



The Precious Blood Family

Seeing the World Through
the Lens of the Precious
Blood

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EDITORIAL

CAIN AND ABEL: AN ACT OF WORSHIP AND A LACK OF CONVERSATION LEADING TO FRATRICIDE



Jerome A. Hologa
Director of Development Office

The first murder in human history was committed as a result of an act of worship and a lack of dialogue between brothers, Cain and Abel. We are told both brothers brought forth fruit of their labor as offerings to the Lord. Abel offered his best firstlings to God and his sacrifice was looked upon with favour. Cain, however, was not generous in his sacrificial act of worship and God had no regard for his offering. Two brothers with different interior dispositions reflected most vividly by their external act of worship. This informs us that interior disposition is the underlying principle of external manifestations. If we are whole inside, we will be whole outside. But if we are broken inside, it is no surprise that our brokenness will be reflected on the outside.

Cain was very angry and envy took hold of him. God warned him to master his resentment, but the warning fell on

deaf ears. Cain had premeditated the murder of his brother as a way to get even or to find justice for not finding favour with God. His brother, not him, was to blame for his rejection, so he had to be eliminated. It is remarkable how one act of worship bears good fruit and another leads to bloodshed. Because with a lure of a predator “Cain said to Abel his brother, let us go out to the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him” (Gen 4:8). Fratricide enters humanity!

Notice, prior to killing Abel his brother, Cain shut the door for dialogue on two crucial occasions: the first opening is with God, Who challenges him to reverse his fortune by doing good and cautions against the temptation of sin; and the second opening is when he told his brother to go out to the field. This is the last time we hear Cain conversing with Abel his brother before the deadly incident. When Cain refuses to converse with God and his brother, fratricide follows.

Since the first brotherhood ended in fratricide, many more brothers and sisters have gone on to suffer fratricide, and sadly some of these appalling physical, emotional and spiritual murders have been committed under the name of religion. You might think being religious would make us good. But the truth is not so simple because even religion depends on the interior disposition of the worshiper. For this reason, Cain abounds in our hearts!

SEEING RED

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

You've heard the phrase, "Seeing the world through rose-colored glasses," meaning having an optimistic view of things, perhaps even a pollyannish or naive outlook on the passing scene. There's nothing wrong, of course, with being an optimist. Trust in a provident God, love of whom induces a belief that "all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28) makes such confidence a Christian virtue to be cultivated—appearances, at times, to the contrary.

But there's another color which might more suitably tint the world for the purpose of clarifying a Christian's vision, namely, the color red — red stained with the Blood of Christ. Now you might think that could lead to pessimism as an equal and opposite virtue to optimism. After all, an habitual reminder of the price of redemption exacted at the hands of the Lord's enemies might well make you see things in a negative light, always on the lookout for the next cause of human suffering — especially your own.

I think between these two ends of a spectrum lies the happy medium appropriate for a believer's life, that is Christian realism. For there is little point in turning a blind eye to the many evils that afflict us and the world, any more than there is to being so wide-eyed that we are left with little else but pious platitudes

when asked why such things exist.

If anything, "seeing red" gives us reason to confront personal, social and physical evil with the resolute hope spurred on by the Paschal Mystery whereby sin and death do not have the final word. "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith"(1 John 5:4). This is a faith, moreover, in the Blood of the Lamb who has conquered on our behalf the ravages of evil. The drama being played out in the pages of human history already has its outcome and those who have suffered tribulation know they have conquered by means of its power (cf. Rev. 7:14).

We have only to look at the life of most any saint to see such realism at work. Indeed, the saints are history's great realists and among them the martyrs are the most realistic of all. They were under no illusions about the ability of their oppressors to succeed in their desire to destroy them: not Rome when Nero crucified Peter upside-down and beheaded Paul; not his fellow Emperors who would throw Christians to the lions in the amphitheaters of the Empire; not the Moors, Saracens and more recently ISIS who would behead them for not practicing the right religion; not the revolutionaries of France, Spain, Mexico, and Russia who sensed there was something about the church and the gospel that just might overthrow them if they weren't careful; not the Nazis and the Soviets who thought the State was better off putting them in concentration camps



A single dandelion and its spreading seeds.

and gulags; nor, alas, Christians who have persecuted and killed other Christians whom they judged to be either too orthodox or too heretical.

Now you might think that of all people the victims of murderous regimes would hold the most pessimistic view of humanity of anyone. Not so. But neither would I call them optimists. They are, as I said, realists. And the reality that sustained them was the Blood of the Lamb. So much so that the Second Century convert Tertullian would exclaim, “The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians.” He astutely observed how, the more the Roman authorities spilled Christian blood, the more the church seemed to grow. And if Tertullian were to observe the rest of church history, he would not be surprised to learn that pretty much every one of the oppressive systems I mentioned can no longer be found on the face of the earth, from the Roman Empire

itself to Stalinist Russia. And all the while the church of Christ has endured. So Tertullian couldn’t have been more realistic. Nor could his glasses refract a redder hue, for the martyrs conquered their persecutors “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death” (Rev 12:11).

So whether you wear glasses or not, the next time you look out on the world see if you can detect a red glow cast over all you behold. And no matter what the vista see how it has all been “reconciled by the Blood of the cross” (cf. Col. 1:20) – destined for a glory where a Lamb is seated on a throne, albeit as if slain, and find therein cause for neither optimism nor pessimism, but for realism about life, knowing that no matter the tribulation, this precious Blood has spoken with “eloquence greater than Abel’s” (Heb. 12:24) a word of redemption and final vindication.

“THROUGH THE CROSS, WE DRAW CLOSER TO JESUS”

By Fr. Lui Santi, C.P.P.S.

St. Gaspar del Bufalo in his correspondence to members of the community, to various people, in his Circular Letters and in his preaching, refers to the importance of the Cross. Understanding the Cross in our spiritual journey deepens our love for the Blood of Christ and the gift of this life giving Tree, the Cross. At the foot of the new Tree of Life, the Cross, the work of the new Adam and the new Eve comes to fruition.

