

SPRING 2010

C P P S T O D A Y

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

Through Others' Eyes



How the **MISSION** Changes
the **MISSIONARY**

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



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Giving and Receiving

When I was little, and probably when you were little too, publications from “the missions” flooded our mailbox. We received rosaries, medals, salt and pepper shakers and all sorts of trinkets from religious congregations serving in countries or areas in the U.S. that seemed so very far away. These usually came along with a newsletter full of pictures of people in truly dire need, and a plea to help our brothers and sisters in Christ.

I never dreamed that someday I would be coordinating fundraising for mission work! Today, we send out letters from time to time asking our supporters to help us with our mission work here in the United States and in other countries.

Interest in missionary work remains strong among Catholics, who are quick to reach out to those in need. In the past few decades there has been a subtle shift in our attitude toward Christian missionary work. In the past “mission” language often conveyed the impression that all good things flowed from us in North America to others in developing countries. The relationship was one-way: from “us” to “them.”

Certainly, we want to hold on to our feelings of generous compassion, the model of Christian community life. But in our C.P.P.S. missionary work, we encourage a relationship among people that is life-giving to all. We put an emphasis on sharing what we have with one another. People who have not been blessed with our financial resources certainly still have much to offer us in the way of friendship, support, prayer, understanding, and Christian witness.

This way of thinking about charity goes back to the time of Jesus and Jewish practices. There were no social agencies at the time of Jesus, so the community fasted and abstained then used the savings from these acts to support the widows, orphans and sick of the community who in turned served the community in any way they were able. It was a mutual relationship. As the early Christian community grew and expanded, so did this practice.

You’ll read about this attitude toward missionary work in the cover story of this issue. Our founder, St. Gaspar del Bufalo, knew how important it was to pray, reflect, and spend quiet time in God’s presence. But he also firmly believed that his Missionaries should get out there and do something! All of us, through our baptism as Christians, are called on to help carry out the Church’s mission work with open arms and loving hearts. We all give, and we all receive.



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



Through Others' Eyes



How the **MISSION** Changes the **MISSIONARY**

Fr. Joseph Deardorff, C.P.P.S., a native of Dayton, walks with the people of Nuestra Señora de la Luz parish in Lima, Peru, during Holy Week 2006.

By Jean Giesige

I had been asked to edit some documents for a symposium the Missionaries of the Precious Blood were sponsoring in Lima, Peru, about the connections between Precious Blood spirituality and the care of the earth. The speakers drew

several strong connections between God's covenant with all creation and our responsibility as stewards of that creation to treat the earth with the same care in which we hold our human family.

The documents were

originally written in Spanish then translated into English. I was to go over them and give them a little coat of polish to get them ready for distribution at the symposium.

The writers were looking at the world from a Latin American perspective, which is quite different from our own. There was one word over which I kept stumbling: exploration. In these documents it was cast in a pejorative context, listed along with negative terms such as abuse, waste and consumerism. *Hmmm, I thought, the writer/translator must have gotten confused. I'm sure they mean exploitation.*

But no, there it was again and again, so often that it could not have been a mistake. Yet how could exploration be a bad thing? Those romantic mustachioed figures who set sail from the old world to find cities of gold—we look to them as heroes. The middle school in our town has an Explorer's Day each year, where students in social studies classes dress up like explorers and present their stories to the class.

It's a good thing to be an explorer. But then it struck me: not if it's *your* territory that's being explored. Then we might call it trespassing. It all depends on your point of view.

Walking with the People

Seeing things from another's point of view, placing ourselves into a situation outside our familiar settings, experiencing the revelation that the world is a big place and we are so small—that is the life of a missionary.

At one time, missionaries were seen as those who carried the truth to lands that had little to offer except their natural resources. Missionaries attempted to remake indigenous societies based on an old-world model. Often, they served valiantly and achieved great good. But the flaw in their work was based on the erroneous assumption that God had created nothing of value in cultures different from ours.

Today, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood move from place to place as they respond to God's call to reach out and serve his people. But they do not believe they are carrying God to new territories. They go forth to walk with the people to learn what God has revealed to them and to share what they have learned of God's ways.

