The Gospel of Life) by Pope St. John Paul II (†2005)***

“The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground” (Gen 4:10). It is not only the voice of the blood of Abel, the first innocent human to be murdered, which cries to God, the source and defender of life. The blood of every other human being who has been killed since Abel is also a voice raised to the Lord. In an absolutely singular way, as the author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us, the voice of the blood of Christ, of whom Abel in his innocence is a prophetic figure, cries out to God: “You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God... to the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel” (12:22, 24).

It is the sprinkled blood. A symbol and prophetic sign of it had been the blood of the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, whereby God expressed his will to communicate his own life to humanity, purifying and consecrating them (cf. Ex 24:8; Lev 17:11). Now all of this is fulfilled and comes true in Christ: his is the sprinkled blood which redeems, purifies, and saves; it is the blood of the Mediator of the New Covenant “poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26:28). This blood, which flows from the pierced side of Christ on the Cross (cf. Jn 19:34), “speaks more graciously” than the blood of Abel; indeed, it expresses and requires a more radical “justice”, and above all it implores mercy, it makes intercession for the brethren before the Father (cf. Heb 7:25), and it is the source of perfect redemption and the gift of new life.

The Blood of Christ, while it reveals the grandeur of the Father’s love, shows how precious human beings are in God’s eyes and how priceless the value of human life. The Apostle Peter reminds us of this: “You know that you were ransomed

from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Pt 1:18-19). Precisely by contemplating the precious blood of Christ, the sign of his self-giving love (cf. Jn 13:1), the believer learns to recognize and appreciate the almost divine dignity of every human being and can exclaim with ever renewed and grateful wonder: “How precious must humanity be in the eyes of the Creator, if we “gained so great a Redeemer” (Exsultet of the Easter Vigil), and if God gave his only Son” in order that we should not perish but have eternal life’ (cf. Jn 3:16)!”

Furthermore, Christ’s blood reveals to humanity its greatness, and therefore its vocation, consists in the sincere gift of self. Precisely because it is poured out as the gift of life, the blood of Christ is no longer a sign of death, of definitive separation from the brethren, but the instrument of a communion which is richness of life for all. Whoever in the Sacrament of the Eucharist drinks this blood and abides in Jesus (cf. Jn 6:56) is drawn into the dynamism of his love and gift of life, to bring to its fullness the original vocation to love which belongs to everyone (cf. Gen 1:27; 2:18-24).

It is from the Blood of Christ that all draw the strength to commit themselves to promoting life. It is precisely this blood that is the most powerful source of hope, indeed it is the foundation of the absolute certitude that in God’s plan life will be victorious. “And death shall be no more”, exclaims the powerful voice which comes from the throne of God in the Heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21:4). And Saint Paul assures us that the present victory over sin is a sign and anticipation of the definitive victory over death, when there “shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Cor 15:54-55).

# Where Now for Visible Unity?

**Fr. Sam D'Angelo, C.PP.S.**



CHRIST GIVING THE KEYS TO SAINT PETER, by Peter Paul Rubens, c. 1612-1614

On Tuesday, March 18, 2025, a webinar entitled, “The Bishop of Rome and Christian Unity” was hosted by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Vatican’s Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity as part of the WCC’s Faith and Order World Conference which reflected on the thematic question, “Where now for visible unity?” Participants zoomed in worldwide for the webinar.

The webinar presented the Vatican’s 152-page study document *The Bishop of Rome, Primacy and Synodality in the Ecumenical Dialogues and in the Responses to the Encyclical Ut Unum Sint*. It was led by presenters Rev. Prof. Dr. Juan Usma Gomez and Rev. Prof. Dr. Hyacinthe Destivelle, of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity. Additional perspectives were presented from Orthodox, Anglican and Free

Churches by Prof. Dr. Eve Tibbs, Prof. Dr. Nicholas Sagovsky, and Prof. Dr. Elizabeth Newman. Panel discussions and interactive question and answer sessions also marked the event.