St. Gaspar even chose the mission cross or mission Crucifix as the distinctive sign by which the Missionaries of the Precious Blood might be recognized. The crucifix proclaims faith in the truth of redemption and salvation. As a Missionary it signifies “our part of bearing the Cross.” The Missionary binds himself to Christ, taking up the Cross, living not himself, but for Christ alone. The Missionary pours out his life for Christ, as Christ himself pours out his Precious Blood for him.

At first, the mission Cross was given only to priests at the time of ordination; today the mission Cross is given to all members, whether priest or brother, at

the time of final incorporation as a sign of membership in the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Even members of the USC (Unio Sanguis Christi), Pious Union, Circle of Friends, Companions and other lay associations with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood receive some form of pin with a Cross and or Cup to mark their membership.

But let us take a step further. What is the meaning of the Cross or Crucifix for us who live the spirituality of the Precious Blood? Gaspar encourages and recommends “not to cease studying the great book of the Crucifix. From that book, we learn profound humility, patience, and gentle, industrious charity so that we are able to attract souls to his love...let us try to make everyone see that serving God is sweet and that by word and deed we can stimulate in each person a love for the holy Cross” (*Letter 1203*; July 10, 1825).

It is ironic the instrument of torture, pain, suffering and death is a well spring of our Christian life, hope, and is a means of salvation. In accepting the physical wood of the Cross, Jesus was condemned, wounded and scorned.

Jesus transforms our difficulties and brings us forgiveness, healing from our errors and offers us new life and salvation. He shows how this Tree is a means of glory and victory.

The real victory of the Cross is that Jesus brought new life by his death and resurrection. As he was lifted up and beyond, Jesus proclaims the resurrection. So without this passage from death there would be no glorious and triumphant Cross. As st. Paul says, "if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain" (1 Cor 15:14). For everyone who believes in the death and resurrection of Jesus shares in his victory and partakes in new and eternal life. As we accept the daily crosses of our lives whether

they be burdens, difficulties, hurts or betrayals, Jesus in return gives the grace to endure with patience and humility. As we endure these moments we are renewed, transformed, changed and become a new person. We too rise beyond the heaviness. Our trust and belief triumph.

Gaspar encourages us to gaze on the Crucifix. This wooden Tree is a cause of strength and power. Strength since it makes our faith grow stronger and powerful since it gives us the ability to cope with hardships and to believe in his love for us. Take time to hold in your hands a Crucifix during your moments of prayer. Sit at the foot of the Cross and let Jesus renew your spirit and love for God and your neighbour.





SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH THE LENS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

By Jerome A. Hologa

In *The Little Prince*, Saint Antoine de Exupery observed: “It is only with the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eye”. It follows that most of us are a minus sign when seeing clearly and deeply what is invisible to the eye. Like a child’s world of fairy tales and bedtime stories, we see what we want to see and believe only what we believe to be true. Unlike children, for some of us fairy tales become the only way to see, the right way we process reality. And we defend this vision, for better or for worse. This is partly because from the moment we are born, through different passages of life, we are handed multiple lenses: the genetic make-up, family of origin and environment from which we are nurtured, the enduring influence of culture and social values, the faith we adhere to, education and thought systems, all of which shape our world view and personality traits. From such predisposed visions, we have made choices and suffered the consequences. We are formed and informed by them.

Look at our fragile world! Virtuous violence is on the rise. The Coronavirus does not discriminate, but we have turned it into an arena for bitter battles between polarized lenses. Our divisions are deepening to the point no wild beasts are as hostile to humans as we are to each other. Seeing reality from preconceived or preestablished positions is diminishing our capacity to dialogue in charity and truth. The other—who sees differently—becomes a rival, a threat. Because such sentiments are driven by fear and mistrust of the other, a closed world—usually within my own tribe or echo chamber—appeals as safe. In this world, we opt freely and with ease for falsehood as long as it serves the purpose of reducing the other to our own categories. Seeing in this way kills the culture of encounter which is at the heart of the Gospel and any religious experience.

This fragile world is also contrasted with the vision of John in which he saw a new heaven and a new earth.

In this vision God dwells among His people. These are the people who warm our hearts with love and encourage us with a vision marked by hope. They are here among us and through them we see what is invisible to the eye—God.

But between these two visions—light and darkness—drawing all to himself is Jesus Christ. In him, we have been loved, desired and chosen. For while we were still sinners Christ loved us and shed His Blood for us (Cf Romans 5:6-11). Let this sink in deeply: our ransom was paid in full not by silver, gold or any other wealth, but by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. This is what we see when we fix our eyes on the Cross: the innocent victim who “has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa 53:4-5).

Yet, this bloody crucifixion and death did not crush or overwhelm his outstretched arms to embrace humanity and all history, lifting up to the Father his Blood as a sacrifice of oblation so that through him and in him we might have new life, our salvation. Let us see once again what this means through the vision of John: “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth” (Rev 5:9-10).

If this is who we are, what then are we to do in order to see red threads

running through everyone and everything, especially those shoved to the edges, the twilights and shadows of our society? For although we know that the Blood of Christ is the bond which unites us with God and which brings us into fellowship with one another as a new people, united by drinking anew from his Cup, we continue to see other human persons according to utilitarian, stereotypical and prejudicial criteria. First, we must admit that our vision is blurred; we need a renewed lens. For once we clearly and deeply see ourselves as precious in the Blood of Christ, only then will we see the preciousness of others. This is how we receive an integral vision of divine adoption as children of God.

Secondly, we need to be firmly grounded in our own identity. For while the lens we received may have influenced us to see with a particular perspective, it does not represent the whole truth of our being. Since the human person is made in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:26-27), we should see in there the most profound reason for the inviolability of human dignity and the reference point of our hope despite our flawed visions. The partiality of our lenses may well have caused us to distort the likeness of God, we never lost the image of God.

It takes many years, however, and many humbling moments for some us to receive an integral vision of humanity. And for some of us we may go through our whole life without ever noticing our need for renewed sight. But if we irrevocably belong to Jesus, we will see again.



