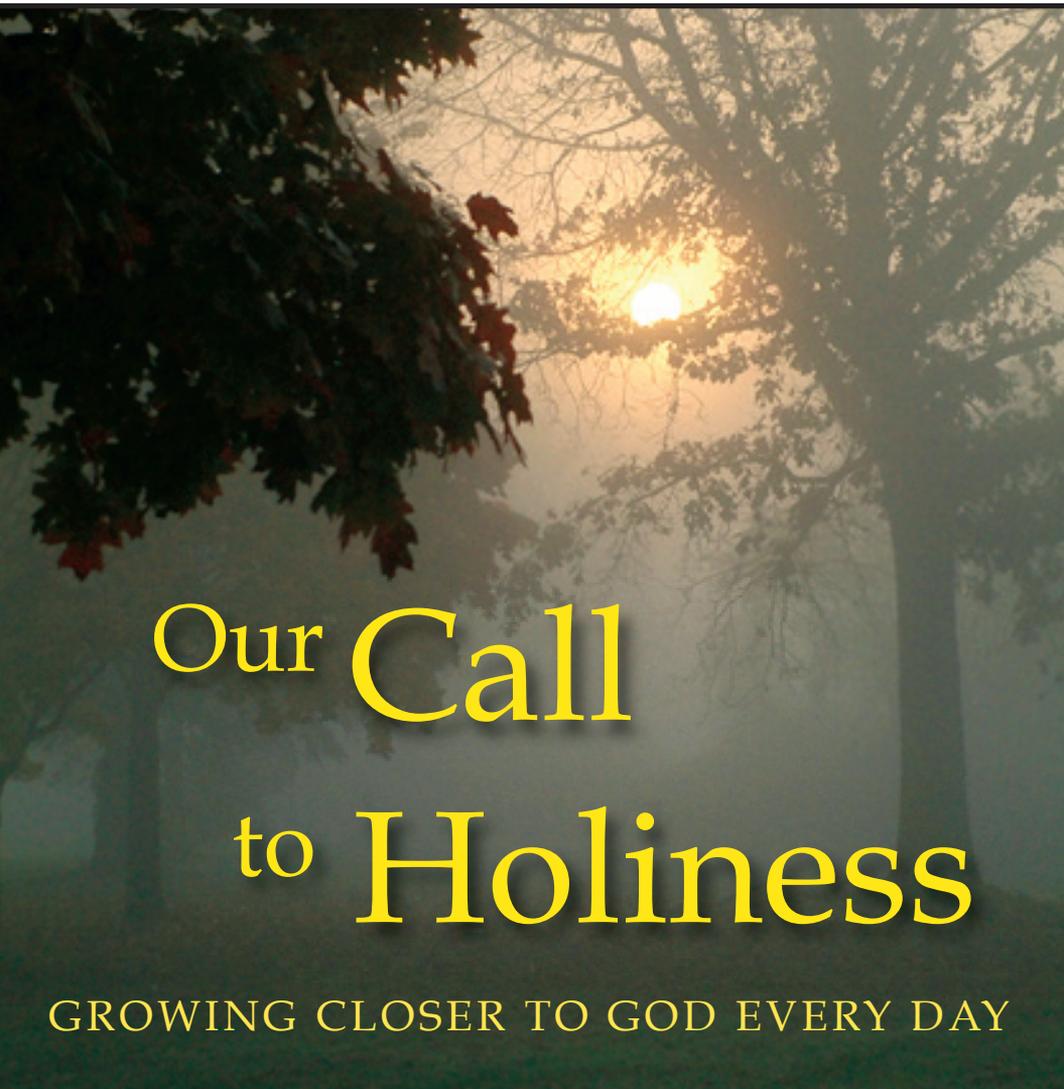


FALL 2009

# C P P S T O D A Y

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD



Our Call  
to Holiness

GROWING CLOSER TO GOD EVERY DAY

# In this issue of *C.P.P.S. Today*



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# The Ability to Connect

**M**y dad ran a successful family business that took him across the Midwest and into many different kinds of business and social settings. Though he lived most of his life in the small Ohio town where he had been born, he somehow picked up the ability to deal with people from all walks of life.