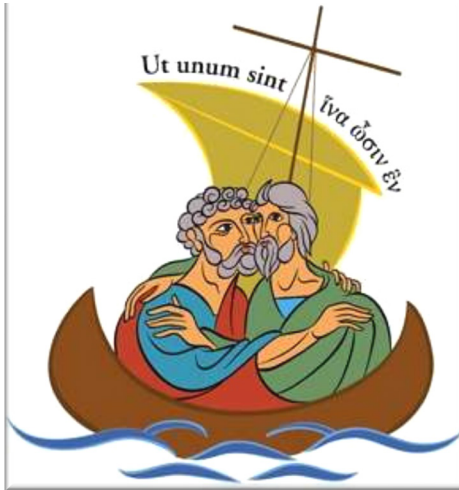
The study document published in 2024, was the result of Pope John Paul’s call in the encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*, promulgated on May 25, 1995, for church leaders and theologians to discern together how the ministry of the Bishop of Rome could be revisioned as a “service of love recognized by all concerned.” (#95 *Ut Unum Sint*) It was the hope of Pope John Paul II that a future publication resulting from such dialogue and reflection with other Christian denominations would contribute to further theological understanding of the ministry of the Bishop of Rome in service to Christian unity in the entire world. The

Dicastery felt the 25th anniversary of the Pope’s encyclical in 2020 was an opportune moment to resume and deepen the discussions and dialogues thus far by integrating new theological dialogue documents and the writings of successive popes. The convocation of the synod on synodality by Pope Francis was seen as a confirmation of the work of the dicastery and how the ecumenical movement might find a path forward. Pope Francis therefore published the Study Document to highlight the work that has been done since *Ut Unum Sint*.

Some areas for further dialogue and exploration regarding the Bishop of Rome included the following: greater reflection on Petrine texts, whether the office of the bishop of Rome is of divine or human origin, interpreting the dogmatic

# *How indeed can we proclaim the Gospel of reconciliation without at the same time being committed to working for reconciliation between Christians?*

statements of Vatican I in their historical context and in light of the teachings of Vatican II, a mutual interdependency between primacy and synodality in governance, and as regards the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, a “search for perfect and total communion which is neither absorption nor fusion, but a meeting in truth and love.” (#174 Bishop of Rome Study Document). To read the study document, please click on the following link: <https://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/documenti/altri-testi/the-bishop-of-rome.html>.



From a Precious Blood perspective, I find the following words of John Paul II in *Ut Unum Sint* resonant with the ecumenical core value

proposed by our twenty-first General Assembly: “How indeed can we proclaim the Gospel of reconciliation without at the same time being committed to working for reconciliation between Christians? However true it is that the Church, by the prompting of the Holy Spirit and with the promise of indefectibility, has preached and still preaches the Gospel to all nations, it is also true that she must face the difficulties which derive

from the lack of unity. When non-believers meet missionaries who do not agree among themselves, even though they all appeal to Christ, will they be in a position to receive the true message? Will they not think that the Gospel is a cause of division, even though it is presented as the fundamental law of love?” (#98, *Ut Unum Sint*) As Ambassadors of Reconciliation, let us therefore take this reflection to heart and strive to keep the ecumenical spirit of the Church alive in our personal lives, our parishes, our ministries, and our congregation.

***Fr. Sam D'Angelo serves as Vice-Provincial of the Atlantic Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and as pastor of Holy Redeemer Church in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada. Additionally, he holds the role of ecumenical officer for the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie.***



# Jubilee and the Precious Blood

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

The quadranscentennial observance of the Jubilee Year by the Catholic Church has its roots in the Old Testament practice of the semicentennial jubilee as described in Leviticus 25:8-13:

*You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the period of seven weeks of years gives forty-nine years. Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month—on the day of atonement—you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: you shall not sow, or reap the aftergrowth, or harvest the unpruned vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces. In this year of jubilee you shall return, every one of you, to your property.*