"A Great Awakening"

"When I first went to Latin America, I had a desire to work in the foreign missions, but I

also felt that I needed a change, to break out of the old me," said Fr. Barry Fischer, C.P.P.S., who volunteered for ministry in Chile in 1969 when he was 22. "I felt that in a whole new place, a whole new situation, where no one knew me, I could begin anew."

He was placed in a strange culture where he knew few

Finding oneself in a country where one does not speak the language is very stressful, Fr. Fischer wrote in his book, *The Cry of the Blood*. "One experiences a deep loneliness. Without friends, without the possibility of communicating to another one's anxieties, ideas and the thousand emotions that one is experiencing, the



Fr. Barry Fischer (lower center) meets with Missionaries in Bogotá, Colombia.

"You are neither totally accepted nor integrated. People's response to you is, 'you are not from here, so what do you know?'"

people, where he did not speak the language or understand the daily life, where his friends and family were far away, where the music and food, the smells and sounds were very different. He soon found himself stripped down to the bare essentials. Being immersed in a new culture can lead to a time of great discovery—if you can survive it.

missionary feels like a displaced person. . . . You are neither totally accepted nor integrated. People's response to you is, 'you are not from here, so what do you know?'"

Dependent on others, perhaps the target of discrimination for looking and sounding like a foreigner, feeling foolish and lost much of the time, the missionary realizes

that he is experiencing what many of God's suffering people feel every day of their life.

"Because of those experiences, I can empathize with people who are on the margins of society," Fr. Fischer said. "I have felt those feelings of being lonely, of not belonging."

From those feelings can come great spiritual growth, he added. "In Latin America, I was reborn. It was a real reawakening for me. I had always been Catholic. I said my prayers. I was a devout person," he said. "But being in Chile (where he was ordained in 1973) was the beginning of a whole new experience of my faith. It was a revelation to me to hear the lay people share how they understood the Gospel. I learned to read the Gospel with them. I learned to pray with them. Even today, I find it easier to pray in Spanish because that's where I really learned how to pray."

Fr. Fischer went on to minister in Chile and Guatemala, eventually becoming the director of the C.P.P.S mission in Guatemala. During those years, he wrote many articles and gave many presentations and retreats about the spirituality of the Precious Blood. Always, the premise was that Jesus commissions us through the shedding of his

Blood to pass along God's unstinting love to all creation. The Blood of Jesus offers healing and reconciliation to all of us, no matter how lost or broken we are. Fr. Fischer's writings are credited with helping fuel a new understanding of Precious Blood spirituality that revitalized his Congregation throughout the world. Eventually, he was elected the moderator general, or leader, of the C.P.P.S. worldwide.

His understanding of Precious Blood spirituality could not have come about if he had not had those experiences as a stranger in a strange land, he said.

We Have, You Have Not

As Catholics in North America, we must shake off the notion that we alone can solve the world's problems, that those in other nations should gratefully accept our wisdom and largesse and have nothing to offer us in return.

"In the past, we had the idea that a missionary comes in and has all the answers, whether economically or spiritually," Fr. Fischer said. "That puts us in a superior position to them: we have, you have not. We know; you know not. We can get caught up in that mentality. Or, we could have a different

attitude: 'I don't have the answers. I'm here to walk with you, and to care.' Sometimes that's all we can do, be present to another person, to offer solidarity.'"

"It Has Changed Me"

A missionary may set off to change the world but soon finds himself changed, said Fr. Tom Hemm, C.P.P.S.

studies and was ordained in Valdivia, Chile, where his old friend Fr. Lengerich—by then director of the Chilean Vicariate—presented him to the bishop.

After 26 years in ministry in Chile, Fr. Hemm is now back in the United States. For 12 years he was the pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Ottawa, Ohio, and is now the pastor of



Fr. Hemm, bottom right, with Missionaries from Latin America and the U.S., meeting in Bogotá.

"It's hard for me to fathom how much it has changed me. . . . I have a different perspective because of my years in Chile."

