

WINTER 2011

# C P P S T O D A Y

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD



OUR  
ANCIENT  
BOND  
OF  
BLOOD

The ritual of sacrifice, made perfect by Jesus



Also inside: A new day dawns at  
the Church of the Resurrection

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# Marked by the Blood

In our cover story in this *C.P.P.S. Today*, we examine the ancient scriptural roots of blood sacrifice. The Hebrew people followed God's instructions, passed down through Moses, on how to make these offerings in a way that would be pleasing to their heavenly Father. In this we, as Precious Blood people, find the very beginnings of our reverence for the Blood of Christ. It is the Blood of Christ that binds us and the power of that Blood to console and heal that gives us hope.

Observant Jews continue to follow the laws set down for them in the Torah, the first five books of what we commonly call the Old Testament. The Torah includes the dietary laws called *Kashrut*, from which the more familiar word kosher is derived. For a Jewish family to keep a kosher kitchen requires a high level of commitment. There are certain foods that are forbidden altogether (pork, rabbit and shellfish, for instance). There are other foods that are permissible, but cannot be eaten together; meat and dairy must be strictly separate. Not only must the foods themselves be eaten apart, but they cannot be prepared with the same utensils. Many Orthodox Jewish cooks keep two sets of kitchen utensils, one for meats and the other for dairy.

The Torah gives no reason for many of the dietary rules found in *Kashrut*. For some Jewish people, it is enough that the Torah says so. Others speculate that one reason for the strict dietary rules is that it sets the Jewish people apart from the world and makes them mindful of the presence of God in their everyday life. Keeping kosher is an outward sign of an inner faith.

I admire that level of commitment. I hope that we people of the Precious Blood are also set apart from the world. I hope that the world can sense something about us that is different. What are the outward signs of our inner faith? When we forgive others, when we draw people together, when we seek solutions to thorny problems, we show the world that we believe in the power of the Blood of Jesus to heal and reconcile his people. (You can find a good example of Precious Blood spirituality at work in our story on page 11 about the merger of four Cincinnati parishes into one new parish.)

We have a wonderful tradition of reverence and awe for God and all God's works. It's right there in our sacred scriptures. But the tradition is not enough. We must live in such a way that we show we are marked by the Blood that Jesus shed to save us. If people can't see it on us in some way, as plainly as if it was sprinkled on us in an ancient sacrifice, we are not fully living out our call to be Precious Blood people.

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





# OUR ANCIENT BOND OF BLOOD

Blood has been precious to the people of God since Moses brought the law down from the mountain.

Jesus gives a new meaning to the ancient ritual of sacrifice.

by Jean  
Giesige

**W**hen I was 11, I put my arm through a plate glass window. I didn't mean to do it; or rather, I put my arm through to prevent my face going

through. It seemed like a more prudent course at the time. Quickly and efficiently, the broken glass cut my arm open from wrist to elbow.

Immediately, blood poured out.

I can remember standing for a moment in utter amazement and quiet awe at the sight of what had been a perfectly normal arm just a second before, now turned nearly inside out. It overwhelmed my little sister, who was right behind me. "Blood! Blood! Blood! Blood!" she screamed, until my mother came running from the kitchen.

As sometimes happens in family life, the kid who is making all the noise is not the kid who is hurt, so it took a moment or two to sort it all out. Soon after that, my mother had wrapped my arm in a clean towel and we were on our way to the doctor. I was grateful for the towel and so was my little sister, as we had seen quite enough of the red stuff for one day.

Most of us have a visceral and at least partially horrified reaction to the sight of unexpected blood. Some of us look away as quickly as we can. Some of us pass out. Some of us can gaze upon it with calm competence, and these people have a job for life, if they want it, in taking care of the rest of us. Placed within us long before we are born is a deep respect, awe and perhaps even fear of and aversion to the liquid that keeps us all alive.

## **An Ancient Belief**

A religious congregation that devotes itself to the Blood of Jesus cannot avert its eyes from the sight of blood. The Missionaries of the Precious Blood have long studied and lived out the deep connection between blood and life, between blood and God.