While not associated with the sacrificial rites celebrated under the Elder Covenant which employed blood as a central element, the biblical jubilee nevertheless suggests a number of themes relevant

for a spirituality of the Precious Blood. The first of these is rest for the land. The cessation of agricultural work allowed the land to rejuvenate and to prevent depletion of the soil. In modern parlance, it was a means to ensure sustainable farming for future generations. By extension, the Catholic jubilee is an opportunity for everyone to renew their commitment to help prevent further erosion of the global environment and to forestall ecological collapse. The periodic rest enjoined by the Law of Moses for the land highlighted its ultimate ownership by God where even the Chosen People are seen as its tenants. God's sovereignty over the Promised Land was also exercised by its inclusion, not only in the jubilee year, but in that sevenfold rest which distinguished Israel, namely, the sabbatical rest of the land every seven years also detailed in Leviticus 25:1-7.

In his startling image of the Blood and Water which flowed from the opened side of Christ, Russian Orthodox theologian Sergei Bulgakov noted:

*The whole world is the chalice of Christ's blood and water; the whole world partook of them in communion at the hour of Christ's death. And the whole world hides the blood and water within itself...*

# *Those, moreover, who were "far off" from one another have been "brought near" by the blood of Christ.*

*This blood and water made the world a place of the presence of Christ's power, prepared the world for its future transfiguration, for the meeting with Christ in glory... Christ is not alien to the world; the world lives by Christ's power (The Holy Grail and the Eucharist).*

A spirituality of the Precious Blood ought then to have a special resonance with efforts to care for "our common home," entrusted to humanity by the Creator and sanctified by the absorption of the life-giving Blood and Water poured out upon the earth from the Cross—the kind of compassion toward the earth foreseen by the biblical jubilee.

A second jubilee theme relevant to the spirituality of the Precious Blood is the return of ancestral properties to their original owners for the purpose of helping people conserve their heritage and prevent the loss of family and tribal assets. We live in a time of renewed concern for the cultural and real patrimony of indigenous people in the face of historic injustice, genocidal policies, depredation of tribal lands, and vitiation of identity so intimately aligned to land.

Ever since Abel's blood has plead for redress—crying out to God for justice "from the ground" (Gen 4:40)—all victims of injustice have been aligned with its plaint. More eloquently, of course, is the Blood of Jesus, which speaks of "better things than that of Abel" (Heb 12:24). The "cry of the Blood" calls out therefore not only for justice for the land itself suffused with the Blood, but also for those whose land has been violated by a murder akin to Cain's. The legitimate claims of indigenous peoples ought then to stimulate those devoted to the Blood of Christ to renewed

sensitivity and concern for the land they often enough occupy which once belonged to others by right. Honoring indigenous traditions in liturgical practice, pastoral outreach, and catechesis would, furthermore, enhance the song addressed to the glorified Lamb of God who has "bought us for God with [his] blood out of every tribe, language, people, and nation" (cf. Rev 5:9).

Another jubilee theme is the liberation of slaves. Slavery, of course, continues to exist in our world in multiple ways, from the scourge of human trafficking to substance addiction fueled by the drug trade, to consumerism with its attachment to material goods. In the face of such enslavement of persons endowed with human dignity and of the bondage of the human will, the Blood of Christ by contrast has "bought our freedom" through which we have "redemption," rescuing us from the darkness and gloom of demonic powers holding us hostage (cf. Col 1:13-14; Eph 1:7). While the word "redemption" might not at first hearing evoke its reference to the manumission of slaves, the repurchasing of who or what had been sold, in light of all forms of human oppression those devoted to the Blood of Christ cannot help but think of the price at which we have been bought: "knowing that [we] were redeemed, not with corruptible things like silver or gold,



from the useless way of life handed down from your ancestor, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish or spot, the blood of Christ" (cf. 1 Pt. 18-19). The jubilee year then occasions therefore a renewed commitment to raising awareness and making concrete efforts on behalf of those whose redemption still awaits the full freedom promised by the Blood that has ransomed us for God.

