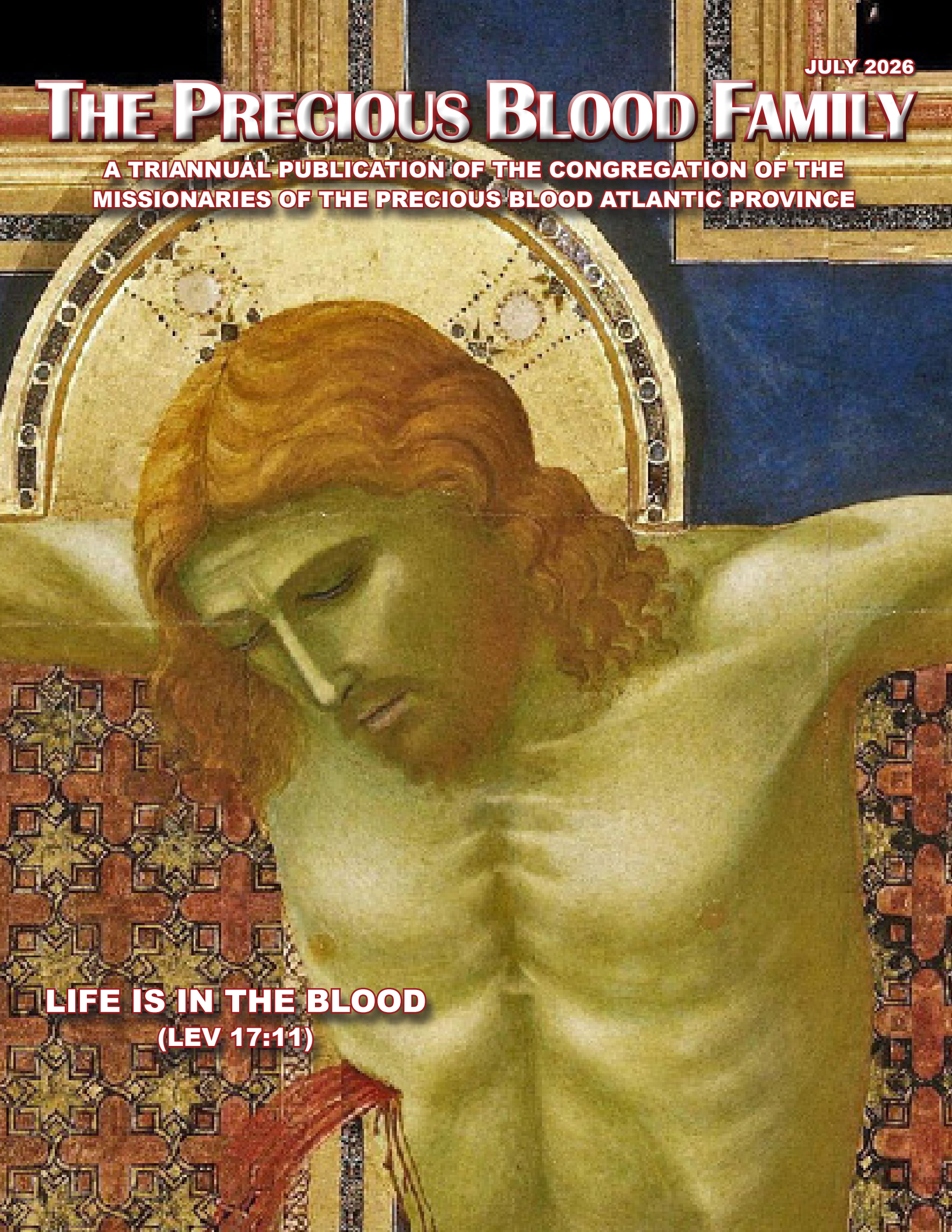


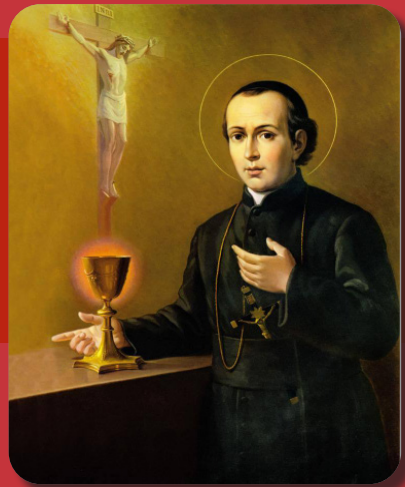
JULY 2026

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY

A TRIANNUAL PUBLICATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE
MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD ATLANTIC PROVINCE



LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD
(LEV 17:11)



THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY

is published triannually (Lent-Easter, July, and Advent-Christmas) by the Congregation of Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Atlantic Province.

EDITOR

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

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Gino Marcuzzi

For submissions, including questions, articles, story ideas, news, and suggestions, please email cppspublications@gmail.com.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3** *Editorial*
Fr. John Colacino, C.P.P.S.
- 4** *The Precious Blood Family's "Common Father"*
Fr. John Colacino, C.P.P.S.
- 7** *Address to the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life*
Pope Leo XIV
- 9** *The Chaplet of the Precious Blood*
Mons. Francesco Albertini
- 16** *Exquisite Rest*
Christine Way Skinner
- 19** *A Journey of Faith through Contradictory Times*
John Tries

EDITORIAL

IN THIS ISSUE we are highlighting the person who might well be called the originator of the Precious Blood Family, Bishop Francesco Albertini, founder of the Confraternity of the Precious Blood. From this organization sprang several ecclesial communities, including the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, with their respective founders.

So, in this month of July dedicated to the Blood of Christ, the eponymous Chaplet composed by Albertini is offered for your devotion, along with passages from Scripture and meditations composed by several Missionaries.

We are also welcoming two Canadian authors to The Precious Family. Christine Way Skinner offers a reflection for the summer months, and John Tries presents a challenge for Christian believers in these demanding times.

FR. JOHN COLACINO, C.P.P.S.

The Precious Blood Family's "Common Father"

John Colacino, C.P.P.S.

MANY of the congregations committed to the blood of Christ are at root deeply related in title, spirit, and mission. Bishop Francis Albertini and his foundation, the (Arch)-Confraternity of the Precious Blood, is the source of the vast movement of devotion and spirituality that arose in the nineteenth century centred on the blood of Christ.

Born and educated in Rome, Francis Albertini (1770-1819) nurtured a life-long desire to be a



priest, something he realized on May 25, 1793. Prior to his ordination, he earned a doctoral degree in theology from the Dominican faculty at Santa Maria sopra Minerva where he demonstrated a special interest in the relationship between theology and spirituality, an academic interest later translated into a ministry that highly

regarded spiritual direction. His direction of others, as well as his personal spirituality, stressed the fundamental importance of the virtue of humility. His principal extant work, *The Introduction to the Humble Life*, is a scholarly and practical compendium devoted to the subject. Albertini's other interests included concern for the poor and the uninstructed who congregated around the Roman basilica of St. Nicholas in Carcere, where he was appointed canon in 1800. In all of this, he showed himself an exemplary figure renowned for his imitation of the human and priestly qualities of St. Francis de Sales.