It began long before Jesus was born, in the days of the ancient Jews. "Blood is life. In the Old Testament there is a very clear and strong recognition of this," said Fr. Tom Hemm, C.P.P.S., who last fall teamed up with Fr. Ernie Ranly, C.P.P.S., to give a retreat on the spirituality of the Blood of Christ to lay associates of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

"When we say that our spirituality is a spirituality of the Blood, it is profoundly biblical. Again and again in the Old Testament, we see blood offered in sacrifice as a very important ritual. If all life and blood comes from God and is holy and sacred, a blood sacrifice recognizes the God of creation and returns the best there is among us to God himself."

In the book of Exodus, God himself described to Moses what was to be done: "Take one of the rams, and after Aaron and

his sons have laid their hands on its head, slaughter it. The blood you shall take and splash on all the sides of the altar. Cut the ram into pieces; its inner organs and shanks you shall first wash, and then put them with the pieces and with the head. The entire ram shall then be burned on the altar, since it is a holocaust, a sweet-smelling oblation to the Lord” (Exodus 29: 15–18).

sacrificial animal was poured out reverently on the ground and covered with earth . . . To assist at a sacrifice must have been a very moving experience for the priest and for all the people.”

He points out the difference between the two types of sacrifice described in the Old Testament. A holocaust was a sacrifice in which the animal was completely consumed by

fire and offered to the Lord. In a sacrifice of communion, the animal was dedicated to the Lord then roasted on a fire. The better cuts of



**The act of sacrifice was a profound religious activity.**

The act of sacrifice was “a profound religious activity,” wrote Fr. Ranly, a theologian and missionary who recently published *The Spirituality of the Blood of Christ*. “The slaughter of the sacrificial victim was carried out with great care, and the blood was carefully set aside. The slaughtered animals were carefully laid over the firewood on top of an altar. At times the blood of the sacrificed animals was sprinkled upon the very altar of sacrifice. Sometimes the blood was sprinkled upon the people, or the blood of the

meat became the foundation of a holy feast for the people of God.

“The Lord of life had received the sacrifice, but now he was sharing the sacrifice with his people,” Fr. Ranly writes.

### **The Awe Remains**

It’s hard to imagine blood being sprinkled on a modern congregation gathered for Sunday worship. But the ancient reverence for blood remains strong among the

Jewish people to this day. The Torah (what Christians know as the first five books of the Old Testament) prohibits the consumption of blood (Leviticus 7: 26-27; Leviticus 17: 10-14).

Observant Jews eat only kosher meat, which has been slaughtered according to a ritual described in the Torah. Kosher methods insure that the animal dies by a humane method and that as much blood as possible is drained from the meat.

“Ritual slaughter is known as *shechitah*, and the person who performs the slaughter is called a *shochet*,” Tracey Root writes on her website, Judaism 101. “The method of slaughter is a quick, deep stroke across the throat with a perfectly sharp blade with no nicks or unevenness. This method is painless, causes unconsciousness within two seconds, and is widely recognized as the most humane method of slaughter possible. Another advantage of *shechitah* is that it ensures rapid, complete draining of the blood, which is also necessary to render the meat kosher.

“The *shochet* is not simply a butcher; he must be a pious man, well-trained in Jewish law. In smaller, more remote communities, the rabbi and the

*shochet* were often the same person.”

The recognition that life is sacred, a gift from God, and that all life is holy, is part of a righteous life, said Fr. Hemm. “It can be difficult for us to imagine participating in the sort of sacrifice we read about in the Old Testament, but those of us



**It can be difficult for us to imagine participating in a sacrifice, said Fr. Tom Hemm, C.P.P.S.**

*(Photo by Fr. Tim McFarland, C.P.P.S.)*

who remember home butchering know that it comes pretty close,” he said. “We take animals that we have raised, that perhaps we love, and we acknowledge that they have to be given up to feed the family. To do that with a sense of the

God of creation brings us a tremendous internal sense of giving, of respect, of love and adoration.”

He recalled a time when, as a missionary in Chile, he was called upon to participate in a community meal in a way that was a little more direct and personal than he might have liked.