Finally, a jubilee theme relevant to the spirituality of the Precious Blood is the forgiveness of debts leading to liberation and the possibility of "starting over," unburdened by the past with its limitations and constrictions. No one needs reminding that Christ's Blood is the atoning sacrifice which has brought about justice between God and humanity and by extension between

human beings, themselves, and indeed, the earth. "Justified by his blood" whom God put forward "as a propitiation" (Rom 5:9, 3:25) the bond of sin which stood against us has been cancelled with its legal demands, nailing it to the cross (cf. Col 2:13-15).

This reconciliation of "all things" by Christ has thus "made peace by the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20). Those, moreover, who were "far off" from one

another have been "brought near" by the blood of Christ (cf. Eph 2:13). The crushing burden of international debt owed by developing countries,

the spiraling distance created by wealth disparity even in affluent countries, unjust wages, and all kinds of social injustice join the "cry of the poor" to that of Christ's justifying Blood. Then there are the personal "debts" owed to those who have been hurt or victimized by breakdowns in all kinds of relationships. Reconciliation where possible and the redress of wrongs suffered is a perennial challenge posed by the Blood that brings near.

This article was written during the interregnum following the death of Pope Francis and prior to his successor's election. It should be clear that the jubilee themes I have outlined were all near and dear to the late pontiff's heart. It should also be clear that these four themes are profoundly interrelated and cannot easily be separated from each other any more than the various facets of the spirituality of the Precious Blood can. As a tribute to his memory and to highlight the unity of these themes, I would like to conclude with words from Pope Francis' final message for the World Day of Prayer for Peace. It is a summary of his own hopes for this Jubilee Year, which he opened, and Pope Leo XIV will close on Epiphany of next year.

*Fr. John Colacino, C.P.P.S., is a Missionary of the Precious Blood of the Atlantic Province and serves as the local director of the Giano Mission House in Rochester, NY. He also publishes a blog at [sanguischristi.com](http://sanguischristi.com).*

***“Reconciliation where possible and the redress of wrongs suffered is a perennial challenge posed by the Blood that brings near.”***



# MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE LVIII WORLD DAY OF PEACE 1st JANUARY 2025

At the dawn of this New Year given to us by our heavenly Father, a year of Jubilee in the spirit of hope, I offer heartfelt good wishes of peace to every man and woman. I think especially of those who feel downtrodden, burdened by their past mistakes, oppressed by the judgment of others and incapable of perceiving even a glimmer of hope for their own lives. Upon everyone I invoke hope and peace, for this is a Year of Grace born of the Heart of the Redeemer!

Throughout this year, the Catholic Church celebrates the Jubilee, an event that fills hearts with hope. The “jubilee” recalls an ancient Jewish practice, when, every forty-ninth year, the sound of a ram’s horn (in Hebrew, *jobel*) would proclaim a year of forgiveness and freedom for the entire people (cf. Lev 25:10). This solemn proclamation was meant to echo throughout the land (cf. Lev 25:9) and to restore God’s justice in every aspect of life: in the use of the land, in the possession of goods and in relationships with others, above all the poor and the dispossessed. The blowing of the horn reminded the entire people, rich and poor alike, that no one comes into this world doomed to oppression: all of us are brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the same Father, born to live in freedom, in accordance with the Lord’s will (cf. Lev 25:17, 25, 43, 46, 55).

In our day too, the Jubilee is an event that inspires us to seek to establish the liberating justice of God in our world. In place of the ram’s horn, at the start of this Year of Grace we wish to hear the “desperate plea for help” that, like the cry of the blood of Abel (cf. Gen 4:10), rises up from so many parts of our world—a plea that God never



fails to hear. We for our part feel bound to cry out and denounce the many situations in which the earth is exploited and our neighbours oppressed. These injustices can appear at times in the form of what Saint John Paul II called “structures of sin”, that arise not only from injustice on the part of some but are also consolidated and maintained by a network of complicity.