Sometime around 1808, during a moment of intense prayer, Francis received what has been described as a "strong impetus to awaken in souls devotion to the most Precious Blood of Jesus." This grace would lead Albertini to establish at St. Nicholas the Confraternity of the Precious Blood and to compose some of the traditional prayers associated with the devotion, such as the Seven Offerings and the Chaplet of the Precious Blood. At about the same time, Albertini had a decisive encounter with the young cleric, Gaspar del Bufalo, that would eventually confirm the latter's own commitment to the blood of Christ and his resolve to dedicate himself to the preaching ministry. As Gaspar's mentor and spiritual director, Albertini would thus play a major role in the shape his protégé's life and mission would take.

In July of 1810, Albertini was exiled from the Papal States for refusing to swear the oath of fidelity to Napoleon whose troops occupied the city of Rome. Leaving home and family behind, he and several other resisters, including del Bufalo, were deported to northern Italy for what would amount to a four-year detention in several locales under varying degrees of severity and restraint. Francis and Gaspar were lodged together for part of this time, during which Albertini's influence on Gaspar was deepened considerably.

Among other things, Francis developed a spiritual program for his disciple to follow, tutored him in moral and ascetical theology, and furthered his distinctive focus on the blood of Christ. The pair also engaged in many conversations which shaped their future plans for the Confraternity of the Precious Blood. They envisioned, for instance, its expansion to include an institute of preachers and a congregation of women dedicated

to the education of young women: the seeds, in other words, of what would be known as the Missionaries and Adorers of the Blood of Christ. This comprehensive project would be collectively referred to by its founding figures as "the Work."

Once the ordeal of exile was over, Albertini returned to Rome and resumed his duties as canon of St. Nicholas in Carcere. He also continued his guidance and encouragement of Gaspar regarding the Work they had discussed at length. Albertini's careful preparation enabled del Bufalo to establish on August 15, 1815 the Congregation of Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood at the former Abbey of St. Felix in Giano in the Umbrian hills of Italy. Several years later, on April 18, 1819, Francis Albertini was consecrated bishop of the three small dioceses of Terracina, Sezze, and Piperno, near Rome. He immediately made plans for those under his pastoral care to benefit from the Missionaries' preaching ministry. He arranged for missions to be preached in these areas by Gaspar and his confreres, missions in which the newly-appointed bishop planned to participate himself. Tragically, Bishop Albertini took sick early in this campaign, and died on November 24, barely seven months after the start of his episcopal ministry.

Bereft of his director's counsel and support, the legacy of Francis Albertini was inherited by Gaspar del Bufalo whom he called his "first-born son." Under Gaspar's stewardship, the original inspiration received by Albertini years earlier continued to develop. Moreover, what was bequeathed to Gaspar would eventually be shared among many direct and collateral descendants of Albertini, to whom Gaspar would always refer as the "common father" and "beloved founder" of all those destined to collaborate in the Work.

Francis Albertini never limited himself to awakening in individuals alone his desired commitment to the blood of Christ. As noted, the original inspiration he received led him to envision several associations that would embody and stimulate such devotion corporately. The first, the root from which a single vine would sprout with several branches, each bearing its own distinctive fruit, was the Confraternity of the

Precious Blood. This communal expression of Albertini's "strong impetus" was inaugurated on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1808—in the same basilica where he was canon, at a side altar distinguished by an imposing crucifix and a purported relic of the Precious Blood, the same altar where he would one day be consecrated a bishop. Invited to preach for the occasion was Francis' young protégé, Gaspar del Bufalo, canon of the neighboring Basilica of St. Mark. This newly-founded assembly consisted of a core group of 15 laymen and 15 laywomen who provided leadership in fulfilling its mission, a mission described in the Confraternity's original Constitution as "the weighty task of performing many devout works designed to serve the spiritual good of the numerous population of the neighborhood and surrounding area, especially the poor peasants and day laborers who abound in the vast parish [of St. Nicholas] ... to the greater glory of God and the greater advantage of one's neighbor." From these words, it is evident the first fruits of Albertini's inspiration had both a spiritual purpose, focused on veneration of the Precious Blood, and an apostolic one, directed toward the welfare of the indigent people who came to this area of Rome from outlying districts to sell their produce, a group of marginalized people neglected by the social and ecclesiastical institutions of the time. In this way, Albertini's foundation fulfilled the historic role of the (largely lay) confraternities, namely to promote the Christian life by efforts directed to worship or to works of charity. Their modern correlative, "associations of the faithful have a similar scope in that they "strive in a common endeavor to foster a more perfect life, to promote public worship or Christian doctrine, or to exercise other works of the apostolate such as initiatives of evangelization, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with a Christian spirit" (*Code of Canon Law*, 298.1).

As noted, the Confraternity, soon elevated to an Archconfraternity, also had an intimate connection to the other associations directly inspired by Albertini: the Missionaries, and later, the Adorers of the Blood of Christ founded by Blessed Maria de Mattias in 1834—the latter's foundational

document, the so-called Fundamental Articles, having been drawn up by Albertini and del Bufalo during their exile. Hence, from the beginning of Gaspar's congregation, the ties between it and Albertini's association were extensive, indeed so close that Gaspar's first companions were known as "priest missionaries of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood." Gaspar referred to himself as "director general of the missions of the venerable Archconfraternity", a position to which he was officially elected by that same assembly in 1817. The Adorers were likewise known for some time after their foundation as being "of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood".

There is no doubt then that these three embodiments of Albertini's inspiration—the Archconfraternity, Missionaries, and Adorers of the Precious Blood—are deeply interrelated and owe their origin to the "common father" and "beloved founder" of the Work. The same can be said, though less directly, of an estimated 15 other surviving religious institutes whose beginnings can in some way be traced to Albertini's inspiration. For example, Mother Anna Brunner, foundress of the Sisters of the Precious Blood, received the incentive for her community from a visit to the Basilica of St. Nicholas and the Archconfraternity, while Mother Catherine Aurelia Caouette, founder of the contemplative Sister Adorers of the Precious Blood, joined the Archconfraternity having found its way from Italy to France and then to Quebec.