One of the things that impressed me the most is that he did not change his methods of communication to conform to the people around him. Whether he was talking to the workers at the plant or a major buyer, he used the same straightforward, friendly style. People knew that when he shook their hands it was as good as gold. I hope that his integrity and authenticity has rubbed off on me.

I admire people who are able to be at home wherever God places them, who are able to connect with people no matter what their status or station in life. One such person is Bishop Joseph Charron, C.P.P.S., who contributed the main article in this issue of *C.P.P.S. Today*. If people think that bishops are intimidating or unapproachable, they've never met Bishop Joe. His message on hearing the call of God in everyday life is one that we all need to hear. Though his life may be very different from ours, he has never lost touch with the concerns of the people to whom he is a spiritual leader.

Pastors are also people who have to be able to get along with all sorts: young or old, rich or poor, rock solid in faith or troubled and searching. A pastor recognizes that all kinds of people turn to him for guidance and spiritual companionship. One of our Precious Blood pastors, Fr. Rick Nieberding, C.P.P.S., who ministers at St. Augustine Church in Minster, Ohio, has found a unique way to reach out to the young people of his parish. Each week last summer after the Wednesday morning Mass, Fr. Rick and other adult volunteers led a group of young people from the church to the local McDonald's, where Fr. Rick treated them to breakfast. You'll also find that story in this issue of *C.P.P.S. Today*.

It is characteristic of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood to be out among the people they serve. We are known for our down-to-earth nature and our willingness to dive in to the places where God has planted us. Whether delivering a message that inspires people to seek God in their everyday lives, or sharing a meal with young parishioners, our Missionaries are most at home in the midst of God's people.



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



*By Bishop Joseph  
Charron, C.P.P.S.*

# Our Call to Holiness

GROWING CLOSER TO GOD EVERY DAY

*(Bishop Joseph Charron is a member of the Kansas City Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Ordained a priest in 1967, he was a professor of moral theology for many years, with a specialty in medical ethics. He also served as provincial director of the Kansas City Province. Ordained a bishop in 1990, he ministered in the Twin*

*Cities then led the diocese of Des Moines until health issues forced his retirement in 2007. He continues to lead people to Christ through his retreats, presentations and spiritual direction. This is an excerpt of a presentation he gave to the Companions, or lay associates, of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood this fall.)*

All of God's people are called to be holy. I like to recall the story of the barren fig tree from the Gospel of Luke. When the tree didn't produce for three years, its owner said, "Let's just cut it down, it's useless." But the gardener's reply was, "Let's give it another chance. Let's see if we can bring it back to life."

Many times in our life—especially in our spiritual life—we feel like that barren fig tree. But I believe that even if we start to give up on ourselves, the Lord never gives up on us. Like the fig tree that sprouts new life, we are always invited to greater holiness.

We need to allow ourselves to be made perfect by God. As we remember and renew our call to holiness, first and foremost we must remember that God is at work in us. If we allow that work to be fruitful, it will be fruitful.

As Paul wrote to the Church in Ephesus, "live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love . . . And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph 4: 1–2, 11–12).

And so we pray, "Father of all gifts and calls, help us to grow in

your love toward the perfection you desire for us. Stir up in our hearts the fire of the desire of your presence for us. Thus may we whom you have chosen grow ever closer to you."

### **Obstacles on the Path to Holiness**

Throughout our lives we struggle to follow this call to holiness that God has placed in each of us. We all have periods of spiritual dryness. We all have ups and downs in our relationships. We all have failures in our lives. Dealing with failure is not the problem. The only failure in life that is devastating is the failure to be a saint, to fail to answer God's call to live in his light.

There are obstacles in the path. One obstacle is a negative self-image. Maybe we do this subconsciously to get off the hook a little bit. If we can convince ourselves that we are not good enough, then we don't have to work so hard to live up to God's promise. We've all heard people joke about going up to heaven and finding a different route inside. We might hear someone say, "I hope that St. Peter leaves the back door open so that I can sneak in." If we're talking about a merciful God, that is a positive image. But if we're talking about who I am, my worthiness to claim my place

near God, that's a very bad image. Every one of us was created in the image and likeness of God. Every one of us is redeemed in the Precious Blood of Christ, and we have a dignity that calls us to meet God face to face in the front door of heaven.