“I was asked to go out back and slaughter a duck that would be cooked for our meal.

“Most of us don’t have an experience of bloody sacrifice. It’s just not a part of our culture. How many of us have butchered a hog or chicken, dressed down a deer, gutted a fish, or even cut up a chicken for the pot? Yet for every piece of meat we eat, there has been sacrifice.”

Now, if you kill a duck, it’s not quite like killing a chicken—I can still see the eye of the duck turning back in its head as I was saying, ‘I’m sorry, I’m sorry,’” he said.

“Most of us don’t have an experience of bloody sacrifice. It’s just not a part of our culture. How many of us have butchered a hog or chicken, dressed down a deer, gutted a fish, or even cut up a chicken for the pot? Yet for every piece of meat we eat, there has been sacrifice. In a sense, we should experience the sacrifice directly. There is no meal, no party, no sharing of food, without sacrifice.”

### A New Sacrifice

It’s no wonder that we have such deeply complicated feelings toward blood. It’s a sign of both life and death. It’s a vessel of everything we need to stay alive. It’s how we are identified; it’s how our health is gauged. From the beginning of the stories of the twelve tribes of Israel to the present day, it is central to our beliefs and to our rituals.

“In the Old Testament in the giving of sacrifice by the high priest, the animal was taking our place,” said Fr. Hemm. “We are the sinners and our sins are upon this animal. This sacrifice



is given to God in our name. Then as now, that's a really profound religious experience: the recognition of our sinfulness and begging of forgiveness. It was an external, public social rite."

It was a rite that allowed the people to transcend their own lives, their sinful nature, and join themselves to their God. As Christians we believe that Jesus now offers the perfect sacrifice on our behalf. "When the death of Christ on the cross is interpreted as a sacrifice, Christ himself is the priest who offers the sacrifice," Fr. Ranly writes. "At the same time he is the victim who is slaughtered and sacrificed. This is a sacrifice of holocaust. This is a total giving of one's life, one's body, to the Lord of Life. The Last Supper that Christ shared with his apostles was a sacrifice of communion."

The sacrifice of the Mass, which takes place on an altar that is also a table of communion, is both a holocaust and a sacrifice of communion, he said.

It was a perfect sacrifice: Jesus "entered, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, how much

more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God" (Hebrews 9: 12-14).

As people who recognize the value and holiness of the Blood of Christ, and of the blood of all God's people, we can join in that sacrifice. "In and through Christ, you and I are the people of God,"



**"In and through Christ, you and I are the people of God," says Fr. Ranly.**

Fr. Ranly said. "In that sacrifice we can see that even among all of the wrong things that go on in the world today, amidst all of the violence and strife, somewhere along the line God is still trying to help us."





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# A Whole New Family

I have another family, and it's 1,400 miles away from me.

My birth family is from Fort Wayne, Ind. The family that has adopted me is the faith family of St. Paul and Risen Savior parishes of Crownpoint, N.M.

Those two parish missions, administered by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (ASC), first welcomed me to their home on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico in 2007, when I was still a candidate in formation for the priesthood. The first time I went to Crownpoint, I couldn't put my camera down. I was entranced by the austere beauty of the desert landscape. I spent the summer helping out with music ministry in the parish.

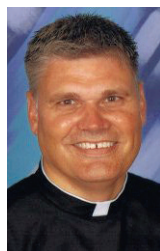
Before long, I felt very connected to the people there. I belong to the Miami people through my mother's side, but even if I had no prior knowledge of Native Americans I would still have been drawn to the Navajo. Because they saw my willingness to serve them, I think they were drawn to me too. The people cried when I left, and so did I.

I've returned since, as often as I can. Most recently it was in November, when I was able to celebrate Mass on Thanksgiving at the two parishes, which was a joyous occasion. The people of Crownpoint face a lot of challenges, including a very high poverty rate. Yet when I look at them, I don't see poverty in their eyes. I see hope, happiness and a commitment to family.