For a variety of mostly practical reasons, a division of the original institutes to which Albertini's inspiration gave rise came about. By the year 1833, the Missionaries had dropped the official designation referring to themselves as part of the Archconfraternity. The approval in 1841 of a distance rule for the Missionaries ultimately led, in 1851, to their canonical separation from the Archconfraternity. At that time, the Missionaries, now under the leadership of John Merlini, established a new association, the "Pious Union of the Most Precious Blood", through which they hoped to further their founder's aims among Christ's faithful. But even then the Missionaries

were considered responsible for promoting the original Archconfraternity. The year 1869, however, saw a definitive break between the two entities, a parting that contributed to the almost total desuetude of the Archconfraternity which persists to this day. A similar process of disassociation occurred with the Adorers, though it should be noted how in their early expansion outside Italy they were able to gain recognition and acceptance precisely from their connection to Albertini's foundation.

In our own day, the "Pious Union" initiated by Merlini—now known as the "Union of the Blood of Christ"—has undergone considerable change, its format and statutes having been updated in view of the conciliar reform. The Pontifical Council for the Laity recognized it as an international association of the faithful of pontifical right on May 24, 1988 along with its respective statutes. The Union, which encourages regional diversity and adaptation, may rightfully be considered the legitimate heir of the Archconfraternity, faithful to Gaspar's desire "always to maintain what Albertini had instituted."

As shown throughout this article, the inspiration bestowed on Francis Albertini evolved historically and ecclesially from its initial expression in a lay form; this led eventually to other concretizations in a priestly form and several religious forms. The gift bestowed on Albertini in prayer could thus be called the "original charism" which later manifested itself in the lives and mission of other key figures who in turn possessed unique charisms of their own. Admittedly, the later forms can trace their descent from the original more or less directly. Still, the historical details outlined here indicate the good reason why Albertini can be referred to as "the common father" of the charism's several manifestations. For the Work which Gaspar, Maria, and others were called to shape and direct—and here they are unequivocally the founders of their respective congregations—was essentially one, springing from an original inspiration given to the Archconfraternity's founder.

My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you! Gal 4:19

The following words of Pope Leo, in which St. Gaspar del Buffalo is mentioned should serve as a further recognition of the value of the Union of the Blood of Christ as a vehicle of lay formation ultimately rooted in the foundation of Bishop Albertini.

Fr. John Colacino, C.P.P.S., is a Missionary of the Precious Blood of the Atlantic Province and directs the Giano Mission House in Rochester, NY.

ADDRESS OF POPE LEO XIV TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE DICASTERY FOR THE LAITY, THE FAMILY AND LIFE 6 February, 2026

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Peace be with you! Your Eminence, Your Excellencies, dear priests, brothers and sisters,



I am pleased to meet you in these days, in which you are gathered for the Plenary Assembly of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life. At the centre of your work are the themes of Christian

formation and World Meetings, important realities for the entire Church.

The World Meetings involve a large number of participants and require complex organizational work, listening to and in collaboration with the local communities and with people and bodies, many of whom have long and valuable experience of evangelization.

However, I would like to focus in particular on the theme of Christian formation. The words of Saint Paul, which you have chosen as the title of your meeting, indicate a precise direction in this regard. If we consider the verse from which they are extrapolated in full, we read: "My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you!" (Gal 4:19). The Apostle addresses the Galatians as "my little children", referring to a "travail" by which, not without suffering, he led them to welcome Christ. Formation is thus placed in the context of "generation", of "giving life", of "giving birth", in a dynamic that, even with pain, leads the disciple to vital union with the very person of the Saviour; living and working in him or her, capable of transforming "living in the flesh" (cf. Rom 7:5) into "the life of Christ in us" (cf. 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 2:20).

It is a theme, dear to the Apostle and present in various passages of his readings. For example, when addressing the Corinthians, he says: "For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel" (1 Cor 4:15).

It is true that in the Church, at times, the figure of the formator as "pedagogue", engaged in transmitting instructions and religious competences, has prevailed over that of the "father" capable of generating faith. Our mission, however, is much loftier, and so we cannot stop at transmitting a doctrine, an observance, an ethic, but rather we are called to share what we live, with generosity, sincere love for souls, willingness to suffer for others, and unreserved dedication, like parents who sacrifice themselves for the good of their children.

And this leads us to another aspect of formation: its communal dimension. As indeed human life is transmitted thanks to the love of a man and a woman, so Christian life is conveyed through the love of a community. It is not the priest by himself, or a catechist, or a charismatic leader

who generates faith, but the Church (cf. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, 24 November 2012, 111), the united, living Church, made up of families, young people, celibates, consecrated persons, inspired by charity and therefore eager to be fruitful, to transmit to everyone and above all to the new generations, the joy and fullness of meaning that it lives and experiences. The desire in parents to give life to their children does not arise from the need to have something, but the wish to give, to share the superabundance of love and joy that dwells in them, and it is here that every work of formation also has its roots.

Jesus, after the Resurrection, entrusts the missionary mandate to the Apostles, saying to them to “make disciples of all nations”, “baptizing them” and “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded to you” (cf. Mt 28:19-20). I recall these expressions because they summarize other fundamental elements of the mission of the formator, which I would also like to emphasize.

First of all, the need to foster consistent, engaging, and personal paths of life that lead to Baptism and the sacraments, or to their rediscovery, because without them there is no Christian life (cf. Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation Sacramentum caritatis, 22 February 2007, 6).

Then, the importance of helping those who embark on a journey of faith to mature and preserve a new way of life that embraces every area of existence, both private and public, such as work, relationships, and daily conduct (cf. Saint John Paul II, Address to participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture, 16 March 2002, 3).

Furthermore, it is essential to nurture, in our communities, aspects of formation aimed at respect for human life in all its stages, particularly those

that contribute to preventing every form of abuse of minors and vulnerable persons, as well as accompanying and supporting victims.

As we can see, the art of forming is not easy, and cannot be improvised: it requires patience, listening, accompaniment and verification, both on a personal and a community level, and cannot be separated from the experience and company of those who have lived it, in order to learn and follow their example. Thus, over the centuries, spiritual giants such as Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Saint Philip Neri, Saint Joseph Calasanz, Saint Gaspar del Bufalo, and Saint John Leonardi have emerged. It was with this in mind that Saint Augustine, shortly after being elected bishop, composed his treatise *De catechizandis rudibus*, whose guidelines remain useful and valuable to this day.

Therefore, dear friends, also in the light of such models, I encourage you in your commitment and I thank you for the help you give to the Dicastery in reflecting on these topics. The challenges you confront can at times seem beyond your strength and resources, However, you must not be discouraged. Start small, following, in faith, the Gospel logic of the “mustard seed” (cf. Mt 13:31-32), confident that the Lord will never fail to provide you with the necessary energy, people, and graces at the right time. Look to Mary: by giving us Christ, she “wrought together by charity, that faithful ones should be born in the Church, who are members of that Head” (Saint Augustine, *De sancta virginitate* 6, 6). Imitate her faith and always entrust yourselves to her intercession.