Each of us must feel in some way responsible for the devastation to which the earth, our common home, has been subjected, beginning with those actions that, albeit only indirectly, fuel the conflicts that presently plague our human family. Systemic challenges, distinct yet interconnected, are thus created and together cause havoc in our world.

I think, in particular, of all manner of disparities, the inhuman treatment meted out to migrants, environmental decay, the confusion willfully created by disinformation, the refusal to engage in any form of dialogue and the immense resources spent on the industry of war. All these, taken together, represent a threat to the existence of humanity as a whole. At the beginning of this year, then, we desire to heed the plea of suffering humankind to feel called, together and as individuals, to break the bonds of injustice and to proclaim God's justice. Sporadic acts of philanthropy are not enough. Cultural and structural changes are necessary, so that enduring change may come about.

The celebration of the Jubilee spurs us to make several changes to confront the present state of injustice and inequality by reminding ourselves that the goods of the earth are meant not for a privileged few, but for everyone. We do well to recall the words of Saint Basil of Caesarea: "Tell me, what things belong to you? Where did you find them to make them part of your life?... Did you not come forth naked from the womb of your mother? Will you not return naked to the ground? Where did your property come from? If you say that it comes to you naturally by luck, you would deny God by not recognizing the Creator and being grateful to the Giver". Without gratitude, we are unable to recognize God's gifts. Yet in his infinite mercy the Lord does not abandon sinful humanity but instead reaffirms his gift of life by the saving forgiveness offered to all through Jesus Christ. That is why, in teaching us the "Our Father", Jesus told us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses" (Mt 6:12).

Once we lose sight of our relationship with the Father, we begin to cherish the illusion that our relationships with others can be governed by a logic of exploitation and

oppression, where might makes right. Like the elites at the time of Jesus, who profited from the suffering of the poor, so today, in our interconnected global village, the international system, unless it is inspired by a spirit of solidarity and interdependence, gives rise to injustices, aggravated by corruption, which leave the poorer countries trapped. A mentality that exploits the indebted can serve as a shorthand description of the present "debt crisis", that weighs upon a number of countries, particularly in the global South.

I have repeatedly stated that foreign debt has become a means of control whereby certain governments and private financial institutions of the richer countries unscrupulously and indiscriminately exploit the human and natural resources of poorer countries, simply to satisfy the demands of their own markets. In addition, different peoples, already burdened by international debt, find themselves also forced to bear the burden of the "ecological debt" incurred by the more developed countries. Foreign debt and ecological debt are two sides of the same coin, namely the mindset of exploitation that has culminated in the debt crisis. In the spirit of this Jubilee Year, I urge the international community to work towards forgiving foreign debt in recognition of the ecological debt existing between the North and the South of this world. This is an appeal for solidarity, but above all for justice.

The cultural and structural change needed to surmount this crisis will come about when we finally recognize that we are all sons and daughters of the one Father, that we are all in his debt but also that we need one another, in a spirit of shared and diversified responsibility. We will be able to "rediscover once for all that we need one another" and are indebted one to another.

# *Hope overflows in generosity...*

If we take to heart these much-needed changes, the Jubilee Year of Grace can serve to set each of us on a renewed journey of hope, born of the experience of God's unlimited mercy.

God owes nothing to anyone, yet he constantly bestows his grace and mercy upon all. As Isaac of Nineveh, a seventh-century Father of the Eastern Church, put it in one of his prayers: "Your love, Lord, is greater than my trespasses. The waves of the sea are nothing with respect to the multitude of my sins but placed on a scale and weighed against your love, they vanish like a speck of dust". God does not weigh up the evils we commit; rather, he is immensely "rich in mercy, for the great love with which he loved us" (Eph 2:4). Yet he also hears the plea of the poor and the cry of the earth. We would do well simply to stop for a moment, at the beginning of this year, to think of the mercy with which he constantly forgives our sins and forgives our every debt, so that our hearts may overflow with hope and peace.