That's the dignity and the call that is placed within us. That is who we are. In God's sight, we are children of God and every one of us is called to live that out in dignity.

(Rev 3: 15–16). When we are lukewarm, we are too comfortable in where we are. It keeps us from taking another step and another step. Believe me, it is a lifelong call to come and live in the presence of God.

A third obstacle is when we say, "I'm going to live out my call to be holy, but I'm going to do it my way." We somehow want to make ourselves holy, but it is God who calls us into holiness. Certainly we can understand the

human impulse to want to be in control. It's a frightful thing to place ourselves in the hands of the living God: to allow the Spirit to direct

Every one of us was created in the image and likeness of God.

Bishop Joe Charron, shown here speaking to Companions



Another obstacle I see is a comfort with being lukewarm in our faith and our beliefs. We might say, "I don't want to be holier than thou. I don't want to come off as a hypocrite." We go to the sacrament of reconciliation year after year, confessing the same things, and we can't understand why we don't make more progress.

Remember what is written in the Book of Revelations: "Would that you were hot or cold. But because you are lukewarm I vomit you out of my mouth"

us in ways that perhaps we never thought we would go, and trust that the Spirit would lead us in ways that will bring us to holiness. But we can't do it ourselves.

And finally, the most difficult obstacle: "Yes, bishop, I am going to be holy, but I am going to do it later."

I have used this one myself. I've said I will work on being holy when I'm not so busy doing confirmations. I am going to be holy when I have a better place, or when I have more time. But I

say to you, the time to be holy is now. If today you hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts.

Real life is right now. This is not a dress rehearsal. God gives us many, many chances but if we do not respond now there is a good chance that we will put it off and put it off until it is too late. Author John Burroughs once said, "The lure of the distant and difficult is deceptive. The great opportunity is where you are."

Live this day with its joys and sorrows, its opportunities and disappointments. This day, try to remember sometime recently when you had a wonderful, wonderful experience with God.

Think of that time when God was very present to us. Stir up that desire.

## It Is God Who Calls

It is God who calls us to be holy. God initiates the call and God continues the call. First let's think about the story of Samuel (Samuel 3: 1-18). Samuel's mother places him in the presence of the holy man, Eli. While living with Eli, Samuel hears his name being called in the middle of the night. He goes to Eli and asks, "Did you call me?" Eli says he did not.

This happens three times, and because Eli is a holy man, he recognizes that God is at work. He tells Samuel, "The next time

you hear your name being called, say, 'Here I am, Lord.'" The boy received the Word of God that would take him through his life as a judge and guide him, through God, to anoint David. How tremendously God brought this young boy into his work.

We see it too in the story of Andrew and his brother, Simon. Andrew met Jesus and was very taken with him, so Andrew did a wonderful thing: he brought his brother Simon to meet Jesus. Jesus meets Simon, changes his name, and changes the course of our world.

So we see that often, another is involved in the call. Eli interprets the call for Samuel. Andrew brings Simon into the presence of Jesus. How many times in our lives do we not call one another to holiness? Husbands and wives, family and friends, we call each other to holiness. How important it is that we have spiritual guides in our lives. How many times are we surprised when someone else tells us what gifts we have that we do not see. As bishop I was inspired many times by the people around me. The people I was leading were ministering to me. I believe that is true in all our lives.

Secondly, we must recognize that God's call is by name. It's not, hey you out there. It's Samuel. It's Simon. It's Mary, it's

Joe, it's all of us who are called by name. God has a purpose for every one of us. Our call to holiness is a personal invitation. It's not a sign on a bulletin board. It's a handwritten invitation that arrives in the mail that says "I want you to be holy."

### To Be Open to God

It's so important that we remove the obstacles that keep us from responding to the gift within us. How important it is that we open ourselves up to experience God! The experience of God, like love, cannot be vicariously received. I can't experience God for you. Someone else can't talk to us about love and that would be love for us. We have to have love in our lives.