Brothers and sisters, I reiterate my thanks, I promise to remember you in prayer, and I bless you from my heart.

THE CHAPLET OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

The Chaplet of the Precious Blood, also known as the Precious Blood Rosary, consists of seven mysteries in which we meditate on the seven sheddings of Jesus’ Blood. The chaplet was composed in 1809 by Francesco Albertini who founded the Confraternity of the Precious Blood and was the mentor and spiritual director of Saint Gaspar del Bufalo, founder of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

METHOD: In its original form, the chaplet consists of 33 beads in remembrance of the Lord’s earthly years. The *Our Father* is prayed five times for each mystery, except for the seventh, when it is prayed three times. Each mystery concludes with the *Glory be to the Father* and the invocation: **V/.** We beseech you, therefore, help your servants. **R/.** Whom you have redeemed by your precious Blood.

In this Scriptural version, each of the 33 *Our Fathers* is preceded by a verse from the New Testament. A Missionary of the Precious Blood has also provided a meditation for each mystery.

OPENING VERSICLES

V/. O God, come to my assistance.

R/. Lord, make haste to help me.

V/. Glory be to the Father...

R/. As it was in the beginning...

FIRST MYSTERY: The Circumcision Meditation

Very Rev. Luigino Santi, C.P.P.S.

On the eighth day after His birth, the Child born of Mary was circumcised in obedience to the Law and was given the name Jesus. The circumcision of Jesus is the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham—that he would be the father of many nations, and that through him all peoples would be blessed.

In the Old Testament, circumcision was important to God as a physical sign of the covenant between God and the people of Israel. It served as a mark of belonging to God’s chosen people. It symbolized the promise of salvation for the nations and was an outward representation of the need to remove sin, undergo a change of heart, and dedicate oneself anew to God. Living the covenant meant repentance, renewal, and a commitment to embrace God’s will.

In the New Testament, the focus shifts to the circumcision of the heart—to living in the Spirit and not merely in the letter of the Law. This becomes the distinguishing mark of a true follower of Christ, one who accepts God’s will. Through baptism, we are graced and strengthened to live faithfully.

Spiritual circumcision occurs when we repent, place our complete faith in Christ, and allow His grace to transform us.

Jesus was circumcised in obedience to the Jewish Law. Though He is fully divine and fully human, He entered into the covenantal life of Israel. Mary and Joseph bringing Jesus to the temple on the eighth day was a vital fulfillment of the Old Testament covenant. For us, as we live the spirituality of the Precious Blood, this moment

foreshadows the Blood of Christ shed for our redemption. It marks the beginning of the transition from the old covenant to the new—ultimately fulfilled in baptism.



How do we live the Circumcision today? For us, it means “cutting away” sinful actions, letting go of ego, changing selfish habits, and living in faith, love, and obedience to God. This inner transformation is ongoing and guided by the Holy Spirit. St. Paul, writing to the community in Philippi (Phil 4:8), encourages believers to focus on whatever is true, honourable, just, and pure. He also reminds them of the need to forgive—to release grudges, bitterness, and resentment. Extending kindness and compassion even to those with whom we struggle fosters deep inner peace.

PRAYER

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb (Lk 2:21). *Our Father...*

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children (Gal 4:4-5). *Our Father...*

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil (Matt 5:17). *Our Father...*

In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love (Gal 5:6). *Our Father...*

At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:10-11). *Our Father...*

Glory be to the Father...

V/. We beseech you, therefore, help your servants.
R/. Whom you have redeemed by your precious Blood.

SECOND MYSTERY: The Agony in the Garden MEDITATION

Rev. Samuel D'Angelo, C.P.P.S.

The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane stands as one of the most profound and heart-breaking moments in the events leading up to the Passion of our Lord. It offers to us a unique window into the mystery of Christ's dual nature—being fully God and fully Man—as well as revealing the depth of Jesus' redemptive mission on earth. By reflecting on the Agony in the Garden, we're invited into a more profound



understanding of the value and meaning of suffering, the discernment required by obedience to faith, and the transformative power of prayer to submit ourselves to the Will of God.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus

experiences intense anguish, described in the Gospels as a sorrow “even to the point of death.” (Mt 26:38) Luke further adds “And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Lk 22:44b) This agony is not a sign of weakness, though, but a testament to the true humanity of Christ. Like the rest of us, Jesus is not immune from fear, pain, or the instinct for self-preservation. His Precious Blood, dripping like sweat, expresses the extent to which Jesus is willing to accept suffering and death for our sins. By facing the real likelihood of his impending fate, Jesus immerses himself fully into the human condition, embracing it with all its vulnerability. This is Jesus' solidarity with humankind: God becomes man, not in some theoretical or spiritual sense, but in the very real experience of human suffering and the limits of human existence.

The agony in the garden also reveals Christ's divinity. His prayer—“Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as you will” (Mt 26:39)—expresses both a deep and personal Father-Son relationship, as well as a humble submission to His Father's divine plan for humanity. In this tension between human fear and divine obedience, the Church sees the mystery of Christ divine and human wills united, but also distinct. The agony in the garden is not merely about facing physical pain then, as it is also about Jesus' willingness to bear the spiritual weight of the world's sins while also struggling with accepting His Father's will.

The agony in the garden is also a prelude to Christ's redemptive sacrifice on the Cross. In the garden, Jesus freely accepts the “cup” of suffering, as a part of His Father's will. This act of obedience un-does the disobedience of Adam. Whereas the first Adam faltered in a garden, seeking his own will over God's, the “new Adam,” by contrast, triumphs in the Garden of Gethsemane by surrendering Himself completely to the Father's plan for Him and for humanity.

Christ's agony in the garden ultimately unveils the depth of Christ's love, for He chooses to embrace the Cross out of love for each person. This “suffering with” (aka, compassion) is not abstract; it's personal and particular. It leads to our redemption and salvation.

How can we live out this mystery? Think of your garden of Gethsemane. Where do you seek to be alone with God outside of Church? Take some time to go there this week and be honest with God about your vocation and its struggles. Pray for discernment.

Take a walk in the crisp morning air. While walking, ask God to give you an insight into some person who is struggling in life and how you might help ease their burden.

Think about how your own blood brings you life and energy to overcome life's difficulties. Pray for someone who is sick or lonely or on the margins and visit them this week, so that they will know that they are not alone.

PRAYER

Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done’ (Lk 22:41-42).
Our Father...

In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground (Lk 22:44).
Our Father...

Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested (Heb 2:18).
Our Father...

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission (Heb 5:7).
Our Father...

It is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb 10:10).
Our Father...

Glory be to the Father...

V/. We beseech you, therefore, help your servants.
R/. Whom you have redeemed by your precious Blood.