I feel completely at ease there, and how do I explain that? Born and raised in the Midwest, how could I ever be at home among the piñon pines? This happens sometimes. People travel to a faraway place, only to feel that they are right where they belong. I believe that God places components in us that don't click into place until we are in the right place, at the right time. God blesses us with this wonderful adaptability of spirit, which enables us to open ourselves to whole new groups of people that we could not have imagined in our earlier years. These people then become essential to us, and what a miracle that is: a whole new family.

I hope that you are able to remain open to all that God promises to you. I hope that as you travel to new places, you are amazed by what is different about the people you meet, but enthralled by what is the same. We can go as far as we like, but all around us, we will see our brothers and sisters.

**Call and  
Answer by  
Fr. Vince  
Wirtner,  
C.P.P.S.**



# A New Day Dawns at THE CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Four urban  
Cincinnati parishes  
become one  
new faith family.

When people greet those they don't know at the Church of the Resurrection in Cincinnati, they often ask, "What church are you from?" What they mean is, *Which of the four parishes that merged into Resurrection is your home church?*

It is a question that Phyllis Kelley simply refuses to acknowledge. "I tell them I'm from Resurrection," she said. As the parish's administrative assistant, Kelley is at the center of parish life, where she feels it is especially important to set a tone of unity and forward thinking.

"Everyone thinks that I'm an optimist, but I think it's going very well," she said of the process to build a new church family out of the four parishes. "We've done so much so fast. It's been hard work and we've put in a lot of hours but things are starting to

gel. We've had our difficulties but we're working it out."

The four parishes—St. Andrew, St. Agnes, St. Mark and St. Martin de Porres—began discussions on their future nearly five years ago, said Fr. Dennis Chriszt, C.P.P.S., who in August became the first pastor of the newly merged parish. St. Mark's former pastor, Fr. Jerry Steinbrunner, C.P.P.S., was one of the first to help lead the parishes into the difficult but necessary discussion.

After a lot of conversations facilitated by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, it was decided to merge the parishes into the site of what was formerly St. Agnes. Fr. Chriszt said that with the help of Sr. Donna Liette, C.P.P.S., he held listening circles at each parish to give people the chance to talk about their sense of loss, but also to begin to imagine what life could be like at a new parish.

The four parishes, all with largely African-American congregations, formally closed last summer, with celebrations at each marking each parish's unique history and the



**Servers with processional crosses from four parishes await the first Mass at the Church of the Resurrection on August 1.**

*(Photo by Tess Wilfong)*

contributions it had made to the Church and its community.

"It was important to say goodbye and to respect each parish's history, especially since three of them were over 100 years old," Fr. Chriszt said. "It was important to give thanks to God for the past."

Once those celebrations were over, it was also important for the parishioners of the newly formed Church of the Resurrection to turn their eyes to the present and to the future, he said.

"Two weeks before we opened the new parish, we scheduled a gathering where we invited anybody who had done liturgical ministry in any of the four parishes and was interested

in continuing to serve as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, greeters, choir members or servers," he said. "We were hoping for 50 people. There were 125 who came. That's when I knew everything was going to be all right."

The new parish has begun to dream of what it hopes it will become. Parishioners began talking about the future shortly after the new parish opened, but found that it was too soon. Feelings were still raw and many people were missing their former

parish family. "We put the visioning process on hold for a while," Fr. Chriszt said.

Resurrection's liturgy commission recommended that the parish use Advent 2010 as a time of mourning and healing. "The four Sundays of Advent were assigned a theme: *Name It*, which means talking about how your heart has been broken; *Claim It*, which means sitting with the pain for a while; *Give It*, which means give it to God, because God can carry it; and *Live It*, live the dream as Joseph lived the dream," Fr. Chriszt said. "By the fourth week, our pastoral council met and decided it was time to resume our visioning process for the future."

Helping with the healing process has been pastoral associate Br. Hugh Henderson, C.P.P.S., who has been reaching out to all parishioners, especially the elderly and those who are sick or homebound.