It's the same with God. Each of us must find those moments to experience God. It's not enough to talk about God, read about God. You must have God in your life. God is in the sacraments we celebrate, in the Word we hear. God is present in our assemblies. Our invitation is to find that experience of God.

Remember the story of the prophet Elijah, who found God present not in the wind, not in the earthquake or in the fire, but

in the small whispering sound. The poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning captures this so well: "Earth is crammed with heaven. And every common bush afire with God. But only he who sees takes off his shoes." Probably most of us will not experience God in earthshaking ways, although some of us, perhaps, will have powerful, strong experiences. But if we are attentive, every day in some quiet gentle way God will be present to us. If we listen, we will truly be changed in a very deep way.

St. Augustine carried on a lifelong search for God. He once said. "How late have I loved thee. You were inside and I was searching outside." As with St. Augustine, God searches for us far more than we search for him.

Putting all our excuses aside, we are called to be holy. It is a lifelong process, a lifelong journey. In your journey, I pray for you as St. Paul prayed for the Thessalonians: "May God himself who is our father make our path a straight one and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another as for all, and may God strengthen your hearts, making them holy."



# Find Your Way to Pray

**W**e cannot progress on the path to holiness, we cannot feel closer to God, if we do not spend some time each day in prayer, said Bishop Joseph Charron.

“I don’t care if you’re retired, raising children, on the job—our lives are very busy,” he said. “But what we do with that is so important. At diocesan meetings when we had a lot on the agenda it was not unusual for someone to say, ‘Bishop, I move we do away with prayer tonight because we have too much on the schedule.’ We went the other way! We would not begin a meeting without praying, sometimes for up to a half hour. It completely changed the tenor of the meetings. If we go into everything we do in prayer, go out in prayer, surround ourselves with prayer, just think of how that would change everything we do!”

He offered some practical suggestions: “Prayer can be very simple or very complex. When we are very busy, we can offer a simple prayer: ‘Lord, I am busy now but I am aware that I am doing your work.’ That puts your day in a spirit of prayer.”

Life can be very noisy, he

added, but quiet is important in prayer. “Henri Nouwen said, ‘Without silence words lose their meaning.’ We experience this with one another. We get busy, we talk past one another.



**The bishop in prayer: here with Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S.**

This can happen in our prayer life too. We need to focus our prayers so they pass through our hearts and not just over our lips.

“Don’t give God what is left over. Give God your best time. It’s better to give God five minutes of true prayer than to treat prayer as an afterthought.”

# Missionary Hearts Update

## Campaign is Like A Marathon

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

I have always been in awe of marathon runners. I ran cross country in high school, but it's been a long time since I could even consider entering a 5K race. I can't imagine completing a marathon course of 26 miles.

However, as we approach the finish line of our *Missionary Hearts* comprehensive fundraising campaign, I do have new empathy for marathon runners.

**We are nearly at the finish line of our *Missionary Hearts* campaign. Can you help us meet our matching challenge gift by fulfilling your pledge by December 31?**



## Missionary Hearts

C.P.P.S.

### COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN

We launched the campaign publicly in the summer of 2007, but there was so much preparation that went into it. First of all, we had to decide to do it! No one likes to ask for money, and sometimes I think people in religious life, who have committed themselves to a life far from the material realm, are even more squeamish about it.

Once we decided to move forward with the campaign, we had to set campaign goals. People who donate funds have a right to know how those funds are going to be spent. We had to come up with a name for the campaign (*Missionary Hearts*), and compose all the printed materials that would help explain it to people.

We talked to our members and Companions (lay associates) to gain their support. Then we took the campaign to its public phase, where we asked you, the friends of our Community, to help strengthen us for our current and future ministries.

The results have been very

gratifying. You have pledged your support and shared your resources with us. Even more, the *Missionary Hearts* campaign has given us a chance to tell the story of our mission and ministries. Your response, your reassurance that our ministry has touched your lives in some way, has been deeply inspirational to us.

We plan to close the campaign at the end of this year. It has been successful in so many ways; financially, yes, but also in that it has strengthened our ties to our larger Precious Blood family, and introduced new people into our fold.