The #EducationForGirls2021 campaign raised \$32,000. Thank you for the generosity of the many donors who contributed. Because of you 37 girls will go to school. There is still more work we can do to reach the goal of 100, 000. THANK YOU!

\$32,000

$\$9600 \div \$480 = 20$ girls
St. Gaspar Primary School

$\$22,400 \div \$1300 = 17$ girls
Venerable John Merlini SS

- The funds portioned out for girls at St. Gaspar Primary School
- The funds portioned out for girls at Venerable John Merlini Secondary

A sunset over sand dunes with a blue text box overlay. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow over the sky and the ripples of the sand. The text box is a solid dark blue rectangle on the left side of the page.

Plan Your Legacy: A Stewardship Resolution

Your support has helped us over the years to carry our mission of sharing Christ's message. Upon your death, who will be responsible? Pass on your values and leave your mark to future generations by leaving a testamentary gift or will upon your death by including the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Atlantic Province or C.P.P.S. Mission Projects in your long-term plans while achieving your own personal and financial goals.

Testamentary life-income gifts include a charitable gift annuity, a charitable remainder unitrust, a charitable lead trust or pooled income fund all of which can be funded through your will.

Naming the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Atlantic Province or C.P.P.S. Mission Projects as a beneficiary in your will or through a revocable (living) trust is the most common way to support our apostolate through a deferred gift.

WHY EDUCATION FOR GIRLS?

By Jerome A. Hologa

Among the children born today in Tanzania there might well be inventors greater than Steve Jobs, humanitarians greater than Martin Luther King, environmentalists greater than Maathai Wangari, and leaders greater than Julius Nyerere and Nelson Mandela. Regrettably, a large portion of such potential will never see the light of day. Some will die prematurely because of the high prevalence of malaria which records about 68 infant deaths per 1000 live births. Some will die of malnutrition; others will lose their mothers during or after delivery as the maternal mortality rate stands at one death per every 100 births. Some of those potential greats will be born in the 28.2% of households living under extreme poverty (\$1 or less per day) thus preventing their being adequately nourished, well-sheltered or having a realistic chance to pursue education. Finally, still others will be born in the 38% of households without access to electricity or the 63% of households without access to clean and safe water (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

At the national level, the lucky children who are going to survive a premature birth or infant mortality will grow up in a country with dysfunctional political, social and economic institutions: a country that cannot guarantee to provide them with a better-quality education, civil

liberties, social equity, health care, economic opportunities or protective security. All the necessary conditions that will allow them “to lead the life they value and have reason to value” (Sen, 1999: xii).

The odds are stacked even more against girls who, from the moment they are born, experience a massive disparity in the rights, opportunities and entitlements afforded them when compared to boys. When it comes to education, a fundamental human right, one that is necessary for the exercise of all other human rights, access is either denied or limited. This robs girls of the individual freedom to participate fully as citizens and in decision-making power.

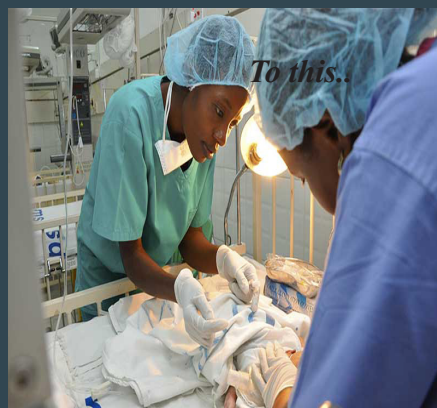
Social and cultural norms still see girls through the lens of reproduction. Already at an early age, girls engage in and spend disproportionately more time than boys in unpaid care work such as cooking, cleaning, collecting firewood, fetching water and taking care of younger household members. Such social expectations relegate them to the lower ends of socio-economic opportunity. This also means girls suffer time and energy-poverty, namely, the time and energy that could be allocated to augmenting their personal development.

These girls are also frequently victims of sexual harassment which causes great harm to their dignity and mental health. Damning reports from UNAIDS show that "five in six new infections among adolescents aged 15–19 years are among girls. Young women aged 15–24 years are twice as likely to be living with HIV than men." Outdated practices such as early and forced marriage still prevent hundreds of girls access to the right of an education. Two out of five girls are married before the age of 19, often to meet the financial needs of the family. In poor households, families are often limited to choosing only one child to send to school and that money is always spent on boys. Of those who do get the chance to attend school, a significant portion find their dreams cut short because the education system and policies are not well prepared to protect them and meet their needs.

For example, many affordable schools are not equipped with hostels and dormitories to offer a safe environment in which to meet academic and social challenges. Most are forced to walk long distances to school. Time and energy-poverty is further enhanced since girls spend after-school hours taking care of siblings, cooking, collecting firewood and other household chores. Sometimes they are forced into child labor and sexual exploitation as a means to provide for the family. How can they maintain a healthy school life in such disadvantaged circumstances?

Certainly, education is a key tool for any society to advance its social,

cultural and economic well-being. Our mission schools in Tanzania were founded to meet the right to education for hundreds of deprived children. C.P.P.S. Mission Projects is dedicated to this cause and currently has an online campaign, #EducationForGirls2021, which runs until April 2021. This campaign is aimed to educate girls who do not have the financial means to go to school but have the potential to be a force for empowerment of other girls and contribute to Tanzania's sustainable development.



BEAUTY, SACRED ART AND PRAYER

By Fr. Martin Dicuango

The Museum of St. Mark in Florence, Italy, is a former Dominican priory which contains an extensive collection of the frescoes of Blessed Fra Angelico, whom the Church venerates as the patron saint of artists. On the upper floor, there are forty-four friar's cells frescoed by the "Angelic Friar." Each brother would have in his private cell a beautiful depiction of the life of Christ to gaze upon so that their souls could be lifted to contemplate the sacred mysteries. These frescoes, therefore, did not serve as a means of instruction, nor were they considered mere decoration. For the brothers, they served as pathways to prayer.

