

WINTER 2010

# C P P S T O D A Y

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

## God's Promise of New Life



by Fr. Angelo  
Anthony, C.P.P.S.

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# Chance Meetings by Divine Design

**D**o you ever think about all the connections you've made and people you've met in your life, and how easy it would have been for you never to have met them at all? You might have been a very different person if you had attended a different school, lived in different places, worked for a different employer, or joined a different club. You may never have met some of the people who are now very important to you.

When I think about many of the important relationships in my life that appear to be the product of chance, I don't believe that it was really by chance at all. I think God puts people in our lives for a reason. They are meant to teach us something, provide the talents that we may lack, demonstrate for us a new and different way of thinking, or to provide us with another experience of God's creative genius. Or we are meant to teach them something, provide talents that they may lack, demonstrate for them a new and different way of thinking or an experience of the creativity of our God. We may meet people by chance, but the relationships that follow are never by accident.

This issue of *C.P.P.S. Today* is all about those connections. In our cover story, Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S., writes movingly about the death of his father, and his own journey through grief to a greater understanding of the eternal nature of God's love. Fr. Angelo is the director of the Cincinnati Province of the C.P.P.S.

Our second story in this issue is about a family in happier times. Deacon Vince Wirtner, C.P.P.S., will be ordained a priest in June. For that celebration and his life beyond, his mother, Charlene, is making Vince's vestments. The design on his chasuble will feature a crazy quilt of fabrics donated by Vince's family members and friends. Each square of fabric comes with a story of love and support for Vince as he begins this new stage of his life. Vince's family has been an unwavering source of strength for him on his journey to the priesthood and his vestments will be a concrete symbol of the many connections in his life.

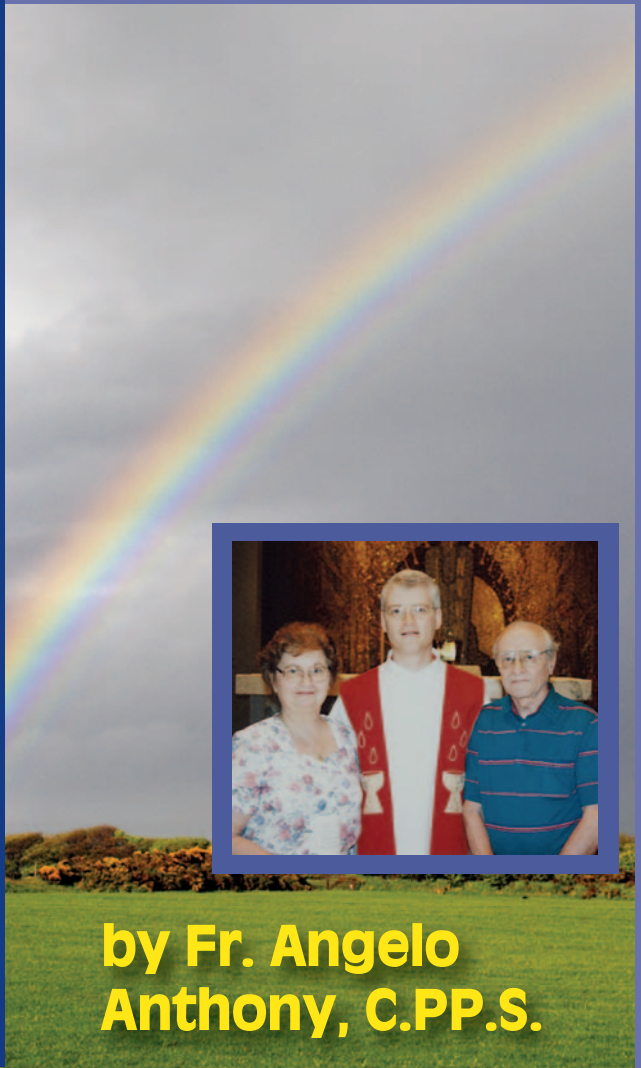
Think of the people who support you in good times and bad. Isn't it wonderful that God has placed them in our lives? Out of all the billions of souls on earth, God in so many mysterious ways has put us in touch with the friends and family he wants us to have. People are in our lives for a reason. Be sure and tell them today how glad you are that God brought you together in this place and time.