Fr. Hemm grew up listening to the stories of Fr. Ambrose Lengerich, C.P.P.S., a family friend who was a missionary to Chile. Fr. Lengerich's life was so inspiring to him that Fr. Hemm pursued his own vocation to the priesthood with the missions in mind. He completed his theological

the St. Henry, Ohio, cluster of parishes. "It's hard for me to fathom how much it has changed me," Fr. Hemm said. "When I listen to the news, when I think about events unfolding in the world, I have a different perspective because of my years in Chile."

He understands that his

world view often puts him at odds with those around him. He feels deeply that his years away from home turned him into something of a stranger to his homeland. "It's an uncomfortable space to be in. You truly aren't at home anywhere," he said. "But I'd rather live that way than never questioning that which needs to be questioned. It makes you uncomfortable throughout your life—but I really do think it is a privilege to have lived elsewhere and to have seen the world through others' eyes."

Those eyes are not always admiring of the United States. "Frankly, we have to think about the possibility that we are causing some of the problems in the world, that our extreme wealth leads to some of the troubles in these other countries," Fr. Hemm said. "That's a very uncomfortable thing to say. But how we live as Christians isn't just about mercy. It's about justice too. At the very heart of it is this: how can you put yourself in another's place?"

While he acknowledges that "I have more questions than I have answers," he remains grateful for the experiences that sometimes set him outside the gate. "The feelings of not belonging, the feelings of expanding horizons, of finding yourself challenged, those are

the cracks in your life through which the Gospel can flow," he said.

Leaving Our Comfort Zone

We can't all travel as missionaries to another country, immersing ourselves in another culture and another land. But we don't have to, said Fr. Fischer. We all have opportunities to see the world through another's eyes.

"Any time we try to put ourselves into another's reality, we can grow," he said. "We used to talk a lot about 'the poor.' Now we talk about 'the other.' That other person might speak a different language or have a different culture, a different theology, or different politics. Whenever we enter into a relationship with 'the other,' we are leaving our comfort zone. We can open ourselves up to what the other has to offer. Then we can offer what we have. It's a mutual gift exchange."

His years as a missionary have convinced him of everything he does not know, everything he has yet to learn. "I don't go into a new situation thinking I know all the answers," he said. "I let things unfold. I try to learn from the experience. That has been a great benefit to me throughout my life."



Missionary Hearts Update

Thanks to You,
We have Reached
Our Campaign Goal

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

The area in West Central Ohio where I grew up is crazy about basketball. Whenever a team is doing well in the tournament the little towns just bloom with their school colors. People tie streamers to the telephone poles and put up signs to encourage the team as it leaves town on a school



Missionary
Hearts

C.P.P.S.

COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN

bus, destined for the next battle.

I'm thinking of tying red streamers to the trees lining the lanes at St. Charles Center, because we are celebrating the successful conclusion of our *Missionary Hearts* fundraising campaign. In the last issue of *C.P.P.S. Today*, we reported that we had met a \$1.5 million matching challenge gift. In this issue, we are letting you, our supporters, boosters and cheering section of our C.P.P.S. family, know that we have not only met but exceeded our campaign goals.

Words can hardly express my gratitude to you, our faithful supporters, for your prayers and contributions that have helped us meet this important goal. Thanks to your generosity, we will be able to strengthen our current missionary efforts to serve the people of God. One of the best things about *Missionary Hearts* is that it has given us a chance to

*Thanks
to you,
we have
met our
goal!*

connect with many people who also believe in our mission and ministries. We're not a large Congregation, but now we feel anything but alone.

Fundraising is just a part of life for missionaries. While we celebrate the end of the campaign, we know that we'll continue to need your support.

We have only had one other campaign in our history here in the United States and that was almost 50 years ago, so we did not have any idea what would be reasonable goals. So we focused on our most pressing needs. This is what we've been able to accomplish together:

- **Current ministries and operating expenses:** The province supports over 200 people: candidates, men in active ministry, and retired priests and brothers. We met our goal of \$600,000 for administrative support.
- **Retired members:** We provide care for our retired members who have given their lives in service of the Church. We met our goal of \$1.7 million for an endowment to support retired members.
- **Our missions:** The C.P.P.S. has missions in Chile, Peru, Guatemala and Colombia,

and also carries out mission work here in the U.S. We were able to raise \$530,000 for operating expenses to support current mission work, and an additional \$670,000 to begin an endowment for our missions.