Many ancient philosophers considered sight to be the most spiritual of the senses. What we see truly affects our soul—for good or ill. In our technologically saturated culture, filled with so much "visual noise," you could say that our spiritual sight is suffering from a buildup of cataracts. The objects of our sight often do not lead us to contemplation of divine realities, but instead, toward the things of earth. Smart phones offer a constant stream of visual distraction that keep our eyes occupied and our souls deadened. Modern art and architecture

also often point to man's power over the world and away from God. This leads us to forget that our sight is made for beauty—true spiritual beauty—just as our minds were made for truth. It is thus absolutely urgent for us Christians living in such a positivistic climate to learn how to "see" again.

One way is to familiarize ourselves with the great treasure of sacred art and architecture born in the womb of the Church which continues to attract both believers and non-believers alike. Our art and architecture are sacred because they are born from prayer and lead to prayer. In gazing upon a beautiful work of sacred art we are led away from ourselves toward an encounter with God. Sacred art acts like a "divine hook" which draws us out of the mire to the sweetness of contemplation. I remember visiting the beautiful Basilica of the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona where I had an experience of beauty and prayer. The nave was made to look like a forest in stone; its columns like trees rising upwards orienting one's sight and spirit to the heavens. While I was standing there, I could not help but experience being lifted up from monotony to the goodness of heaven.

Today, with our overwhelming concerns with the things of earth, let us not forget the things of heaven. Let us remember that beautiful sacred art and architecture has a spiritual *raison d'être*, and that they can help modern eyes to see deeply again, and be led toward divine realities.



Fra Angelico: The Annunciation in the Museum of San Marco, Florence.

ATTACHMENT by Vasant Lad

Attachment is the food of the mind. Attachment is the anchor of the mind. Through attachment the mind anchors to many things in this world. Such a mind is a jailed mind. Where there is attachment there is no freedom. Where there is attachment there is no love. The attachment you feel to a particular outcome is like a vehicle. Let the vehicle take you on a journey but when you arrive, you must leave it outside the door and enter the destination alone. Some have become unhappy with attachment so they decide to practice detachment. This detachment is but another face of attachment. It is based on control.

The stem of attachment has given rise to the sprout of detachment, both stems spring forth from the root of ego. You may have given up outer clinging. You may practice spiritual austerities. But have you given up the inner clinging? The clinging to enlightenment prevents the transformation you so desire. You cannot force open the flower of spiritual freedom. It blooms on its own accord. If you force it, it may appear to bloom. But in reality it is already dead. Where there is attachment, there is no awareness. Give complete attention to your attachment. Apply your whole body, mind, and emotions to it. A space will open and that attachment will drop by itself like a mature leaf drops to the ground.

All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well...for there is a Force of love moving through the universe that holds us fast and will never let us go.

Julian of Norwich

THE MYSTICS: JULIAN OF NORWICH

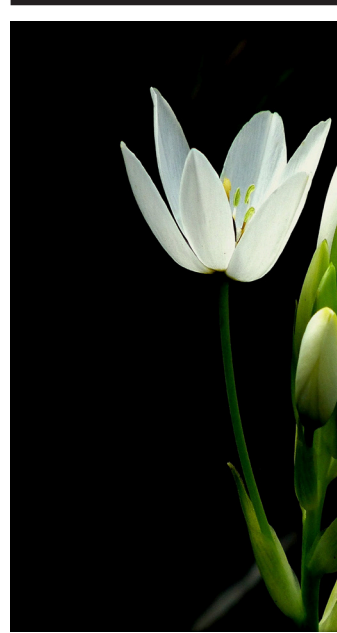
*By Very Rev Mario Cafarelli,
C.P.P.S.*

As was mentioned in the previous issue, very little is known of the personal life of the mystic Julian of Norwich. Aside from the fact that she lived in city of Norwich, situated about 160 kilometres northeast of London, much of what is known of her can be gleaned from writings entitled *Showings*.

Julian is well known for her optimism and hope for the future of humankind: “*All will be well, and every kind of thing will be well*”. Why would she make this phrase a central

character of her writings? What did Julian know of the difficulties and struggles her fellow men and women had to endure in everyday life? She was an anchoress, by God, who never ventured outside her cell. How could Julian hope to give people the courage and fortitude needed to withstand the trials and tribulations they suffered and the faith to sustain them?

English spirituality and mysticism were considerably influenced by the Anglo-Saxon tradition, Teutonic mysticism and home-grown mysticism.





Each of these traditions were influenced by the circumstances and events that took place around them. The background with which the mystics of the fourteenth century wrote were bad enough. The Hundred Years' War between France and England (1337-1453), bubonic plague also known as the Black Death of 1348/49 and again in 1361, and the 'Peasants Revolt' of 1381 were the major events that shook the fourteenth century. None of this chaos, however, deterred mystics such as Julian to see the good and the

wholesomeness of the human spirit and and the love and concern that God had for his people. It's as if she and her fellow mystics deliberately turned away from the oppressive and harrowing times and chose instead to contemplate the unchanging, tranquil and serene Holiness of God.