**Between  
the Lines  
by Fr. Larry  
Hemmelgarn,  
C.P.P.S.**



# God's Promise of New Life



**by Fr. Angelo  
Anthony, C.P.P.S.**

The death of a loved one knocks us off the tracks of the life we had. God promises a new life, not just to those who die in his grace, but also to those believers who are left behind.

This past year I turned fifty and received my first mailing from AARP. A couple of months after that watershed birthday my dad died on September 3, 2009. Walking the journey of these past several months has brought a notable increase in the thoughtful pauses that enter my day as my mind wanders and I try to comprehend these changes in life. Leafing through the pages of old photographs brings smiles and tears as I think of my own life story and how different that story will now be in light of Dad's death.

The day of Dad's funeral brought a wonderful gift. My niece, Korin, revealed that she had been talking with her son Jacob, who is in heaven, telling him that he was to see to it that there would be a rainbow in the sky on the day of Grandpa's funeral.

It had been so dry in Ohio that summer, but on the evening of the funeral a light rain started to fall and a rainbow appeared in the sky . . . in fact, a double rainbow! We all stood out in the rain and admired the beautiful sight, holding on to God's promise that everything was going to be okay.

When we least expect it God breaks through the darkness of death to reassure us that His covenant of love knows no end;

that the life of our loved ones lives on and so must we. This thought is reaffirmed in one of the preface prayers used during the funeral liturgy: "Lord, for your faithful people life is changed not ended." While these words serve as a source of hope the depth of their meaning remains a mystery.

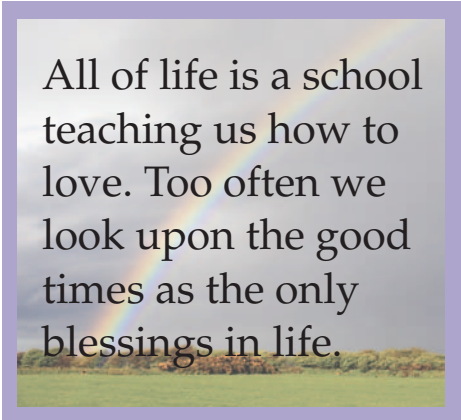
Death and grief are companions from which most of us shy away until they are thrown into our lives like a hot potato that we all too quickly want to toss far away. Inspirational resources for living a purposeful life and preparing for death have become popular in the last several years in books like *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *The Bucket List*, *The Last Lecture* and *Our Greatest Gift*. Each offers some homespun wisdom for living life to the fullest and seeing all of life as a journey with meaning and purpose.

During the past several months I have wondered why there aren't more materials available for those who carry the burden of grief, who seek to push their way through the darkness that comes from death. Maybe it has to do with the personal nature of grief and the unique relationship that one has had with the deceased.

Maybe the manner of death and the circumstances leading

up to the death of our loved one shape our perspective. Maybe we recognize that this journey of grief is not a matter of completing a list of things to do, but rather learning the steps of a new dance in which our loved one is no longer physically present to join us.

Certainly, the personal experience of loss has a power that can knock us off track. The familiar path we walked for



weeks, months and years has suddenly become strange and unfamiliar. Death brings an end to the patterns of old and in time we come to realize that we can't get back on that same path again. Life is changed. I am changed. Family dynamics have changed. My way of relating to the world has changed.

In the midst of change some things remain familiar. As humans we interact and relate to one another through the help of our senses. A favorite song,

the smell of cologne, the sight of a favorite chair, can take us back to a memory of our loved one in a heartbeat.