- **St. Charles:** We have undergone extensive renovations to our motherhouse, St. Charles Center, to make it a warm, welcoming and accessible place for those who live there and for the Congregation to gather. We raised \$3.5 million for these improvements.

Besides meeting all of our goals for the campaign, together we raised an additional \$2,162,000. This put us well beyond our overall campaign goal of \$7 million which means that we will be able to address some of the needs that we did not include in the campaign or possibly place more in the much-needed endowment for our missions.

We are planning new ways to let you know how these moneys are being put to use. You, whose support has been so important to us, are a part of our family, and we are so grateful. We hope that you'll want to hear more stories of where our missionary hearts have taken us.



A New Voice

This will be the last column I will write as director of vocation ministry. It is a position I have held for eight years but on July 1, I will turn it over to Vince Wirtner, C.P.P.S., who will be ordained a priest on June 12. I've walked with Vince throughout his formation journey. He brings passion, energy and commitment to this position, and I know he will do a great job.

Vocation ministry requires a lot of energy but also an inner stillness, as one of the most important aspects of the job is listening. A vocation minister at his or her best leads and inspires, but also knows when to be quiet, to give discerners plenty of time to talk about what is in their heart.

Listening to young people talk about their hopes and dreams, to see the Lord's hand at work in their lives, has been one of the most rewarding aspects of this ministry. Many times, I have wished that you all could hear how much our young people love God and desire to follow the right path. You wouldn't have any worries about the future of our Church.

I have also met a lot of wonderful people who minister to these youth, whether in vocation ministry, as pastors, teachers, mentors and, especially, parents. Behind most thoughtful, compassionate, service-oriented young people stand the adults who led and inspired them. I have been honored to count myself as their co-worker in God's vineyard.

Of course the ministry has also had its challenges. One thing that has always been difficult for me is when people focus too much on numbers. "How many (candidates) do you have?" is a frequent question.

What I would have wished to hear instead was, "What kind of candidates do you have?" Then, I could have answered, "Our candidates are a group of the most committed, multi-talented, open-hearted and Spirit-filled young men you could ever hope to meet. I have no doubt they will serve God's people long and well."

Indeed, it has been a great honor and privilege to walk with our C.P.P.S. candidates during my time as director of vocation ministry. Each has caused me to stretch and grow.

I hope they would say the same about me. Now, as a vocation minister, I have to practice what I preach and listen to God's voice. I feel called to a new ministry. God bless all of you who have supported our vocation efforts with your prayers and examples over the years. May we all continue to listen to God's call in our life.

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



JOB FAIR

Calumet
College of
St. Joseph
takes its
mission of
education
a step further.



(Photo by Ashley Lake)

Cheryl Peek, right, of Calumet College of St. Joseph, greets a student at the CCSJ job fair in February.

At any school, the focus of the year naturally falls on the finish line: the last day of classes, the last day of testing, the end-of-the-year awards, graduation day.

But Cheryl Peek has her eyes on a prize beyond commencement. Peek is the director of career services for Calumet College of St. Joseph, which is sponsored by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Calumet offers two-year, four-year and advanced degrees to students who commute to its Whiting, Ind., campus, just an hour east of Chicago in a blue-

collar neighborhood. The Missionaries founded the college in 1951 to serve the working-class families of Northwest Indiana. Its student body consists of many who are the first in their family to attend college, and many who are already in the workforce, going to school while supporting a family.

“Our students often have multiple competing demands on their time: they may be single parents, they may be caregivers for other family members,” Peek said. “Some of them come from backgrounds where perhaps no one in their family has ever been to college. They may be working

now in unskilled jobs as they're attending classes here."

Without a professional background, some Calumet students are a little insecure when, as they face graduation, they must enter a competitive job market for the work they've been dreaming of doing.