In teaching us to pray the "Our Father", Jesus begins by asking the Father to forgive

our trespasses but passes immediately to the challenging words: "as we forgive those who trespass against us" (cf. Mt 6:12). To forgive others their trespasses and to offer them hope, we need for our own lives to be filled with that same hope, the fruit of our experience of God's mercy. Hope overflows in generosity; it is free of calculation, makes no hidden demands, is unconcerned with gain, but aims at one thing alone: to raise up those who have fallen, to heal hearts that are broken and to set us free from every kind of bondage.

Consequently, at the beginning of this Year of Grace, I would like to offer three proposals capable of restoring dignity to the lives of entire people and enabling them to set them out anew on the journey of hope. In this way, the debt crisis can be overcome and all of us can once more realize that we are debtors whose debts have been forgiven.

First, I renew the appeal launched by Saint John Paul II on the occasion of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 to consider "reducing substantially, if not cancelling outright, the international debt which seriously threatens the future of many nations". In recognition of their ecological debt, the more prosperous countries ought to feel called to do everything possible to forgive the debts of those countries that are in no condition to repay the amount they owe.



# *True peace can be born only from a heart "disarmed" of anxiety and fear of war.*

Naturally, lest this prove merely an isolated act of charity that simply reboots the vicious cycle of financing and indebtedness, a new financial framework must be devised, leading to the creation of a global financial Charter based on solidarity and harmony between peoples.

I also ask for a firm commitment to respect for the dignity of human life from conception to natural death, so that each person can cherish his or her own life and all may look with hope to a future of prosperity and happiness for themselves and for their children. Without hope for the future, it becomes hard for the young to look forward to bringing new lives into the world. Here I would like once more to propose a concrete gesture that can help foster the culture of life, namely the elimination of the death penalty in all nations. This penalty not only compromises the inviolability of life but eliminates every human hope of forgiveness and rehabilitation.

In addition, following in the footsteps of Saint Paul VI and Benedict XVI, I do not hesitate to make yet another appeal, for the sake of future generations. In this time marked by wars, let us use at least a fixed percentage of the money earmarked for armaments to establish a global Fund to eradicate hunger and facilitate educational activities in the poorer countries aimed at promoting sustainable development and combating climate change. We need to work at eliminating every pretext that encourages young people to regard their future as hopeless or dominated by the thirst to avenge the blood of their dear ones. The future is a gift meant to enable us to go beyond past failures and to pave new paths of peace.

Those who take up these proposals and set out on the journey of hope will surely glimpse

the dawn of the greatly desired goal of peace. The Psalmist promises us that “steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss” (Ps 85:10). When I divest myself of the weapon of credit and restore the path of hope to one of my brothers or sisters, I contribute to the restoration of God’s justice on this earth and, with that person, I advance towards the goal of peace. As Saint John XXIII observed, true peace can be born only from a heart “disarmed” of anxiety and fear of war.

May 2025 be a year in which peace flourishes! A true and lasting peace that goes beyond quibbling over the details of agreements and human compromises. May we seek the true peace that is granted by God to hearts disarmed: hearts not set on calculating what is mine and what is yours; hearts that turn selfishness into readiness to reach out to others; hearts that see themselves as indebted to God and thus prepared to forgive the debts that oppress others; hearts that replace anxiety about the future with the hope that every individual can be a resource for the building of a better world.

Disarming hearts is a job for everyone, great and small, rich and poor alike. At times, something quite simple will do, such as “a smile, a small gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed”. With such gestures, we progress towards the goal of peace. We will arrive even more quickly if, while journeying alongside our brothers and sisters, we discover that we have changed from the time we first set out. Peace does not only come with the end of wars but with the dawn of a new world, a world in which we realize that we are different, closer and more fraternal than we ever thought possible.