The Book of Ecclesiastes reminds us that there is an appointed time for everything: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to weep and a time to laugh (Ecclesiastes 3: 1–2). The author goes on to say, "Sorrow is better than laughter, because when the face is sad the heart grows wiser." This is a reminder that all of life is a school teaching us how to love. Too often we look upon the good times as the only blessings in life. Like our founder, St. Gaspar, we can learn from Jesus that our wounds can also teach us.

The grief and pain that accompany death seem to unite us with others who are hurting. Emotions well up inside of us as our heart says, "I know what you are experiencing." The precious dignity of life that we find through our inner quest reminds us that we are all one blood. This shared identity also stirs within us a longing for a time when all pain and sorrow will be gone and we are united with God forever.

A number of years ago I was sitting with my Uncle Tom, who had lost his wife to cancer some years earlier. He said, "You know, Angelo, your love for

someone can continue to grow even after they have died." I have thought of that scene several times over the last couple of months. I believe Tom's wisdom was born out of a faithful journey of listening for the life that goes beyond death, a life that is found in the risen Lord.

The Emmaus story offers us an example of the disciples wrestling with their grief. With eyes blurred by tears they don't recognize Jesus. Navigating the uncertainty of this new existence they wonder what the new normal is going to be. It is in the familiar breaking of the bread that they recognize the presence of Jesus and see that life is changed not ended. As one of our Missionaries, Fr. Clarence Williams, C.P.P.S., likes to say, "What we thought was the end of the road is simply a bend in the road."

In the celebration of the Eucharist we gather to be nourished at the heavenly banquet. As we gather around the table of the Lord we believe in faith that the faithful departed are sharing in the same food from heaven. When I preside at the funeral of one of our priests or brothers I think of all of the Congregation's

members who have gone before us and I imagine them gathered behind me at the altar as I look out to the members who are living. With this perspective we can see the faces of all who believe, living and deceased, reflected in the cup of salvation and celebrate the truth that we are redeemed in the Blood of Christ.

The new life that we speak of at the time of death is not just for the person who has died. It also points the way for those who survive and must look upon their future as a new life. Embracing this truth helps us to appreciate and be patient with the awkward journey that marks the movement from grief to deep peace.

Placing our hope in God we find consolation in Paul's words to the Thessalonians: "For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17).



# Missionary Hearts Update

We Have Met  
Our Match

By Fr. Larry Hemmelgarn, C.P.P.S.

*"Your gift will count for twice as much, thanks to a challenge gift the Missionaries have already received."*

How often did I write that, over the last three years of our *Missionary Hearts* fundraising campaign? We put those words, or other words to that effect, on every letter, brochure, and campaign update that went out.

The generous friends of our

**Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we have met the \$1.5 million matching gift of our *Missionary Hearts* fundraising campaign.**



**M**issionary  
**H**earts

C.P.P.S.

COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN

Community who provided \$1.5 million in matching funds at the beginning of the campaign had something very specific in mind. They wanted us to expand our donor base. They wanted to encourage us to do something that we haven't done very well in the past: to tell our story to new friends, and ask for their support for our missions and ministries.

The matching gift did bring new donors forward, and also offered an incentive for people who have been good to us for years. Our campaign would not have been nearly so successful without it.

All through the *Missionary Hearts* campaign, I've watched the thermometer in my head that was telling us how close we were getting to meeting our challenge match. When we first received the challenge match gift, its generous deadline of December 31, 2009, seemed so far away. But days and weeks



went by, and the deadline crept up on us, as deadlines do. A new line began to appear on our campaign literature: "Please help us meet our match before the December 31 deadline."

We asked, and we received. We are both heartened and humbled by the response to our request for last-minute donations so that we could meet the challenge match. For a while, it looked as if some of the available dollars might slip away.

I worried through the last half of 2009 that the money we needed would not come. *Times are hard and people have already been very generous with us*, I thought. *I shouldn't expect too much—but wouldn't it be great if we could receive the entire matching gift?* There is so much good that our Missionaries could do with that money, I didn't want to leave a dime behind.