We are very well on our way to our goals. And now we must ask you one thing more: give us the boost we need to reach the finish line. Throughout the campaign we have been working toward meeting a \$1.5 million challenge matching gift from some very generous benefactors of our Community. It has been great to be able to tell individuals that their donations will be doubled.

Now we are within \$152,000 of making that match. Those funds will make a very real difference to our Missionaries, and we hope that you will help us gather in all of this harvest that we can.

If you have been considering a donation to *Missionary Hearts*,

we ask that you please do so before December 31 to take part in the challenge matching gift. If you have made a pledge to the campaign, and if it is possible for you to pay it off before December 31, we would certainly appreciate that as well. The matching gift applies to received donations only, not to pledged amounts.

I can tell you that although we have learned first-hand about fundraising, it has not gotten any easier to ask for money! I can tell you that we ask out of our needs, and I continue to promise you that we respect and honor our supporters. We do not share your names with other organizations, no matter how worthy. We hold you in prayer, as we hope you pray for our Missionaries and all our endeavors.

Running can seem like a solitary sport. Some runners who train for marathons find friends who run with them. They say that their running buddies help motivate them, keep them on track and make a long road go by quickly. I can say the same thing about you, our Precious Blood family. Knowing that you are with us on the road helps put a spring in our step. I can feel you with me as we approach the finish line, and along with the other Missionaries, I will be forever grateful for your help.





After a weekday morning Mass, Fr. Rick Nieberding and adult volunteers get bicyclists ready for the trip. Below, everybody lines up to order breakfast. Fr. Rick picks up the tab. *(Photos by Robert Lammers)*

# Holy Meal, then Happy Meal

Young parishioners of St. Augustine in Minster, Ohio, are invited out to a weekly breakfast with the pastor.

**P**arked outside St. Augustine Church in Minster, Ohio, on Wednesday mornings last summer were the usual cars—and an unusual number of bicycles. Those belonged to the children of the parish, who came to morning Mass each Wednesday then were

invited to breakfast with their pastor afterward.

After the final “go in peace,” the children gathered outside the church, where they were joined by Fr. Rick Neiberding, C.P.P.S., and adult volunteers, also on bicycles. First Fr. Rick would do a

quick check of his flock; those wearing helmets were rewarded with a \$1 premium that he peeled off of a wad of bills from his own pocket. Then, with a “ready, set, go,” from Fr. Rick, the group began its half-mile journey from the church to the McDonald’s in the small town of approximately 3,000 people.

“Mass and McDonald’s Wednesdays,” it was called by Fr. Rick, who came up with the idea to encourage the children to look at their church as part of their everyday life, not just a Sunday destination. “We started out with a low attendance, but the word quickly spread and the numbers increased,” he said. “Depending on the weather, we had anywhere from 30 to 50 youngsters attend.”

A Minster police officer usually was on hand to help Fr. Rick and the adult volunteers guide the children, in grades four through eight, across the busy intersection of Seventh Street and Ohio 66. Once at the restaurant, the children lined up in an orderly fashion, with Fr. Rick at the head of the line. They were able to order anything they wanted—including a breakfast ice cream treat—and Fr. Rick picked up the bill.

“I approve of an ice cream cone at 8:45 in the morning,” he told the children.

The children then gathered

with their meals on picnic benches outside the restaurant, where Fr. Rick and Jane Boeke, director of the parish’s religious education program, would lead them in discussions about their faith and their world view. Fr. Rick asked questions about Church teaching, the topic of his homily, and many other subjects. The children were quick to respond, as correct answers merited a candy bar or tennis ball as a prize.

“Our goal is to have these youngsters see God in every aspect of their lives. They learn that God is with them all the time, not just in church or in religion class. He is always there to help them with their everyday stuff, and their challenges and difficulties,” Fr. Rick said. “We hope that this is just the beginning of their active life in the Church throughout their lives.”

Some weeks, there were other invited guests. A clown might make an appearance. Sometimes, parish council president Nancy Niekamp came along with her accordian to lead the group in a sing-along. Sometimes the group would drift into a neighbor’s yard to play tag.

“Sometimes we were having so much fun that the time just slipped away and we went past our 9:30 quitting time,” Fr. Rick

said. "One week it was 10 a.m. and I had to announce, "The fun stops in five minutes!"