**Fr. Chriszt blesses the congregation at the opening Mass.**

*(Photo by Tess Wilfong)*

**“We have made a commitment to continue our ministries in the neighborhoods where our former parishes were serving the people.”**

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati, which has been involved in the process but has allowed the parishioners to make many of their own decisions, is pleased with the progress at Resurrection, said Dan Andriacco, archdiocesan director of communications.

“Parish closings and mergers are always difficult and emotional because parishes are so important,” he said. “That was certainly the case here, and some members of one parish in particular struggled with the decision. But others realized that coming together made them stronger. By all accounts, thanks to a lot of great work by both lay and ordained parish leadership, that’s exactly what happened. The new parish is off to a healthy start.”

There were a lot of aspects of the merger that needed special attention, both spiritual and temporal. For one thing, the new parish had three unused church sites that it needed to clean out and sell. The parish scheduled a series of sales to dispose of items it no longer needed, and began to list properties for sale.

“The first person we hired was a property manager,” Fr. Chriszt said. One of the properties has already been sold and another is close to being sold. Both will continue to be used as churches. Some buyers



**The combined choir of the Church of the Resurrection, now 50 voices strong.**  
*(Photo by Tess Wilfong)*

have expressed interest in the third property.

The former St. Agnes was chosen as home to the new parish because it was somewhat centrally located, Fr. Chriszt said, and needed fewer capital improvements than the other parish sites. The Church of the Resurrection includes approximately 600 families who remain committed to the outreach ministries of their former parishes.

“We have made a commitment to continue our ministries in the neighborhoods where our former parishes were serving the people,” Fr. Chriszt said. “We are still operating our food pantry and soup kitchen at St. Mark, for

instance. We are currently talking with the group that is hoping to purchase St. Mark so that those ministries can continue.”

Other things remain from the four parishes. The Church of the Resurrection is using the baptismal font and a set of candlesticks from St. Martin de Porres; the presider’s chair from St. Andrew; and the ambo from St. Mark. All four processional crosses were kept, “and the servers choose whichever one they like to carry,” Fr. Chriszt said.

“All the Easter candles from the four parishes are now in our church,” Fr. Chriszt added. “At our Easter vigil this year we will bless *our* Easter candle.”



**Ordained:** The Cincinnati Province celebrates with its Central American Mission, which in December saw the ordination of two priests. Fr. Sebastián Argueta Blanco, C.P.P.S., 33, was ordained in El



Salvador on December 8, 2010. Fr. Rony Roberto Díaz Quino, C.P.P.S., 35, was ordained on December 28, 2010 in Guatemala.

Fr. Argueta obtained a bachelor's degree in business administration before entering formation with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in Guatemala in 2002. Fr. Díaz, a native of Mazatenango, Guatemala, entered

**Fr. Rony Roberto Díaz Quino, C.P.P.S., left, and Fr. Sebastián Argueta Blanco, C.P.P.S., right, as deacons.**

formation in the same year, after receiving his accreditation as an expert in public management.

In 2006, they began their studies in theology at Xavier University in Bogotá, Colombia, and graduated in 2010. They were definitively incorporated as Missionaries of the Precious Blood on December 12, 2009, in Guatemala City.

**High Marks:** Both colleges sponsored by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood rated a mention in the 2010–11 rankings of colleges nationwide released last fall by *U.S. News and World Report*.

Each year, *U.S. News and World Report* ranks the nation's colleges according to a variety of criteria and by region. Calumet College of St. Joseph in Whiting, Ind., was ranked first in racial diversity among colleges in the Midwest region. Tied for first in that category was Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago.

Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind., was named the ninth best value college in the Midwest and the 25th best college in the Midwest.

The rankings include more than 1,400 schools nationwide.





**In Memoriam:** Fr. Gerold Koller, C.P.P.S., 87, died on November 18, 2010, at St. Charles Center, Carthage, Ohio. He had been in failing health for some time.

Fr. Koller was born September 5, 1923 in Buffalo, N.Y., to Peter and Magdelina (Kaelin) Koller. He entered the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in 1937 and was ordained on March 25, 1949.

**Fr. Koller**

After his ordination, Fr. Koller served as an assistant pastor and was director of seminarians at St. Charles Seminary from 1957 to 1963. Later, he was named chaplain of the Modesto State Hospital in Modesto, Calif. and also served as a chaplain for many years to juvenile and adult offenders in the California prison system.