THIRD MYSTERY: The Scourging at the Pillar

MEDITATION

Rev. Jerome Hologa, C.P.P.S.

In the third mystery of the Chaplet of the Precious Blood, Christ stands bound to the pillar, exposed before human violence and surrendered entirely to the Father's will. His body, fashioned in love, becomes the place where sin meets mercy and where cruelty encounters divine patience. Each blow opens His flesh, and with every wound the Precious Blood is poured out as a wordless proclamation of love that endures rather than retaliates. This mystery reveals a God who enters suffering fully and transforms it from within.

The scourging at the pillar unveils the reality of sin in its rawest form. Sin wounds the body, fractures relationships, and distorts the human vocation. Christ accepts this assault upon Himself, allowing the consequences of human brokenness to strike His own sacred flesh. The pillar becomes an altar, and His suffering becomes an offering of obedience rooted in trust. The Blood shed here testifies that love remains faithful even when violence

seeks to dominate. In this obedience, suffering receives meaning and becomes redemptive.

This mystery also reveals the profound dignity of the human body. The body of Christ is treated as an object, stripped of reverence and subjected to degradation. His Blood answers this desecration by restoring the body to its true purpose as a dwelling place of communion. The Precious Blood falling to the ground proclaims that God enters the most wounded places of human experience and claims them as His own. No suffering endured in love remains empty, and no wound lies beyond the reach of grace.

Bound to the pillar, Christ reveals a strength that the world struggles to recognize. This strength stands firm without hardening and remains faithful without seeking escape. His endurance speaks of freedom rooted in surrender and authority born from love. The Precious Blood shed in this mystery teaches that redemption flows through fidelity under pressure and through perseverance shaped by hope.

To contemplate the scourging at the pillar is to confront the mystery of the body offered rather than protected and the self entrusted rather than asserted. The Blood flowing from Christ's wounds becomes a language of mercy spoken directly to the suffering, the weary, and the forgotten. It announces that God remains present where pain repeats and where endurance feels unseen.

This mystery calls for concrete response in daily life. One way of living this mystery appears in the offering of physical and emotional suffering. Daily life carries hidden forms of scourging through illness, exhaustion, grief, disappointment, and interior wounds that return again and again. Living this mystery means consciously uniting these experiences to Christ bound at the pillar. When pain is accepted with trust and offered to the Father, it becomes prayer. A simple interior offering transforms endurance into communion. The Precious Blood then flows through ordinary suffering, giving it eternal significance and quiet fruitfulness.

Another way of living this mystery emerges through reverence for the body and disciplined freedom. The scourging wounds the body of Christ, and this mystery invites a renewed respect for one's own body and the bodies of others. Practices such as moderation, fasting, and restraint train the soul in true freedom by loosening the grip of impulse and comfort, restoring desire to its proper order. Each act of restraint offered faithfully participates in Christ's endurance at the pillar. The Precious Blood sanctifies these hidden choices, forming a heart capable of true freedom.

The Blood of Christ shed in the scourging at the pillar reveals a love that remains steadfast when escape appears attractive and endurance feels costly. In this mystery, suffering becomes a place of encounter, the body becomes a sanctuary of grace, and perseverance becomes a proclamation of hope. Those who live this mystery learn that every wound embraced in love is gathered into eternity, where the Precious Blood continues to speak healing, mercy, and life.

PRAYER

Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified (Mk 15:15).
Our Father...

I gave my back to those who struck me and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;

I did not hide my face from insult and spitting (Isa 50:6). *Our Father...*

He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed (Isa 53:5). *Our Father...*

God put forward Christ as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith (Rom 3:25).
Our Father...

You were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation (Rev 5:9).
Our Father...

Glory be to the Father...

VI. We beseech you, therefore, help your servants.
R/. Whom you have redeemed by your precious Blood.

FOURTH MYSTERY: The Crowning with Thorns

MEDITATION

Rev. Gerardo Laguartilla, C.P.P.S.

What a painful moment of the life of Jesus. To be crowned with thorns is not only to feel the physical pain of thorns



piercing one's head. It is to suffer humiliation and indignation. It is to be mocked and belittled by those who do not even know who you are or what you're going through in life. It is also symbolizing one's challenges or suffering in life like sickness of oneself or a loved one, or economic challenges or even relational challenges and other sufferings or challenges of life.

We can experience being crowned with thorns. Haven't we felt like that many times in life? As human beings, we feel some challenges in our life piercing in our head or in ourselves like a thorn that is so painful. As Christians, how many times have we felt that we have already been judged even before we say a single word? How many times have we been considered an outcast by those who are in power? How many times in our life have we been pushed aside or throw like a ball from one side of the court to the other or perhaps mocked and belittled by others.

Jesus endures humiliation, cruelty, torture and death. He felt the physical pain. He felt grief and sorrow. But the humiliation and suffering didn't land in him, because he knew his own identity and worthiness, he knew he was the Beloved of God, and that knowing was never touched by the actions or words of others or even when he was mocked. Because he always knew who He was. He knew that life brings pain, betrayal, suffering, death. That's why he came here in human form: to reassure us that the loving Father stands with us in everything we experience.

Remember Jesus is there journeying with us in all moments of our lives.

PRAYER

And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe (Jn 19:2). *Our Father...*

They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face (Jn 19:3). *Our Father...*

Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews' (Jn 19:19). *Our Father...*

He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God (Rev 19:13). *Our Father...*

On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, 'King of kings and Lord of lords' (Rev 19:16). *Our Father...*

Glory be to the Father...

V/. We beseech you, therefore, help your servants.
R/. Whom you have redeemed by your precious Blood.

FIFTH MYSTERY: The Carrying of the Cross MEDITATION *Rev. Germán Santiago Estévez, C.P.P.S.*



The Missionaries of the Precious Blood, inspired by the redemptive power of the Blood of Christ, have the Chaplet of the Precious Blood, through which we meditate on the Word of God and pray with it, reading a biblical verse in order to gain a deeper understanding of the important moments in which Jesus shed His Precious Blood for our salvation.

Christ, though innocent, suffered as a guilty man. The guilt that we bore, He took upon His shoulders, and He did so because He loved us to the very end (Jn 13:1). Jesus came to heal us, to carry the yokes of our sin, so that we might be set free. He made our pains and sufferings His own—those we deserved because of our disobedience to God and our turning away from what is good.

We know the Paschal Mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ—His life, passion, and death, leading to the Resurrection. This is the mystery of our salvation, rich in theological meaning and spiritual power, for it is the fulfillment of the promises and the triumph of Christ over evil. On the Cross that Jesus carried on His shoulders, on that same blessed Tree of the Cross, Jesus cried out, "It is finished" (Jn 19:30). That is, from the heights of the Holy Cross, Jesus cries out with a loud voice: I have conquered you, Satan.