His intention, of course, is that the fun does not stop—and that the children associate their faith with a warm, comfortable (and yes, sweet) feeling.

The weather is sharply colder now, of course, and school is in session, putting an end to the Wednesday morning breakfasts with Fr. Rick. But the pastor is already thinking ahead to next summer, when he'd like to round up his young parishioners once again and take them to the Golden Arches after Mass. Truth be told, he said, he had just as much fun on those mornings as they did. "Maybe more," he said.

*(St. Augustine parishioner Robert Lammers and C.P.P.S. Companion Tess Mescher, director of the St. Marys, Ohio, deanery training center, contributed to this story.)*



Our goal is to have these youngsters see God in every aspect of their lives. They learn that God is with them all the time, not just in church or in religion class. He is always there to help them.

Fr. Rick Nieberding, C.P.P.S.



# A Life of Joy

Recently our religious Community held an assembly where all the members were encouraged to dream new dreams for the future of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. We are electing new leadership next year, so it was a time of preparation for us to be together and talk of all the things that are most important to us.

The theme of this assembly was *A Bold, Hope-Filled Future Together*. As we were charting a course for our future, we were encouraged to take a positive outlook. Any group that sees the future as a bright place of promise is more likely to walk with a lighter step than a group that sees nothing but doom and gloom ahead. The assembly was practical as well. We assigned committees to find ways to make our dreams come true.

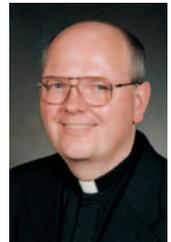
One of the committees was assigned to look at ways that we could achieve a vibrant, joy-filled community life. Maybe this is a gender thing; maybe women would just instinctively know how to build joy into their schedule, but we guys have to work at it! Because we live in community with one another, and not in a typical family setting, community support is very important. Our brothers in our religious Community become like blood brothers to us. We have to be there for each other through thick and thin.

A joy-filled community life is something that comes up again and again among young people who are discerning a religious vocation. Few of them would want to join a community whose members do not enjoy life. We are quite clear with our discerners about all the challenges of a life of Christian service. But we also want to be sure that they see us enjoying ourselves, so that they know they are thinking of joining a happy family.

I believe that Jesus himself demonstrated that joy. That's what drew so many people to him. He told his followers, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." He found his deepest rest and refreshment when he was among friends.

And so we tell the young people who are being formed as Missionaries of the Precious Blood to expect to work hard but also to take time for those things that bring them joy: to draw, sing, play the guitar, run, hike, bike, eat pizza, see movies, watch the big game, play cards, do those things that make them smile, and when possible, do them together. To live as Jesus would wish us to live, we have to build joy into our lives—even if it takes a committee to do it.

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





**HAPPY HOMECOMING:** Missionaries of the Precious Blood and Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament stand to be recognized during a homecoming celebration at St. Adalbert Church in Cleveland. The celebration was held October 18 to honor those who had served or are serving at the parish. It is currently on a list of parishes to be closed or merged in the Cleveland Diocese, although there has been an appeal filed on the decision, and it awaits a ruling from the Vatican on the fate of St. Adalbert. *(Photo by Steve Neal)*

**MISSIONARIES MEET:** The Cincinnati Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood met in assembly October 12-14 to set a course for its future. With the province due to elect new leadership in May, the Missionaries spent three days talking about what is right with their Congregation, what they honor about their past, and what they would like to carry with them in the future.

The tone of the assembly, facilitated by Fr. Bill Nordenbrock, C.P.P.S., was positive and charged with possibilities as the Missionaries were invited to dream of a bold new future.

The conversation will help the next leadership team as it takes office next year, said Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S., provincial director. "We hoped that we could establish a vision for ourselves, celebrating

the best of who we are," he said. "We wanted to gain a sense of what we have learned about ourselves over the years, how we want to be in community, and how we want to be ministers of the Blood of Christ in the world today."