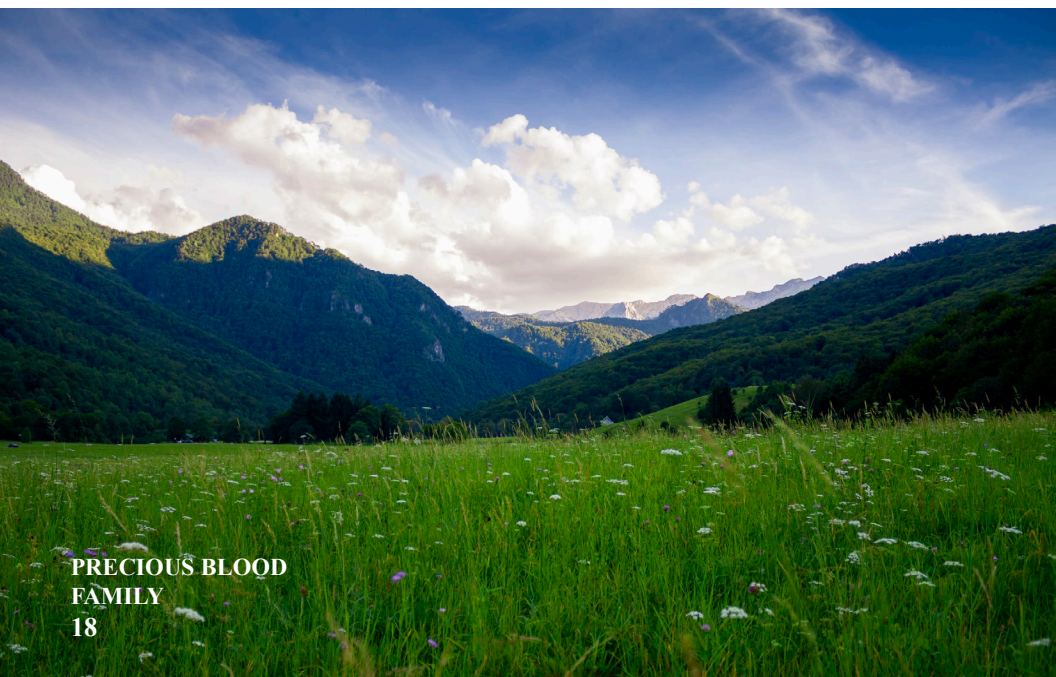
Today we look at society and the world in general and we find that things are not well. The pandemic we continue to experience, the social unrest in most of the world, political disappointments and suspicions have downright contributed to a general malaise and a crippling of the human spirit. These are the circumstances that Julian would have also experienced and worse.

So, what made her the optimist and visionary she is well known for? Even though this English anchoress spent all of her adult life sealed up in cell, she was well aware of what was happening outside the confines of those four walls. It is apparent that Julian had the means and the opportunity to receive information from the outside world. Why did she not succumb to the despair and hopelessness that held her fellow men and women? The difference with Julian is that she, through her mysticism, had the opportunity to see beyond the present and glimpse humanity redeemed and restored. What she was taught in her visions helped her to put her full trust in God. She is in complete communion with God and desires nothing else. Julian also experiences the great love that God has for his creatures. She wants nothing but this love that ignites and sustains her being. In all this she can confidently exclaim that, *all will*

be well, and every kind of thing will be well.

What a wonderful sense of hope and tranquility that Julian desires to impart to those who are experiencing abandonment, misrepresentation and hostility. If we, like the anchoress of Norwich, can look beyond the chaos of our times then we will have the opportunity to see that can and will be well, and every kind of thing will be well. This is not a simplistic way or method for achieving harmony and balance in our lives but a means to reorder and prioritize our life to conform to the will and ultimate love of God.

Julian, in my opinion, possesses the means and the insight to deeply understand God through the mystical experience. If you have had your appetite for mysticism whetted you may also look into the works of Evelyn Underhill (*Mysticism*) and C. Wolters (*The English Mystics*).



*Our Lady of the Most Precious Blood,
Pray for us.*



NATIVE BORN SON
THE JOURNALS OF J. DAVID FORD
EDITED BY MARNIE HARE BICKLE
BLUE DENIM PRESS

By Denise Araiche

I received this book as a gift and what a gift it was! The journals of J. David Ford, a child of parents who ran a Hudson’s Bay Outpost at the beginning of the 20th century, are full of adventure and friendship. Ford and his brother Bill were the only “white” children in the Arctic. The indigenous community allowed the family to integrate with them and through mutual respect, came to claim Ford as their own—even to calling him an “eminent man” (the term “Eskimos” used to describe themselves)—high praise, indeed. Ford, at a very early age, learned with his Eskimo friends how to hunt, fish, and survive in the Arctic. He learned all about the flora, fauna and how to live with them in harmony. At the age of 8, he went on his first polar bear hunt with his friends.

Ford, after going to school in Newfoundland for 5 years, was very aware of the differences in cultures. The Eskimo culture for him was one of survival, equality and community versus the “white man’s” culture of hierarchy and an “every man for

himself” attitude. In the Eskimo community, when one person had good hunting, the whole community shared in that and when food was scarce, everyone starved.

Strangers were welcomed as honoured guests and were housed with families. The communities shared all that they had, no matter the cost. Because of the harsh winters, they would help those who were struggling. On one dangerous trek, a man lent his two best dogs (humbly calling them his worst) to Ford and his crew to help them get to an outpost to get food. Huskies were prized especially during the winter—to offer two of his own, was extremely generous. That was life in the harsh Arctic; everyone survived together. Orphans were taken in by the community and housed with a family. No one was left on their own.

There was great respect for nature. But for all that beauty, nature could be devastating—snow storms that could last months, scarcity of food and dangerous animals were but a few problems they encountered. Although few harken for the days of hunting and fishing for survival, there is an appreciation for the simplicity of that way of life. When hunting, every piece of the animal would be used either for food or to craft utensils or clothing.

Throughout the book, the theme of community and selflessness is pervasive. The way the community rallies together to ensure everyone is equal is enviable. When the community was hungry, a group went to hunt for the winter. When the supply ship was caught in ice and couldn't bring staples a group went, at great peril, to get supplies from another village. The first village they encountered didn't have much, yet they gave what they could spare and even made a coat for one hunter that needed something warmer.

This way of life is reminiscent of what Christ asked us: "When I was hungry, you gave me food, when I was thirsty, you gave me drink, when I was

naked you clothed me".

Ford's writing is detailed and so visual that the images come alive in the reader's imagination. We are immersed in the ice and tundra of the narration. The descriptions of the haunting beauty of the North are alluring. Marnie Hare Bickle did a tremendous job editing the journals and ensuring continuity within the story. The biggest disappointment of this book is that it ends. *Native Born Son* is an iconic Canadian book that generates a lot of discussion. It should be standard reading for schools and bookclubs.