"We spend a great deal of time preparing them for the job market," Peek said. "Before we can send them out, we need to prepare them to meet employers. We talk a lot about proper dress and the condition of their clothing, issues of tattoos and body piercings. So much of the prep work they get here at school, it's the first time they've heard it."

Calumet sponsors an annual career fair (this year it was held March 18) with as many as 40 employers in attendance. Peek's office focuses a lot of attention on this event to make sure students make the most of the opportunity.

"Many of our students lack the confidence to walk up to a table at the job fair and engage an employer in conversation. That can be a daunting experience for any college student, but maybe even more so for our students," she said. "At our career fairs in the past, I have seen our students circling the tables. So now we have a prep workshop where we

role play with the students. We talk about what to say and how to handle an introduction. Even after that, some of the students are reticent at the career fair, so we take them up to an employer and introduce them. After that, they're okay."

Peek's preparations are so thorough that the actual conversation at the job fair or the interview that may follow are comparatively easy, said Bobby Miroski, a Calumet College student who has made good use of the services the job center has to offer.

"In their mock interviews, they go beyond what an employer might expect of you," said Miroski, who is majoring in business management. "I was more nervous when I was getting interviewed by Cheryl than when I was being interviewed by employers."

The career services office has also helped him polish his resumé and refine what he wants in a job, he said. With the help of Calumet College, he landed an internship with the Horseshoe Casino in nearby Hammond, Ind., that he hopes will help him stand out when he looks for a more permanent position.

Peek said she enjoys working with motivated students like Miroski, who are happy to follow her advice. She also works with

people who might have more difficulty. “We have some students who have had involvement with the legal system,” she said. “We know which employers are willing to work with students with that kind of a background, and we’re able to point those students in the right direction.”

For Peek, her job is about helping students, but it’s also about justice, she said. She knows many Calumet students don’t enjoy the economic advantages that other college students may take for granted. “For me, it’s about leveling the playing field,” she said.

She has also been successful at building relationships with local employers, such as Sandra Davis, a Calumet College alumna and assistant vice president of regional recruitment for First Midwest Bank.

“Calumet College does prepare its students for employment,” Davis said. “They come to the career fair dressed as if they want a job. The gentlemen are in suits and ties, and the ladies are

in suits also. The majority of them are really prepared.”

Davis believes that the tight job market around the Calumet region is beginning to show signs of improvement. She is seeing help wanted signs bloom in local businesses this spring, she said.

Still, Peek said, students need to put their best foot forward. “Years ago, students resisted our advice” that they polish their



(Photo by Ashley Lake)

An employer speaks with a student at the recent Calumet College career fair.

looks for interviews, she said. “They’d say, ‘This is who I am; I’m not going to change myself.’ But now, I think we’re getting through to them, and I see them really making an effort.”



Chile Rebuilds: The C.P.P.S. members serving in Chile were unharmed during February's earthquake, which registered 8.8 on the Richter scale. Along with many Chileans, they experienced hundreds of aftershocks that followed the disaster, according to Fr. Antonio Baus, C.P.P.S., who ministers in Santiago.

The devastation is widespread, said Fr. Baus. "Some areas of the country have been literally erased and a yet-unknown number of human lives lost," he wrote in March. "We want to express our deep gratitude for your prayerful support and concern right from the beginning, when the first strike hit us."

While more than 200 aftershocks worked on the nerves of the people already traumatized by the earthquake, Chileans showed their resilience by resuming their lives as quickly as possible, Fr. Baus said. "People are already in the process of rebuilding their



Missionaries of the Precious Blood and candidates at the assembly in Chile.

Alejandro Gómez Villegas was definitively incorporated into the Community in January. He will be ordained a transitional deacon on April 24. At the same time, two candidates made their first commitments to the Community, and three more renewed their commitments.

homes, lives and hopes. International aid has been of help, but much work will have to be done in order to accomplish what is necessary to restore things back to normal. Please keep us in your prayers," he wrote.