**TOWN IN TROUBLE:** Fr. Joseph Deardorff, C.P.P.S., reports that the mountain-top city where he ministers, La Oroya, Peru, is in trouble. A large foundry there has been shut down by its owners for the first time in 87 years. "The workers now have been laid off for three months. Though the company continues to pay them 63 percent of their salary, many workers have left town in the hope of finding temporary work," he writes. "The major problem that we are facing is that the owner is unwilling to invest more money and the banks are unwilling to offer new loans."

Citizens of La Oroya also face persistent health problems due to contaminated air and water from the foundry, Fr. Deardorff writes: "There continues to be a high level of lead in the blood of the children. Because the foundry has not complied with cleaning up the contamination, the Church has spoken out and at times has received threats.

Every night at the entrance of the foundry, we continue to pray for a successful outcome. For three months now we have come together to ask the Lord for his help and to support one another as we face uncertainty. I thank you for the prayers that we have received and ask that you continue to support us in this way."

**DIED: Fr. Werner Verhoff, C.P.P.S.,** 92, died on September 10, 2009, of complications following a fall.

A native of Kalida, Ohio, he was ordained on May 9, 1943. Fr. Verhoff spent over 50 years of active ministry as a pastor, often in urban parishes in Hamilton, Cleveland and Cincinnati, as well as in rural Ohio. He was remembered as a gentle soul who was a good listener.

**Fr. Raymond Seifert, C.P.P.S.,** died on September 14, 2009, 10 days after his 90th birthday.

A native of Barberton, Ohio, he was ordained on December 10, 1944. Fr. Seifert spent his years as a priest in parish ministry. He served at churches in Youngstown, Dayton, Cincinnati, Missouri, Louisiana and Kentucky, and in Western Ohio. He was an innovative and dedicated pastor who was firmly grounded in his faith.

Even after his retirement, he spent much of his time offering his priestly ministry in neighboring parishes.



Fr. Verhoff



Fr. Seifert



# Through the Eyes of God

On the first blustery day of fall, I headed out to cheer on my god-daughter in her tournament soccer game. I grabbed a polar fleece jacket that I got from a store called Our Clothing Attracts Pet Hair, and I topped it off with a heavy, rain-repellent jacket.

When I got out to the windy soccer field I was glad I had all that plus an afghan. I was proud of my goddaughter, who gave a good effort and was gracious when the effort fell short. I gave her a quick hug then hurried off to a parents' meeting at the middle school, where I was just one of many other parents in many layers of outerwear. As the principal detailed all the rules of an upcoming eighth grade field trip to Washington D.C., I felt myself sliding into the semi-narcotic state of one who once was cold, but now is warm.

I slipped out to get to the library, where I had volunteered to help clean up after an author presentation. That's a little different crowd than the soccer crowd, so I sat in my van in the library parking lot and wrestled off my outer jacket. Its polar fleece lining had adhered to the polar fleece jacket beneath it and for a long time I wondered if I would die in that parking lot, my arms trapped up against my head. After a violent struggle I wriggled free. Then I remembered my pet hair problem, and just about tore a rotator cuff reaching around in the dark into the back seat, where I thought I had seen a lint brush the week before. I found it, gave a few ineffective swipes at the jacket, and went inside. I sat in the back row, picking at all the pet hair I had missed, which was a lot.

After the author said goodnight I was edging over toward the refreshment table, my back turned toward the decent folks, when someone called my name. I turned around to see a dear friend coming toward me. My hair was sticking up straight, my skin was chapped and of course there was the pet hair problem. She reached out and touched my cheek. "You're as beautiful as ever," she said. Her eyes were warm and sincere; she was happy to see me, and I had a moment of pure revelation: is this how Jesus sees us?

Looking past the bad skin and the pet hair and the scuffed sneakers to the soul beneath, seeing all our good intentions, our hopes and dreams, the times when we lost the fight but were gracious in defeat, and all the rest? Had I seen the face of God that night, in a dimly lit corner of the local library? Had she seen the face of God in me? And how much pet hair had I left on her sweater when I hugged her, hard, for the great gift she had given me?

**At Our House**  
by Jean Giesige



# Let Us Hear From You!

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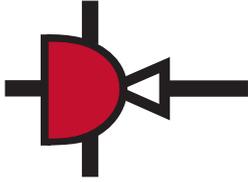
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