Fr. Koller was entirely devoted to his faith and to the people he served. The inmates at the facilities where he was a chaplain found him eminently approachable. Fr. Koller, who was physically fit for nearly all his life, walked the track in the prison yard. Inmates who wanted to talk with him fell in step with him, and in those relatively open surroundings found it easier to open up to him. Fr. Koller retired to St. Charles Center in 1993.

A Mass of Christian burial for Fr. Koller was celebrated November 20, 2010 at St. Charles. Burial followed in the Community cemetery. May he rest in peace.

**Fr. Paul Aumen, C.P.P.S.,** 88, died on December 15, 2010, at St. Charles Center, Carthage, Ohio.

He was born January 10, 1922, in York, Pa., to Bernard and Bertha (Smith) Aumen. He entered the Society of the Precious Blood in 1938 and was ordained March 25, 1949.

Fr. Aumen spent his first years as a priest in parish ministry in Ohio and Pennsylvania. In 1955, Fr. Aumen volunteered for ministry in the province's mission in Chile, where he remained for 20 years.

In 1975 Fr. Aumen struck out for Guatemala, where he set out on a tireless campaign to establish a Guatemalan mission. He worked for 10 years, ministering to the people of Guatemala, establishing a seminary, writing letters back to the United States and to his confreres in Chile, before he finally received approval for the work he was already doing. His persistence in the face of adversity was legendary, as was his concern for the poorest of God's children.

Fr. Aumen returned to the United States in 1993.

A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated on December 20, 2010 at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Hanover, Pa. Burial followed in the Sacred Heart Cemetery. May he rest in peace.



# A God of Shoots

Resting atop my kitchen cabinets is a row of sickly geranium sprouts rescued from my garden before the first hard frost of this cold winter. My cousin Gary, the Geranium Master, explained the procedure to me like this: Break off a portion of the plant. Stick it in dirt. Put it in an out-of-the-way place and water occasionally. Don't worry if it looks terrible.

Normally I don't make any effort to preserve outdoor plants over the winter. But these are special geraniums. They are the great (times 100) granddaughters of the plants that my great (times a number unknown to me) grandmother brought with her to this country from Germany.

The descendents of those original plants were kept alive with tender care by my grandmother, who passed them along to my mother and her sisters, who passed them along to their children, with varying success. With Gary, they thrive. With me, they lead a life of peril.

When Gary shared some starts with me last spring, it began a geranium saga of biblical proportion. Some I planted in a container without proper drainage, and they rotted from the bottom up. Some I planted in a spot that was too shady, and they grew tall and spindly without blooming. Some were accidentally cut down in their prime with a lawn trimmer in the hands of one of our boys. Much of what I found to keep over the winter came from the vigorous new growth of the plants that had been cut down. Perhaps one should take a lawn trimmer to the garden every July.

If I didn't have so much love and admiration for my grandmother and all she was able to accomplish in her quiet life, I would certainly not bother with these geraniums. Because they are such direct descendents they make me think of other things that I have inherited from my people, such as thick ankles, a stubborn worldview, and an abiding faith. Their belief in a loving God and the goodness of creation was unshakable. This they have passed to me in a golden chalice and some days I feel I have dropped it. I have been careless and neglectful, as with the geraniums.

But as with the geraniums, God promotes strong growth from that which has been cut back. He is persistent, this God of ours. He is hard to eradicate. When it seems that death, denial and destruction are all around, a tiny leaf appears. Our God is a God of shoots.

I am so hoping that the geraniums make it through the winter. I am trying to keep my hands off of them to increase their chances of survival. In the spring I will plant them in a suitable place. I will protect and nurture them. I will do better this time. Our God is also a God of completely unfounded yet utterly attainable hope.

**At Our House**  
by Jean Giesige



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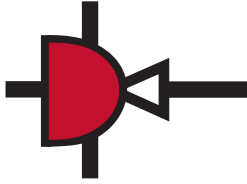
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