As the year was drawing to a close, people began to pay their pledges off in advance to help us reach our goal. Still, on Wednesday morning, December 30, we were \$17,000 short. Then, in a scene that our provincial director, Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S., has compared to the movie *It's a Wonderful*

*Life*, the donations started coming in when people heard that we needed a little extra boost to reach the matching goal.

By the end of the day on December 31, we were \$143,967 over the matching goal. What a happy new year! And it's thanks to you, our generous supporters.

I am looking forward to the months ahead, as we come to the conclusion of our *Missionary Hearts* campaign, and reporting to you more fully on the final outcome of the campaign and its individual goals. But for now please know how heartened and gratified we are by your generous response to our request.

The only way that we can repay you for your kindness is to perform our ministries to the best of our abilities; to remain faithful to the work that God has given us and to the people that God has placed in our care; and to listen to the voice of God as he calls us to new ways to serve his people.

We make this pledge to you as you have made your pledge to help us. Please pray for us that we might continue to be good stewards of the gifts that we have received.




# Labor of Love



A mother  
sews a  
patchwork  
pattern of  
history and  
support into  
her son's  
vestments.

**By Jean Giesige**

 In the thousand-mile journey that is the making of a quilt, the first cut is the hardest.

Charlene Wirtner of Fort Wayne, Ind., had a stack of fabrics in front of her, and she was contemplating how best they would go together. It wasn't that she was a novice seamstress; she had been

sewing since her now-grown children were born. But this was a special project, not like any she'd taken on before.

It was mid-January, the holidays were behind her, and she was about to start sewing vestments for her son, Vincent Wirtner III, a Missionary of the Precious Blood and a

transitional deacon who will be ordained a priest in June. The family had dreamed up a way to be sure all of Vince's family and friends would have a significant role at the ordination. Last fall, they sent out dozens of messages asking people close to Vince to contribute a piece of fabric to be included on a crazy-quilt chasuble and stole that Vince's mother would create.

It could be anything from a t-shirt to a tablecloth, the message said, as long as it had some significance. Contributors were also asked to send along an explanation of the meaning of the fabric, and any other message that they had for Vince. Then the family sat back and waited for the fabric to arrive.

Arrive it did, in colors and patterns and with stories that went beyond their highest hopes. "We started out putting them in a shoe box, but soon had to move everything to a much bigger box," Charlene said.

The family was amazed at the variety: flamingo fabric from friends in Florida; a satin swatch from Vietnam nearly as beautiful on the wrong side as the right side; the ribbon from a military medal won by Vince's uncle; a piece of a beach umbrella, sent by long-time

family friends to remind the Wirtners of the summer vacations they had shared; fabric emblazoned with the Cardinals' emblem, sent by a friend in St. Louis.

The Wirtners have collected fabric swatches from a great-great-grandmother's dress, a piece of a great-grandfather's shirt, and a length of tatting that has been in the family for five generations. It is a treasure, Charlene said.

Equally treasured are the notes that people have sent along with the fabric. It has been heartwarming to see how much her son means to so many people, said Charlene, who often had tears in her eyes as she read them.

"When your kids are grown and gone, you don't have as much of a feel for their friends or their daily life as you had when they were living under your roof," she said. "When we were flooded with over 70 notes, written by people about how much my son means to them, it was overwhelming. You always think that everyone should love your kids the way you love them, but this made it so real and alive."

She and Vince's sister, Shannon, are lovingly collecting the notes into an album for Vince, "something that he'll

have for the rest of his life," Charlene said.

The album full of notes is a fairly straightforward project, compared to the sewing and quilting of the vestments. The fabrics the family has received will be used to decorate Vince's stole, a thin strip of fabric that priests wear around their neck, and the chasuble, the outer garment of rich fabric and ornate decorations that a priest wears while presiding at Mass.