Crosses will never be lacking (St. Gaspar #1955). We have gone through difficult situations in life that have made us feel devastated, but even there we have experienced someone's concern for us. When we were children, those most concerned were our parents, and they did everything possible to seek our well-being immediately. This is exactly what Jesus has done for us. God saw a humanity devastated and burdened by sin and wanted to rescue it. For this reason, He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to save the world (Jn 3:16).

Jesus also said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28), for He carried the heaviest burden of our humanity and now gives us a lighter, more bearable load. Jesus calls each one of us to take up the cross of each day and follow Him worthily, and He has told us that He will be with us to strengthen us. Although burdens are heavy, God also gives the strength to carry them (St. Gaspar #1698).

Jesus carries the Cross and sets out. To walk implies leaving footprints. We are called to leave good footprints for those who see us or live with us. Footprints serve as a guide so as not to lose the direction or the goal to be reached. It does not matter whether we are consecrated persons or laypeople; in whatever state of life we have chosen, we are called to leave good and clear footprints that others can follow, for the works belong to God, and He must take care of them (St. Gaspar #1640).

Jesus walks toward Calvary. When we speak of a place, we are referring to a destination, a goal—in Christ, Salvation. We must become another Christ,

having heaven as our goal through good actions. In this way, we ourselves will be walking and helping others to walk toward the Christian goal, which is to enjoy the presence of God—without forgetting that, in order to reach the resurrection, we must first walk and pass through Calvary. Let us adore the crosses that God sends us (St. Gaspar #1182).

PRAYER

Jesus said to them all, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me' (Lk 9:23). *Our Father...*

Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha (Jn 19:16). *Our Father...*

For the sake of the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame (Heb 12:2). *Our Father...*

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed (1 Pet 2:24). *Our Father...*

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Gal 6:14). *Our Father...*

Glory be to the Father...

V/. We beseech you, therefore, help your servants.
R/. Whom you have redeemed by your precious Blood.



SIXTH MYSTERY: The Crucifixion MEDITATION
Very Rev. Luigino Santi, C.P.P.S.

In this mystery we walk unto the holy ground

of Jesus Christ crucified—the Son of God, fully divine and fully human. With a heart surrendered in perfect love, He embraced death in obedience to His Father, whispering the prayer that still echoes through the ages: “Your will be done.”

His sacrifice was not born of defeat but in mercy. Upon the Cross, Jesus offered Himself to atone for our sins and to reconcile us with the Father. In His suffering, He conquered sin and overcame death, establishing a new and eternal covenant. From His pierced side flowed mercy and hope, and the promise of everlasting life was given to us.

To live the spirituality of the Crucifixion is to enter into this mystery personally. It is a daily dying to self—a gentle but profound surrender of our personal will to the loving designs of God. In humility, we offer our sacrifices, allowing them to become channels of God’s love in the world. When we choose patience over anger, forgiveness over resentment, and surrender over pride, we unite our sufferings with Christ’s own.

Each day presents its share of frustrations, challenges, and hidden sorrows. When we respond not with bitterness but with trust, we begin to identify with the sufferings of

Christ. To harbour resentment is to close our hearts to grace; yet when we ask for the gift of forgiveness, we lay our wounds at the foot of the Cross. Surrender becomes the first step toward forgiveness and healing. ‘Grace gently loosens the grip of pain and teaches the soul how to love again.’ Gaspar del Bufalo.

As St. Pope John Paul II reflected, praying “Your will be done” is a profound “therapy for the soul,” for it invites us to listen deeply and examine our intentions in the light of God’s truth. In prayer—especially in meditation upon the Cross—we find consolation. We do not glorify suffering itself, but we give thanks for the immeasurable love that transformed suffering into redemption.

Through Jesus’ death, the gates of heaven were opened. Every barrier between us and God was torn away. The nails bound Him physically to the Cross, but it was love that held Him there. He would not abandon us to selfishness, pride, greed, or despair. His mission was fulfilled in obedience—teaching forgiveness, revealing mercy, and loving us unto death so that we might live anew.

Obedience rooted in prayer can lead to extraordinary acts of love. When we echo Christ’s surrender—“Not my will, but Yours be done”—our lives, too, become offerings. And in that surrender, we discover that the Cross is not the end, but the doorway to resurrection.

PRAYER
He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many’ (Mk 14:24). *Our Father...*

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the

criminals, one on his right and one on his left (Lk 23:33). *Our Father...*

Jesus suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood (Heb 13:12). *Our Father...*

Through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross (Col 1:20). *Our Father...*

Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ (Eph 2:13). *Our Father...*

Glory be to the Father...

V/. We beseech you, therefore, help your servants.

R/. Whom you have redeemed by your precious Blood.

SEVENTH MYSTERY: The Piercing of Jesus’ Side MEDITATION
Very Rev. Luigino Santi, C.P.P.S.

The piercing of Jesus Christ’s side while on the Cross is a profound mystery of love.

From that wounded side flowed Blood and Water—not merely signs of suffering, but a source of grace. The Church teaches in this holy outpouring the birth of the Church and the stream of the Sacraments. The Blood speaks of the redemption God so freely offers; the Water recalls Baptism and the living presence of the Holy Spirit breathing life into the Church.

This sacred piercing reveals Christ’s total surrender to the Father’s will—a love poured out without reserve. In His final breath and in the shedding of His Precious Blood, Jesus invites us into intimate communion with Him. His words echo in our hearts: to “drink of His Blood” and be spiritually nourished. This divine nourishment is given to us in the Sacraments, most especially in Holy Communion, where His self-offering becomes our sustaining grace.



Exquisite Rest

Christine Way Skinner

July is the month in which I most truly experience the exquisite experience of true rest. June is wonderful and certainly not as hectic as all those months prior, but I'm always still wrapping up something. When my children were small it was the end of school and filled with the noise and excitement and inevitable boredom that came with re-adjusting to unstructured life. Later, June was the time that I finally had time to attend to those household tasks which had remained undone for months. This ranged from putting in new light fixtures, to fixing loose screws, to cleaning out the hall closet. I always felt like I couldn't allow myself vacation till I had a few of these items checked off the to-do list. Then as soon as the first few dates of August have passed, I begin to prepare for the fall busy-ness. My mind is already working even if my body hasn't yet begun to keep up.

But July! July is my annual Sabbath. The Sabbath was a gift given to us by God to remind us that rest is as vital for our good health as food and drink and love. It is so vital, that God instructed us to observe one day of rest for every six we work. (Lev 23:3) For much of history, in the Christian world, this was communally observed. In most countries where the real religion is capitalism, it takes intentionality and commitment to prioritize a day of rest. But in Jewish Law, one even had Sabbath years. In those times, fields were left fallow so that nature itself could rest. No one could plant or harvest crops, except for the poor, who were permitted to harvest anything that grew without conscious planting. Debts were also forgiven in Sabbath years which helped to interrupt the cycle of poverty. Most of us no longer live in cultures where the Sabbath is observed but we

can still attend to the principle of honouring rest and seeing it as a command (which is really a gift) from God. July is this for me.