**The Gentlemen by Fr.
Michael R. Mateyk, C.P.P.S.**

I have been a fan of director Guy Ritchie for well over 20 years. *Snatch*, *Lock, Stock, Two Smoking Barrels* and *Rocknrolla*, to name a few. His quick-witted dialogue, plot twists and action scenes are among the best around today. And there is always a vibe, or what one might call an undercurrent, to each of Ritchie's movies. *The Gentlemen* does not disappoint. It continues the top-notch quality one would expect from a Guy Ritchie film. The film tells the tale of a gangster and his marijuana business along with a myriad of people scheming to take his empire from him. Pure Ritchie genius. The film stars Matthew McConaughey, Charlie Hunnam, and Colin Farrell. The one who steals the show, though, is Hugh Grant as Fletcher. I was never a Hugh Grant fan, but this role is knocked right out of the park by the actor.

The premise centres around Fletcher telling the story to Ray (Hunnam), in the form of a script he wrote based on the experience and story of Mickey Pearson (McConaughey). Mickey Pearson (McConaughey), humble-born but brilliant American, has parlayed his days selling weed at Oxford into a vast marijuana empire, cleverly hidden on the estates of impoverished aristocrats. He prides himself on his pacificity—"My jam doesn't kill anyone, and I like that," he purrs. But

he and his streetwise wife (Michelle Dockery) have had enough. He wants to sell his empire for a reasonable price to Matthew (Jeremy Strong).

But it is never that easy in the criminal world. Two other competing gangs want in on the business and are willing to do whatever it takes to get it. The film is filled with double cross after double cross and just when it seems our "hero" is beaten, one of many great plot twists is thrust upon us. As with all of Ritchie's crime dramas there is a lot of swearing and a lot of killing. But the dialogue is quick witted and so sharp that it keeps you drawn in on what the characters will say next.

My three favourite characters in the film were played by McConaughey, Grant and Colin Farrell. First of all, McConaughey. I just like him. I like that he's a Zen koan in human form. I like how thoroughly he commits. I like how he unfurls every line at the same speed and in the same calm tone, and then finally yells two words—"He put his hands on MY WIFE"—so we know he's snapped.

Next, Grant. He has so much juicy fun here with a Cockney accent and rose-tinted aviator shades, sending up a tabloid scoundrel—the kind he's spent the past several years suing in real life—that it's impossible not to grin.



"Looking at "the Coach" invites me to look at myself to see how selfless, forgiving and courageous I am and how with God's grace I can better grow".

And finally, there's Colin Farrell, who plays a boxing coach called Coach, who tries to keep his Jamaican-English charges on, if not the straight and narrow, the straighter and narrower. He and his lads all wear plaid tracksuits, and it's a testament to Farrell that he makes this feel entirely natural rather than stuntsy. He is an underrated master who can do no wrong. The scene in the fast food restaurant will really make you laugh.

Seeing that this film is called "The Gentlemen," we could really say that it is only Farrell's "Coach" who is a gentlemen. We see in his character a man with class, character and sacrifice for his students. Even after some punks try to accost him in a fast food restaurant he still invites them to come down to the gym so he can teach him to

fight and build character. He also does some pretty serious self-sacrificing for his boxing students who steal from McConaughey's drug kingpin character. We see in Farrell's character a man who is willing to put himself out to help those he cares about—a virtue all of us are called to have. Looking at "the Coach" invites me to look at myself to see how selfless, forgiving and courageous I am and how with God's grace I can better grow.

The Gentlemen is a character driven piece that with its many twists, (crude) jokes and action scenes will keep you entertained throughout. Ritchie has not lost his touch.



THRIVING ON THE SPIRITUAL ROLLER COASTER: NAVIGATING SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION AND DESOLATION

By Fr. Joshua Lobo

St. Ignatius of Loyola would describe spiritual consolation as an interior movement of the soul where the soul is “inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord”. This great experience of God’s love in our soul can be accompanied by tears, often referred by many saints as the sweat of the soul. The tears, a sign of consolation, can be a result of a deepening sorrow for our sins or from a deeper awareness of the Lord’s suffering during His passion. In consolation we experience an increase in hope, faith and charity and an interior joy that attracts our hearts and minds and souls to heavenly things. We experience great peace and joy of soul.

Conversely, spiritual desolation is described by Ignatius as a “darkness of soul” in which our soul is disturbed and experiences a movement or attraction towards the base and lowly things of the earth (an excessive focus on material things and pleasures). The soul experiences agitations, temptations, a feeling of separation from God. A soul in spiritual desolation experiences a tepidness, sadness, laziness, and a

general unquiet of soul. If you have ever experienced this in your life, you are not alone, and St. Ignatius’ teachings can help us weather the storms of desolation. Firstly, it may be good to address what brings about the experience of desolation.

There are three things that can bring about spiritual desolation. It can be brought about by our own sins and failures in fidelity to God. Usually, upon further examination of our day, we will come to realise that some action (most especially some sin, even a serious sin) is usually to blame for the feeling of desolation that is brought about. In this case, God may be using the desolation to draw us closer to Him. Perhaps He is using it to call us back to Him in the sacrament of reconciliation, or He may be using it to draw us to depend on Him more in prayer. Our sins are not always the reasons for spiritual desolation. Spiritual desolation can also be caused by the evil one who desires to disturb us and tempt us away from God. Lastly, spiritual desolation can be permitted by God to teach us that He, and only He,

is the God of all consolations. We cannot do anything to earn consolation or deserve it; it is purely a gift from God. It is important to remember that God is never the source of spiritual desolation, but that He may permit us to undergo it for our own growth.

While it is God and God alone who is the source of spiritual consolation there are some things that we can do in times of desolation to help usher in a time of consolation. For one, if we need to, we can receive the sacrament of reconciliation which gives us a fresh start and an encounter with the Lord's healing mercy. We can also receive the Lord in the Eucharist if we are able and ready to do so.

In times of spiritual desolation it is important to not to make any major decisions, nor is it wise to change the plans or routines (prayer routines or otherwise) that we had set up during our times of consolation. Most importantly, we are not to batten down the hatches and sit and wait for desolation to pass over us like a huge storm; rather we are to take action to fight the desolation head on. As soon as we notice desolation looming like a threatening storm cloud in the distance, we are to run bravely toward it and meet it with certain actions.