**The Wirtners: Vincent II and Charlene with their son, Vincent Wirtner III after he was ordained a deacon in June 2009.**

*(Photo by Vitas Kazragys)*

Charlene obtained the ivory fabric for the main body of the chasuble from the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Mo., who are renowned for the vestments they sew. Once the chasuble is

complete, Charlene can affix the panel of quilting to the front and back. While she has a pattern for the chasuble, she must come up with her own design for the quilted panels. She has received advice from the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, and Marie Trout, the co-director of Companions (lay associates) for the Kansas City Province of the Missionaries, who is also an accomplished quilter. "Marie told me, 'You'll be amazed, once you get the first piece on there, how the other pieces fall together like a puzzle,'" Charlene said.

Beth Krudop, the wife of Vince's best friend, Jeff Krudop, is also helping with the project. Plus, Charlene said she has another advisor on her side. "Whenever I get in a bind, I know that the Holy Spirit is going to help me out," she said.

In fact, the Holy Spirit has been part of the process from the very beginning. The Wirtners' pastor at St Joseph Church in Fort Wayne had talked with Vince about a possible vocation to the priesthood when Vince was still in middle school. Vince was active in the parish, especially in music ministry, and went through all the "typical high school stuff," Charlene said.

After high school, he became

a licensed practical nurse, following in the medical footsteps of his parents. Charlene worked as a nurse (including as a parish nurse) for 50 years; and Vince's father, Vincent Wirtner II, is a retired radiologic technologist. Vince, who is open, upbeat and compassionate, was a good nurse, but his parents had an inkling that his true calling might lie elsewhere. "At our parish we had a basket where people could put the names of kids they thought might have a religious vocation," Charlene said. "The basket was always full of slips of paper that said 'Vincent Wirtner III.'"

In 1997, Vince accepted the position of youth minister at Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne, another job he thoroughly enjoyed. In his time there, he went on a trip to the Holy Land. "When he came home from the Holy Land, he said, 'Mom, it's time,'" she said.

The Wirtners are deeply connected to their heritage; Charlene and their three children and grandchildren are members of the Miami tribe of Native Americans. Charlene's cousin, an award-winning Native American beader, did the beading on his deacon stole. But they are also looking toward the future. When Vince's plan to

enter formation with the Missionaries became common knowledge, someone mentioned to Charlene, probably unnecessarily, that there would be no Vincent Wirtner IV. Vince's parents realized the implications of his decision, but also saw the endless possibilities of a life of ordained ministry.

"There is no more perfect seamstress than my mom to accomplish this project," Deacon Vince said. "She is a perfectionist and an artist. Because she and Dad have had the most investment in raising this priest, I felt she would put the love and care into the project that only a parent can. They have supported my vocation since the first time I thought about being a priest when I was 11 years old. Along with my brother and sister, they have been the strongest voices in my discernment journey. I could not do this without them."

His parents' contributions to his chasuble are a piece of lace from Charlene's wedding gown, and a piece of the tie that Vincent II wore when they were married. It is a symbol to them of their family sending Vince forth to fulfill his vocation.

With those pieces, and over 60 others, Charlene was ready to tell the story of Vince's life so far. "I'm anxious to get started,"

she said. "I'm anxious to cut into the material. Through my hands he works."

(Editor's note: By the end of January Charlene had completed the body of the chasuble, except for

the quilted panel. She had cut and sorted all the donated fabric pieces and had made two experimental stoles. She plans to use her son as a model to see which design works best before she proceeds.)



## Vestment Vocabulary



Charlene Wirtner displays samples of chasuble colors.



**Alb:** An ample white garment coming down to the ankles and usually girdled with a cincture. It is modeled after the long linen tunic used by the Romans. (From the Latin *albus*, white.)

**Cincture:** A long cord with tassled or knotted ends, tied around the waist outside the alb. The color may be white or may vary according to the liturgical season.