# Prayer for the General Assembly

*In September, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood will hold a General Assembly, during which major superiors and delegates gather every six years to discuss important matters concerning the entire Congregation. As the body that exercises supreme governing authority over the community, the Congregation offers the following prayer in preparation, inviting everyone to participate.*

**COMPASSIONATE GOD,**  
we give You thanks and praise  
for Your wonderful yet suffering creation,  
as we share the healing and reconciling presence  
of the Precious Blood of Jesus, Your Son.

**OPEN OUR EYES AND ENLIGHTEN OUR HEARTS**  
so that we may know what is the hope  
to which You have called us,  
the hope that does not disappoint.

**REAWAKEN OUR DESIRE AND COMMITMENT**  
to serve Your holy people as we journey together,  
follow pilgrims on the Way to Your Kingdom.

**MAY THE WISDOM AND ANOINTING OF YOUR HOLY SPIRIT**  
rain down upon us  
as we discover visionary commitments and leaders who,  
in the spirit of St. Gaspar and Blessed Giovanni Merlini,  
will empower our Congregation  
to be a dynamic force for renewal in the Church.

**AS WE RAISE THE CUP OF SALVATION,**  
and call upon Your name,  
may we then pour out our lives each day  
to advance that *new order of things*  
that Christ brought about in the shedding of His Precious Blood.  
Amen.





## HOPE

Antonio Selvaggi

Today.

What day is it?

Saturday.

Feels more like *forever* on a long weekend.

Cocooned in this miserable state  
holds no promise of escape from the vine  
that *binds* me to this tree.

Though I am malnourished from the ground up,  
I admire the beauty of my visitor  
that spawns to realize herself, in me.

I *sigh* at the sight of her joy.

My eyes are your witnesses.  
A new day has dawned  
and I kiss her on the horizon of her lips.  
The exciting rhythmic murmur of  
her fluttering wings,  
whisper melodious mysteries  
in my innermost impression, dream.

*What is this?*

Like a teardrop in my hand,  
her colors splash a new dimensionality,  
a cosmic spectrum, a promise of  
something spirited, something sweet.  
Night ferments the nectar –  
someone to love,  
someone to meet.





Over fragrant flowering fields, she melodiously  
inspires my souls ascent  
over natures lofty, leafy canopy.  
There is no shorter, or surer path to hope,  
than the sweet charism of self-realization  
through an innermost metamorphosis.

Hope is a butterfly with a seraphic smile,  
jubilant and triumphant.  
She is a paradisiacal phenomenon of nature,  
emotional and instinctive,  
master and mystic of light and love –  
envy of the dove.

She glides like memories over fields  
of flowering sensitivity.  
There is no substitute for these wings of euphoria.  
Blissful maneuvers direct her flight,  
manifesting transformative energy  
of breathtaking beauty,  
passion, and innocence.

Hope, gently eases my mind. I *drift*  
onto her wings, a harmoniously randomized  
pattern of acrobatic vulnerability.  
Flowing, feeling, flirting –  
I follow her intuition,  
I follow her vision.

Surprised am I by her elegance,  
she *wills* to rest in my hand,  
guiding me like the bright sun returning home  
from a long season of death and rebirth –  
always soaring higher,  
always a warm, faithful friend.

Our surging jubilant souls sail over serene flowering fields,  
where the sun beams forth a new spring of hope.  
The butterfly returns to rest  
in the quiet chambers of my heart.  
There, she will hum moving mystical melodies  
in the ear of my innermost impression, dream.

ANTONIO SELVAGGI RESIDES IN TORONTO, ONTARIO.





# OUR APOSTOLATE



**C.PP.S. MISSION PROJECTS** has been deeply rooted in specific localities, above all by a significant presence in Tanzania for the past 50 years. Our projects have provided essential services such as clean water, education, healthcare, and sustainable development, focusing on marginalized communities.

The call to missionary discipleship, however, goes beyond geographical boundaries. We are being called to new horizons in response to the urgent needs of the Church. Rooted in the spirituality of the Precious Blood, C.PP.S. Mission Projects is now prioritizing evangelization, formation, and social development in underserved communities worldwide.