A great image that we can use to remind ourselves what to do during times of desolation is found in the story of the battle between David and Goliath. When David saw the enemy Philistine, Goliath, standing in the distance and threatening to draw near, he did not wait for the Philistine to come to him; rather scripture tells us that "When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David,

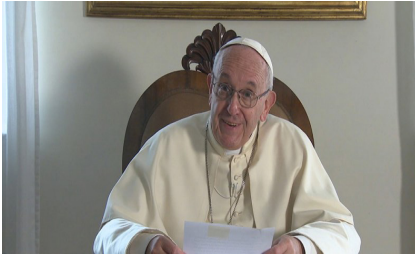
David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine" (1 Samuel 17:48). We must follow King David's lead in our own battle with spiritual desolation; we do not wait for it to overcome us, but we must "run quickly" to meet it in battle. Scripture reassures us that if we do this, we will have victory. St. James reminds us that if we "resist the devil" then, "he will flee" from us (James 4:7).

How exactly do we combat spiritual desolation? For one, we are to increase our time of prayer and not shorten it by any means. In a word, we are to double down on our prayer. We are to increase our penances (for example, we can deny ourselves small pleasures like dessert or excessive television or YouTube). We can repeat some words of scripture that have meaning for us or give us strength and joy. Perhaps the words of the Psalms may help such as "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want, he makes me lie down in green pastures" or the words of the Lord Himself in the Gospels, "Take heart, do not be discouraged or frightened for I have overcome the world."

If we fight bravely in times of spiritual desolation, St. Ignatius reveals that spiritual consolation will return sooner than we expect. In times of spiritual consolation, we are called to enjoy the experience as a gift coming from God, but we also prepare and make resolutions in our spiritual life to which we promise to hold fast during times of spiritual desolation. It is in times of spiritual consolation that we make or confirm important decisions in our life, for it is in these moments that we are most docile to being led by God's spirit and are most docile to His will. In this time, it is important to thank God for the consolations He is giving us.

FRATERNITY IN LOCKDOWN?

THE ENCYCLICAL LETTER *FRATELLI TUTTI* OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS



By *Ada Prisco*

The initial part of the recent encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* of Pope Francis aims for the goal of a newfound and renewed fraternity, although with some expanded perspectives and even some paradoxes. We are living in an open world, yet being closed in on oneself reigns. We continually travel new paths, where the neighbour is more often a stranger, who is easily *eliminated* or *ignored* (cf. no. 6).

Following the Pope's analysis, we note that this historical period in general benefits both openness and enclosure. This is not the case for all openings to others; the more superficial ones, in fact, are favored by the ease and speed of contacts. Such openings can be opposed to a certain depth. Our guiding value this year, *Sharing in the Blood of Christ*, is against these trends and pose problems with respect to Christian faith and

identity. The encyclical challenges us to analyze ourselves. Do we witness more openness or more indifference to others? The response could easily vary and at times be harmful, even contrary to the gospel.

Like all illusions and temptations, enclosure enjoys its own *comfort zone*. It instills the feeling of being safe. The greater the garrison of personal, national, faith boundaries, the more the idea of being unattackable prevails, while the glare of being enough for oneself gradually grows. Reading the situation correctly serves to reveal the general state of things, concerning individuals and institutions. It is useful at the same time to effectively configure the type of conversion required here and now.

Openness and fraternity

Francis' letter also highlighted a substantial difference between mere openness and fraternity. The global world is open to economic necessity and promoting attitudes necessary for development and better living standards for all. Openness and fraternity are not, however, the same thing (cf. no. 12).

The collapse of the great ideologies has not so far been accompanied or filled by visions worthy of the globalized world.

The result is often a so-called open-world, yet full of so many voids, accompanied by various styles of loneliness and isolation. The encyclical seems to lament the total absence of the world understood as a global community, where fraternity flows like real lifeblood. Societies accustomed to alertness, trained to be on the defensive, become fertile ground for the exacerbation of conflicts and for the triggering of easy wars, even equipped with moral justifications.

The letter speaks of a new form of slavery, more subtle and dangerous than the forms known to antiquity. The slavery generated by the world of freedoms is not recognized and tends to perpetuate itself indefinitely. It restricts human beings and subjects them to the law of the market. It anesthetizes courage and enthusiasm, thus altering the ability to be involved in the deepest spheres of being. This in fact moves away from the core of the Christian religion, a message that is always liberating, disruptive, humanizing. If it loses these things, faith loses the possibility of penetrating the fabric of life with strength and depth.

Copy and original

Communication and openness sustained by economic reasons only do not distinguish the faces of either people or cultures. We all feel that we are moving in a world made up of copies of copies, which gladly winks at homogenization. The suffocation of peculiarities, of identities, generates dangerous forms of frustration. It becomes in the long run an exercise

in mere reproduction or repetition. The encyclical, for example, alludes to the propensity to import foreign products, rather than to encourage local productivity (cf. no. 51). The religious conception of life articulates a completely different language, where every expression is unrepeatable. The characteristic of religion is originality, not homogenization. This macroscopic perspective places the witness of faith in opposition to these trends. Who will promote the original, facilitating the realization of concrete people immersed in history?

Sprouting hope

In the pandemic that has dramatically shaken the whole planet, each in his own way has found himself facing his own fragility. In this unprecedented emergency, the Pope indicates the opportunity to rediscover each other united by the same destiny as human beings, who concretely manifest the need for the neighbour. The key to rebirth is, according to Francis, preserved in the model of the *Good Samaritan* (Lk 10:25-37) and in the cultural revolution carried out by the Gospel passage, which invites us to overcome fences, in favor of a movement always towards the neighbour.

The repeated greeting at the end of every Eucharistic celebration, *go*, continues in the mission of witnessing to a hope that takes shape in helping, in sharing. Silently it produces gradual changes, and returns to us the form of a blessing.



BETTER TOGETHER

By Naomi DiRago

We have heard this expression a great deal since the COVID pandemic took hold of the world. Consider what this truly implies. We can do virtually anything from the comfort and anonymity of our computer, cell phone or tablet. A void, however, is opening up as we continue to order our takeout meals, purchase anything our minds can conceive, and meet on Zoom. It's not enough. For each one of us in one way or another discovers in God's perfect time that we need one another, both the greatest and weakest. And everyone is important.