**Alb with stole** **Stole:** A a strip of material, several inches wide, and worn around the neck by priests and bishops or at the left shoulder like a sash by deacons, for the celebration of Mass, administration of the sacraments, and ceremonies of the Blessed Sacrament. (From the Latin *stola*, a long robe.)

**Chasuble:** A sleeveless outer garment worn by a priest at Mass. It is worn over all other vestments and is made of silk, velvet, or other rich material usually decorated with symbols. The arms are to be free when it is worn. It symbolizes the yoke of Christ and signifies charity. (From the Latin *casula*, a little house, a mantle.)



**Chasuble**

*Photos of vestments courtesy of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, O'Fallon, Mo.*

# Parents as Partners

With my parents' blessing I went off to a high school seminary for boys all the way across the state from our hometown in Glandorf, Ohio, when I was just 14. The fact that my older brother was already there had to make the transition a little easier on all of us, but still I'm sure it was hard for my mom to say goodbye to another young son.

A lot has changed in vocation ministry since those days. One of the main changes has been the older age of our candidates; typically, young men come into our Community after they have finished high school or even college. For many young people, the consecrated life as a priest, brother or sister is a second career.

Even so, for most of them, parents and family remain a very important part of the discernment journey. Some parents are tickled pink when their sons announce that they want to explore a vocation as a priest or brother. Others are a little more reluctant and have a lot of questions, including: Do you know what you're getting yourself into? What will you do if it doesn't work out? Who's going to pay for all this?

Talking with parents is an important part of my work. A candidate comes to us with a certain mindset and world view, and it is very helpful to get to know his family as together we discern if the candidate and the Community are a good fit. Often, the candidate's family becomes part of our extended C.P.P.S. family, joining us for events and special celebrations.

But a vocation minister isn't always a welcome visitor. A recent survey of Georgetown University youth ministers found that while one-third of the young men and women had considered a vocation to consecrated life, only 26 percent of the young men and 15 percent of the young women had been supported in their search by their parents.

There are various reasons for this. One parent told a vocation minister, "We don't want our son to be a priest. We want him to be successful."

Our hope is that parents, our partners in religious formation from the time a child draws his or her first breath, can expand their view of what it is to be a success in this world. A young person who follows God's invitation and lives a life of service to God's people may be among the most successful people of all. What could make a parent more proud?

**Vocational  
Visions by  
Fr. Ken  
Schnipke,  
C.P.P.S.**





**Missionaries at the close of the Mass of thanksgiving.**

**Altar Dedicated at St. Charles:**

Archbishop Dennis Schnurr of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati presided at the dedication of a new altar at St. Charles Center in Carthage, Ohio, on January 3.

The celebration, which took place during a Mass attended by Missionaries, Companions (lay associates) and friends of the Community, marked the end of a year-long improvement project in the Chapel of the Assumption at St. Charles, the motherhouse of the province. Improvements include new paint, lighting, acoustics and restrooms. A new ramp leading to the sanctuary also makes it accessible to those with handicaps.

**Definitive Incorporations:** C.P.P.S. members and friends in Latin

America celebrated when three candidates were definitively incorporated into the Community on December 12 in Bogotá, Colombia.

Making their commitment to the C.P.P.S. were Rony Roberto Díaz Quino, Antonio José Hernández Vásquez and Sebastián Argueta Blanco.

The young men, who are from Guatemala, have been studying theology in Bogotá and living in the C.P.P.S. house of formation there.



**Fr. Abel Cruz, top, with Rony, Antonio José and Sebastián.**

**Precious Blood Spirituality and the Environment:** Members of Precious Blood men and women’s congregations gathered in January for a symposium in Lima, Peru, entitled *The Spirituality of the Blood and*



*the Mission in Defense of Our Common Home.* The five-day symposium explored ways in which Precious Blood spirituality calls God's children to care for all of creation.

Presenters included Bishop Erwin Kräutler, C.P.P.S.; Fr. Barry Fischer, C.P.P.S.; and Fr. Dionicio Alberca, C.P.P.S.