Mary Oliver, an American poet and a deeply mystical woman who experienced God in Creation, helps me appreciate the gift of rest. Her evocative poetry is full of the kind of wisdom that is especially appropriate in a time of quiet, rest and mindfulness such as the month of July is for me. In one of her poems, Oliver discloses that each day she sees or hears something that “more or less kills [her] with delight.” All that she sees leads her “to instruct [herself] over and over in joy and acclamation.” (Mindful). None of the things which bring such delight are extraordinary in the usual sense of the word—they are the shine of the ocean or the blades of grass. Each small particle of creation is, then, miraculous and marks occasions for us as Christian to practice the gift we received in Confirmation—wonder and awe in the presence of the Lord. For the Lord is present in the handiwork of Creation.

Oliver recognizes this as well as she invites us to ask who it was who made these glorious summer days. Indeed, who made the world? The swan? The black bear? The grasshopper? She invites us not only to remember the Creator of all this beauty but to examine it with attentiveness and awe—and also to be mindful of how fleeting it all is. Then she asks her famous question, “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” (The Summer Day).

The Blood shed for us is complete self-gift—the inexhaustible wellspring of mercy, tenderness, and saving love.

His Passion and Death also reveal the great mystery of who He is: truly human and truly divine. In laying down His life, Christ affirms the truth of His two natures. The One who suffers is fully human; the One who redeems is fully God. The cross, blood shed and water poured stands as a silent yet powerful proclamation of this sacred truth.

To live the spirituality of this seventh mystery is far more than practicing a devotion; it is to become a living reflection of that pierced side. As His side was opened, so too are we called to open our hearts. We become life for others when we pour ourselves out in compassion, attentive listening, gentle presence, and forgiveness. In a world wounded by suffering, illness, and uncertainty, we are invited to be instruments of healing and hope.

Christ's love was self-giving and unconditional. We imitate His generosity when we serve without seeking reward. One of the deepest ways we embody this mystery is through forgiveness—releasing grudges, seeking pardon, and choosing to begin again. In celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we immerse ourselves in God's mercy and receive the grace to love as we have been loved. The peace we receive is not meant to be kept, but shared.

Jesus opened His side; we open our hearts in trust. Through daily prayer—especially in the words of the *Anima Christi*—we remember that the Blood of Christ washes, strengthens, and renews us for our pilgrim journey. Cleansed and refreshed by this Precious Blood, we are sent forth to live as people of mercy, faithful witnesses to love poured out for the life of the world.

PRAYER

One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out (Jn 19:34). *Our Father...*

These things occurred so that the Scripture might be fulfilled: ‘None of his bones shall be broken.’ And again another passage of Scripture says, ‘They will look on the one whom they have pierced’ (Jn 19:36-37). *Our Father...*

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and the blood (1 Jn 5:6). *Our Father...*

Glory be to the Father...

V/. We beseech you, therefore, help your servants.

R/. Whom you have redeemed by your precious Blood.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

O God, who by the Precious Blood of your Only Begotten Son have redeemed the whole world, preserve in us the work of your mercy, so that, ever honoring the mystery of our salvation, we may merit to obtain its fruits. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. (Votive Mass of the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ)

V/. Glory to the Blood of Jesus.

R/. Now and forever. Amen.

Worrying gets one nowhere so she “gave it up” and took her “old body and went out into the morning and sang.”



I’m wrapped up in oh, so many tasks and projects. “Why do you worry about clothing,” Jesus asks me and perhaps you as well. The lilies of the field “neither toil nor spin” ... let alone worry... but they put good old King Solomon to shame with their beauty. (Mt 6:28-30).

All her contemplation of the Creator’s handiwork led Oliver to give up on worrying! She admittedly worried a lot. She worried about matters she might be able to control and matters that were way beyond her power, e.g., that the rivers flow in the right direction. In a moment of enlightenment, she realized that worrying gets one nowhere so she “gave it up” and took her “old body and went out into the morning and sang.” (I Worried).

Oliver calls me back to familiar passages of scripture—ones that I sometimes dismiss too easily because, from August to June,

Mary Oliver and July remind me that I am a human being and not a human doing. My husband also likes to remind me of this! July relieves me of all my excuses and affords me the opportunity to still myself, to contemplate the bountiful gifts of the Creator, to cultivate gratitude for the gift of my life and the lives of so many who surround me—human and otherwise. July beckons me to consider what I will do with my one wild and precious life.

Christine Way Skinner resides in Newmarket, Ontario, and is pursuing a doctoral degree at the Regis St. Michael Faculty of Theology.

A JOURNEY OF FAITH THROUGH CONTRADICTIONARY TIMES

JOHN TRIES

After teaching for 30 years, I retired in 2015. Now in my 65th year, I have welcomed time to be with family, to travel and regroup. At the time of my retirement, my widowed Mom was increasingly in need of care so that became my focus and my schedule centred on those visits. Although I missed teaching and the children, I did not miss the politics of education. And although I was always aware of political and economic issues in those 30 years, getting up early to get to work through traffic and bad weather, the day-to-day struggle of paying the mortgage and bills, fixing an old house and maintaining a farm were the focus. I never had to give politics a second thought other than voting for whom I thought best represented the best policies for all. That’s not to say I didn’t have an opinion, but even if I disagreed with any particular party’s policies, I still had confidence in most leaders in Canada and in the world at large. Retirement also gave me more time to reflect on life and its ups and downs and my faith journey. One’s journey of faith (whether religiously affiliated, agnostic query or atheistic denial) is a personal and important part of one’s life’s journey. Certain life events and economic and political influences often provide impetus for change and challenge for growth.

I was raised a good Catholic with regular family Church attendance, was an altar boy, and was involved in the church choir,

mission fundraising and charitable works. Our Lady of Peace Church in Niagara Falls, Ontario was an old shrine run by the Carmelite Order which (in retrospect) had a good social conscience and deep (sometimes progressive) theology. I was taught in schools staffed by the Notre Dame Sisters and the Holy Cross Order. Social justice issues and theological formation permeated my early life. When I was 15, I joined CPPS Mission Projects sponsored by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood because I had the desire to serve in some mission capacity—medicine, in agronomy or even as a priest.