Together, we have the ability to find solutions. For solidarity is rooted in love: love of God and love of

neighbour. There exists an unbreakable bond between the love of God and love of neighbour because the "love of neighbour is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and that closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God" (Deus Caritas Est #16).

The amazing grace of wanting to share with another is incredible; it makes our lives bearable when suffering weighs heavy upon our shoulders. When Jesus was carrying the Cross to Calvary, Simon of Cyrene helped him bear the weight of the heavy cross. While Mary and Martha mourned the death of their brother Lazarus, Jesus shared their sorrow and helped them believe in the resurrection through the witness of their brother.

Accepting challenges to go the distance alone can be exhilarating and leaves us feeling invincible. Yet, failing miserably at a challenge can be mitigated with the compassion and understanding of other people. I experienced such crushing failure once when my husband was out of town. I took our sons who were 2 and 3 years old at the time to Mass one Sunday. The church was particularly full and our boys were incredibly restless and noisy, moving and standing on the kneeler and shuffling the hymn books. All my attention was centred on trying to keep them focused on being quiet and not disturbing the people in the pews around us. I was fully distracted from the celebration of the Eucharist and I wanted to remove my children. I vowed never to bring them to Mass together again. Tears were filling my eyes and my throat was clenched with frustration. I remember asking myself: “What is the point of coming to Mass when I’m feeling so ashamed and helpless?”

Somehow we managed to make it through the entire Mass and as we were getting ready to leave the church, I kept my eyes down and tried not to give the boys a piece of my mind. Suddenly a hand touched my arm; the lady sitting directly behind us told me how much she enjoyed our sons at Mass today. When I met her gaze, her expression was so loving and sincere. She told me she remembers when her children were that age and it’s so nice

to see children at Mass.

Her comment immediately changed my impression and gave me the courage to keep coming back to church with our boys. I offered huge prayers of thanks for the gentle gift of the Holy Spirit inspiring another person who helped make life remarkably better.

Today when I see young mothers and fathers hastily trying to shush their toddlers, hanging their heads because their babies are crying or acting like babies during Mass, I try to offer them the same consolation that lovely woman gave me many years ago. It is beautiful to hear children in church and look at the future of our faith.

We can’t foresee all the challenges that lie ahead in our lives. Some day we will all face hardship, loneliness and death. These things are certain, but we can get through the obstacles we face in life when we share the experience of compassion, understanding and, most importantly, hope through the Holy Spirit “to be better together.”





*Pope Francis to
the Precious Blood
Family; Saturday, 30
June 2018*

“**T**he true strength of Christian witness comes from the Gospel itself. And this is where the centrality of the Blood of Christ and its spirituality emerges. It is a question of relying above all on the “superabundance of love” expressed in the Blood of the Lord, which brought to light the Church Fathers and the great saints and mystics of Christian history, from Saint Bonaventure to Saint Catherine of Siena, up to a Saint especially dear to you: Saint Gaspar del Bufalo. This Roman priest, founder of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood, endeavoured to keep alive the ardour of faith in the Christian people by travelling through the regions of central Italy. With the example of his love for God, his humility, his charity, he was able to bring reconciliation and peace everywhere, tending to the spiritual and material needs of the most fragile people who lived on the margins of society.”

“**E**mbrace, then, Jesus crucified, raising to Him the eyes of your desire! Consider His burning love for you, which made Jesus pour out His blood from every part of His body! Embrace Jesus crucified, loving and beloved, and in him you will find true life because He is God made man. Let your heart and your soul burn with the fire of love drawn from Jesus on the Cross!

You must, then, become love, looking at God’s love who loved you so much not because He had any obligation towards you but out of pure gift, urged only by His ineffable love. You will have no other desire than to follow Jesus! As if you were drunken with Love, it will no longer matter whether you are alone or in company: do not think about many things, but only about finding Jesus and following Him!”



*From the “Letters”
of St Catherine
of Sienna (1347-
1380) (no. 165 to
Bartolomea, wife of
Salviato of Lucca).*

Will you consider a gift to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood?

You can support the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and their apostolate. We appreciate any donation to help defray postage and printing costs; the suggested annual is \$30.00. We are most grateful for additional contributions to advance our apostolate. Please make checks payable to *Unio Sanguis Christi*. Tax receipts are issued in January of each year.

Come follow me

Rooted in the Spirituality of the Precious Blood and the Ministry of the Word, our mission is to be a prophetic witness for the renewal of the Church and the transformation of the world. Living the Bond of Charity, our life reflects a multicultural communion of incorporated members and lay associates. Discover your call with us at www.discoverthecall.org

Mass Association

The church enjoys on all the faithful the charitable obligation to pray for the living and the dead. An ideal way to do this is through the Mass Association, a remembrance of 4000 Masses offered by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood for all those enrolled, living or dead. For more information or to enroll call 905-382-1118 or 416-653-4486, or visit our website www.preciousbloodatlantic.org

Become a USC Member

The Spirituality of the Precious Blood is meant to be shared; as such we are forever grateful for your interest and passion in continuing our Spirituality. *The Union Sanguis Christi* (USC) embraces individuals and groups who commit themselves to live and promote Precious Blood Spirituality. You are welcome to join us through our Spirituality.



Fr. John Colacino invites you to follow his weekly blog at sanguischristi.com.



The Family is Growing

Join us as we celebrate the gift of vocation of our brother, Gerardo Valencia Laguartilla, who joined our family on December 3rd, 2020 and was ordained to the Order of Deacon for the Congregation of Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Atlantic Province on December 26th, 2020. We extend our gratitude to his family, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood Atlantic Province, the community at Merlini Study Center, the seminary community at St. Augustine of Toronto, the community in Lima and people of God for helping him become the man he is today.

**Congregation of
Missionaries of the
Precious Blood,
Atlantic Province**



"You sent your Son to reconcile all to you through his Blood,
help us all to work toward achieving this reconciliation".