Earlier in the year, the Chilean Vicariate of the C.P.P.S. had cause to celebrate as Jorge

Pilgrimage for Vocations: All are welcome to join in the seventh annual *Stepping Up the Call*, a pilgrimage for vocations, on Saturday, May 8 in West Central Ohio.

The annual event is a day to walk, talk and pray in support of vocations to the consecrated life and ministry to the Church. Pilgrims walk or drive from site to site. The day begins with Morning Prayer at 8:30 a.m. at St. Augustine Church, Minster, Ohio, and concludes with Mass at 4 p.m. at St. Charles Center in Carthage, Ohio.

Along the way, pilgrims will hear presentations on the consecrated life as a priest, brother or sister, and on the call to holiness as lay people. Refreshments, snacks and lunch will be provided.

The event, which is held rain or shine, is sponsored by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, the Sisters of the Precious Blood, and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Saying Goodbye: The C.P.P.S. said a heartfelt goodbye to the faith family of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Cleveland, where Missionaries have served for more than 100 years. The goodbye liturgy was held March 14.

The parish is being merged with nearby Corpus Christi parish and will become Mary Queen of Peace as part of a parish restructuring program currently underway in the Diocese of Cleveland.

In his homily during the farewell Mass, Our Lady of Good Counsel's pastor, Fr. Leroy Moreeuw, C.P.P.S., said that something of the Missionaries who served the parish for so many years will remain there. "Our Lord is the cornerstone of all this parish has been since its original beginning, and remains so during its new beginning. We feel gratitude for the spiritual blessings that have come to parishioners through the ministry of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood," he said. "We have been marked by the Blood of the Lamb, embodied by those who labor under the banner of the Precious Blood."

C.P.P.S. on Facebook: Follow the Missionaries of the Precious Blood on Facebook. Go to www.facebook.com and search Missionaries of the Precious Blood Cincinnati Province.



Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Cleveland

A Blanket of Snow

Just a quarter mile down the road from my childhood home is a fruit farm that is still in operation. Our neighbors have grown strawberries, sweet corn and melons for three generations, along with field corn and soybeans and such sturdier crops.

My mother and I were out and about a few weeks ago when we ran into the strawberry farmer. My mom, who was raised on a farm and never even tried to get it out of her blood, immediately asked him how his strawberry plants had weathered the winter. So far, so good, he said; they had spent the winter under a thick blanket of snow, and that usually signaled a good crop.

I've been thinking about those strawberries ever since. That which does not kill us really does make us stronger. A hard winter, a traumatic shock, a great loss—if we survive it, and attempt to learn from it, it truly does give us a sort of toughness in that place where the bones have knit. And more than that: it gives us the tools to understand and empathize when others suffer a similar blow. We can make great use of that in our lives as Christians.

When he gave us the crop update, the farmer had mentioned that especially during a hard winter, the berry plants benefit from a good snow cover. He said that the spring season after our great blizzard of 1978 was one of the best years ever for strawberries.

There was something there about the snow and the strawberries. They are two such different elements in our natural world, yet the one owed its survival to the other. Then I thought about the fog that we feel in the midst of life's great crises. In the movies, a cataclysm often spurs the protagonist on to immediate and heroic action. How few of us have those reflexes! It's far more common for us to pull back, curl up and focus inward if we can focus at all. People who have suffered a great loss, or who are dealing with chronic illness, or who are in what feels to them like a permanent state of transition, speak of being in a fog.

I'm wondering now if it isn't a fog at all. I'm wondering if God covers us with a thick, protective blanket of spiritual snow. In due time, we come out of it, wondering where we are and how we got there. By then the worst of the trauma has past. Maybe that snow in our brain helps us over the the freeze-and-thaw of our own emotions. There is deep, shocking cold, then there is a thick blanket of snow, then a thaw, then a time of growth and discovery. If God pulls a blanket up to the ears of his strawberries, is there any reason to think that he does not do the same for us?

At Our House
by Jean Giesige



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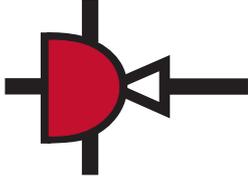
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