As we entrust the Tanzanian initiatives to local leadership, we remain committed to fostering new missionary endeavors that bring Christ's reconciling love to the margins of society.

Find us at [cppsmissionprojects.ngo](http://cppsmissionprojects.ngo).

## THE JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven,  
may the *faith* you have given us  
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,  
and the flame of *charity* enkindled  
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,  
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*  
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us  
into tireless cultivators  
of the seeds of the Gospel.  
May those seeds transform from within  
both humanity and the whole cosmos  
in the sure expectation  
of a new heaven and a new earth,  
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,  
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee  
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,  
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread  
the joy and peace of our Redeemer  
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,  
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen.

*Franciscus*



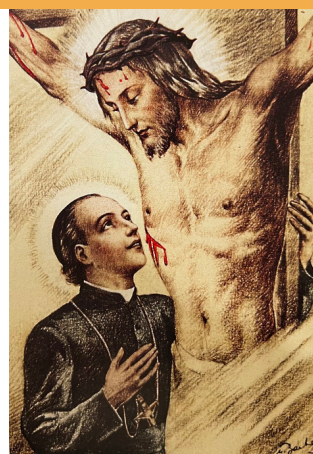
## Unio Sanguis Christi

The Union of the Blood of Christ (Unio Sanguis Christi, USC) is the spiritual family fostered by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, founded by St. Gaspar del Bufalo. Established by Fr. Francesco Albertini,

its aim is to promote devotion to the Blood of Christ. Members commit themselves to live and promote the spirituality of the Blood of Christ.

**RULE OF LIFE** Members follow a program of spirituality solidly based on the traditions of the Catholic Church. Motivated by the love of Christ, who died for us, rather than by any moral obligation, members practice a rule of life inspired by Christ's unselfish love. Conversion and reconciliation are ongoing processes fostered by an appreciation for the Word of God, nurtured by the Eucharist, and wrapped in a life of prayer.

**HOW TO ENROLL** Any practicing Catholic may become a member of the Union upon completion of a period of formation. For information on joining or starting the USC in your parish, please contact Fr. Gerardo Laguartilla, C.P.P.S., at [uscatlanticprovince@gmail.com](mailto:uscatlanticprovince@gmail.com).



## Mass Association

Since 1883, with the approval of Pope Leo XIII, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood throughout the world have offered 4,000 Masses annually for those enrolled in their Mass Association. Enrollments can be made on behalf of both the living and the deceased.

### HOW TO ENROLL

**In Person or by Mail:** Shrine of St. Gaspar  
540 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, ON M6C 1A4

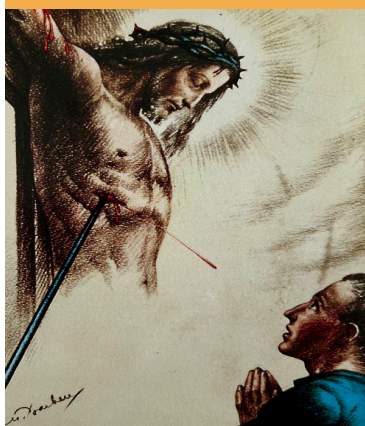
**By Telephone:** 416.653.4486

**Online:** Visit [preciousbloodatlantic.org](http://preciousbloodatlantic.org) and click on 'Donations'.

**Suggested Offering:** \$25.00, plus \$4.00 postage if the Certificate is mailed.



Additionally, you can request a single Mass or make a donation to support the spirituality of the Precious Blood and the work of the Missionaries by completing the required fields on the website.



## 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 the love of God 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 more information, please contact Precious Blood Vocations at 705.507.4288 or email [preciousvocations@gmail.com](mailto:preciousvocations@gmail.com).



**THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY**

100 Pelmo Crescent  
North York, ON M9N 2Y1 Canada  
[info@preciousbloodatlantic.ca](mailto:info@preciousbloodatlantic.ca)  
[www.preciousbloodatlantic.org](http://www.preciousbloodatlantic.org)  
416.656.3054