**Goodbye and Hello:** Fr. Jerard Irudayanathan Irudaya, C.P.P.S., is saying goodbye to the people of St. Edward Church in Newark, Calif., as he returns to his native India.

The province is grateful for Fr. Irudayanathan's three years of ministry as an associate pastor at St. Edward. "It takes a great deal of courage and commitment to leave your home and everything you know to minister to people you have never met, in a country you have never seen," said Fr. Ken Schnipke, C.P.P.S., vice provincial director of the Cincinnati Province. "We are thankful that Fr. Jerard said yes to God's invitation to come to the United States. We hope that he takes home with him many good memories of his time in this country."

While at the parish, Fr. Irudayanathan was active with the Knights of Columbus and Legion of Mary. He ministered at the parish school and often took Communion to the sick and infirm, as well as maintaining a full schedule of Masses at the busy, active parish.

The parish, where Fr. Jeffrey Keyes, C.P.P.S., and Fr. James Franck, C.P.P.S., are also in ministry, now welcomes Fr. Jayababu Nuthulapati, C.P.P.S., as associate pastor. Fr. Nuthulapati was very active in preaching ministry in his native India.

Before he began his ministry at the parish, Fr. Nuthulapati took part in a workshop designed to help become acclimated to a new culture and a new home. Fr. Irudayanathan also took part in the workshop, to help him readjust to life at home in India. The Cincinnati Province organizes the workshop to help members from other countries adjust to life and ministry in the United States, and to give them an opportunity to be with others who have also had to find their way in a world far from home.



**Priests from Tanzania, India and the U.S. gather for an acculturation workshop led by Sr. Katie Peirce, IHM.**

# Married and Remarried

Our son recently attended a confirmation retreat in which one of the leaders put forth an interesting idea. He said that young people don't always experience the full power of the Holy Spirit during the ceremony. While they are confirmed at that moment while they are among their church family, they may experience an inner confirmation at other points in their lives, as they say yes to the Spirit throughout the years.

As with infant baptism, where the baby is unaware of anything but scratchy clothes and cold water being applied by unfamiliar hands, some sacraments can be fully appreciated only after the fact. With others, the effect is immediate.

I have participated very happily in the sacrament of marriage, and I must say I felt married the moment that Fr. Rich Riedel pronounced the words. However, there are layers to the sacrament that a couple can only imagine on their wedding day. The losses we have suffered and the joys we have attained have only strengthened our bond. It is as if we have been remarried and remarried and remarried.

Those remarriages don't always come in ways that we would have anticipated back in May 1987. A few years ago, my computer crashed. I write and edit out of my home office, so the computer is like a business partner, vault and slave all rolled into one.

While it was mostly my problem, my husband took on the challenge like a knight rescuing a princess from an enchanted castle. He followed every twisted path, obeyed every prompt, and spent hour after terrible hour on the phone with technical support people that he could barely hear or understand. Often he'd be on hold for 20 minutes, then work on the problem with a real human for another 20 minutes, only to have his call be cut off and have to start all over again with someone new. He skipped meals and barely looked up for the three days it took us to get back online. When we saw those blessed words, "Windows is starting up," I was shot through with a pure joy that, unless you have been reborn after a crash, you could never understand.

Is that an experience that Hallmark can turn into a card? No. But it was as much of a demonstration of pure love and commitment as all the red roses in the world. Our marriage was renewed on that day, and many others before and since.

I have learned that a sacrament is a living thing, not just a moment in time. It is a glimpse into the forever nature of God's love, a feeling of being called and of answering. It seals a pact between us and God, and underlines the fact that we are beloved, we are treasured, and we are welcomed into the kingdom.

**At Our House**  
by Jean Giesige



# Let Us Hear From You!

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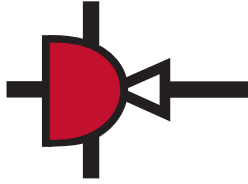
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