My early Catholic faith was ‘easy’ and ‘innocent’ but a valued part of life and although we had some Protestant relatives, there were never conflicts. But when I was 16, a dear aunt left the Church for the Pentecostals and other ‘evangelical religions’. It caused a great rift in the family. Our entire family was stormed with Bible passages, and our entire Catholic faith was challenged as false. The Bible was the inspired word of God directed by the Holy Spirit and Catholics were clearly on the wrong side of that narrative. To question the Holy Spirit’s words was blasphemy. At the same time my very loving and devoutly religious paternal grandmother died. She was Third Order Carmelite and attended daily Mass. This same aunt now questioned Gramma’s salvation. It made no sense to me. Somehow (probably through school and affiliation with CPPS Mission Projects), I managed to keep my Catholic faith. Despite the ‘blasphemy warning,’ I

doubted the Holy Spirit literally inspired the Bible (there were just too many mistakes), and I had firsthand experience how religious division occurred by those claiming to know the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit by nature or definition couldn't be a divisive force. I went on to study philosophy and some theology, graduated from university and became a teacher. The Beatitudes, and the New Testament became my life focus while work, relationships, and daily survival took over the driver's seat. I tried to keep inspired by the actual words of Jesus, not someone else's interpretation.

Years later, a dear sister and her family left for a 'Calvinist Protestant' faith and then my parents also left for the same. It was another time of great turmoil in our family. At that time the Internet became a thing. Despite trying to maintain my Catholic faith in order to work in a Catholic school system, it seemed my faith was constantly under attack. How does one learn to accept that loved ones think so differently? How could they see the same facts so differently? How can a group of Evangelical Christians still not understand evolution to such a degree that they actually believe fossils were left by Satan to cause confusion and a distraction to the Word of God? How can one's notion of the 'good' and of salvation be so different? How does one grapple with questions in public discussion about the 'divinity of Jesus', whether he had actual siblings, whether he was married, and even if He existed at all? How does one reconcile with the fact that the Catholic Church (and all Christian faiths) historically as institutions, turned a blind eye to slavery, the Holocaust, the treatment of First Nations, and sexual abuse? I continued to read and research all matters of faith and once saw something the Dalai Lama wrote. He said, "A kind atheist is better than a cruel believer, and "a compassionate human is better than a judgemental worshipper." At

that point, given all the confusion in my life and faith experiences, I couldn't have agreed more. I had to look at my faith in different ways, and it endured. Much of history (and Church teachings) could be explained with basic psychology, reconciliation with science (especially understanding anthropology), and in historical and cultural contexts. Much good and positivity in the world throughout history came from faith groups. For myself, a continued focus on the words of Jesus and His teachings remained.

Having explained my background and faith journey, one might better understand the concerns that I share with so many others about the current situation in the United States. It seems like a 'real evil' has been unleashed not only on its citizens but on the entire world including: the implementation of tariffs causing a worldwide economic slowdown, minimalizing the Gazan peoples' suffering in favour of a peace tied with coveted Gazan real estate, the American/Israeli initiated war on Iran causing further worldwide economic problems, the bullying of Venezuela and Cuba, the threats to Greenland and Canadian sovereignty, the pro-Russian attitude and cruelty to Ukraine, the threats to NATO, the ridicule of anyone involved in environmental issues—the list goes on and on.

One can understand (and maybe even forgive) an unintelligent person for being part of a political movement or voting for a particular person. It could just be discontent for the way society is today. Or the fact the current cultural wars (such as the world-wide immigration crisis, personal and institutional moral corruption, minority and identification issues, etc.) have become so sensationalized and overwhelming, that the 'other' can be easily targeted as the cause of one's problems while latching on to simplistic solutions to complex issues.

The Dunning-Kruger Effect might explain it: "Cognitive bias where people with limited knowledge or competence in a domain (including politics) overestimate their knowledge and fail to recognize incompetence in themselves or their leaders. This often leads to trust in a confident idiot over an expert." Then there's that phenomenon called 'groupthink' or a "herd mentality" whereby, as Irving Janis of Yale put it, "current social dynamics and pressure can discourage independent thoughts and moral courage". As a consequence, few people speak out or else double down and defend that which at any other time would be considered inappropriate, abandoning their own rational judgement to simply follow the crowd, often leading to chaos.

Here beliefs are not seen as something we hold but who we are. A belief becomes emotionally tied to oneself and no new information or facts are accepted as that becomes a threat to one's identity. The brain will reject new information and evidence and we dig in our heels, doubling down on emotionally entrenched beliefs. Cults work the same way. Such beliefs are further entrenched by echo chambers on social media and by favoured news sources—in my opinion, these are very much to blame for the present situation. Hatred for perceived 'common enemies' and love for a 'hero and potential saviour' lead to widespread abandonment of rationality where emotion triumphs over facts and logic.

Added to all this is a loss of trust in institutions, and an anti-intellectual trend

prevalent today. Cultural trends favour social media, impersonal and relatively anonymous dialogue, half-truths, and shallow, rapid-fire 'sound bites' rather than real information showing depth of thinking. Gone is in-person dialogue where people take responsibility for their words. Conspiracies abound. I am constantly amazed at how unaware of world events many people are because they do not watch the news anymore for fear it might 'affect their mental health' or else they accuse it of being 'fake news' anyway. I wonder who promoted that idea?

I will not, however, try to understand or ever excuse an extremely rich person or corporation for their support of such matters based simply on selfishness and greed. As Marc Rowan, the founder/CEO of Apollo, said, "Traditionally a society would be judged on how they treat their most vulnerable but the new philosophy is one that judges a society on how they treat the most successful". Tax cuts and a blind-eye treatment of an unbridled capitalistic system now reign. Labour laws, environmental laws and safety laws are all being eliminated or relaxed in favour of the super rich and amoral corporations. All while the disenfranchised and poor in society, who were promised a piece of the American dream would soon be theirs, were fooled into thinking that millionaires would work for their best interests and instead of affordability and opportunity got threats or cuts to social security, health care, education and social programs.

Another group I consider equally unexcused are the Evangelical Christians who follow the 'prosperity gospel,' believing riches are a sign of God's favour. They believe the Bible is clear 'that God uses whom he chooses to his purpose'. I've heard them argue God used King David, despite having multiple wives and an adulterous affair with Bathsheba and planned death of her husband. The implications of that for modern civil society are scary. I've also heard it argued by Christians, that 'God used Hitler to chastise the Jewish people in the Holocaust, to bring them back to Him.'

I truly believe there is a severe misinterpretation of Holy Scripture among this group, and an incredible lack of understanding of history and of the sciences. They also have such a selfish and overly zealous desire for their own salvation and the end times so that they alone will be 'raptured and spared the Tribulation'. A family friend and her friend were truly 'overly exuberant' about the world's present state (namely the war in Iran) because the rapture must be close at hand. They believe that they are really 'seeing prophecy unfold' before their very eyes, and 'all the signs point that 'we are near the end'.

They sincerely believe Jesus Christ only first came as a 'suffering servant' but upon his return shall be a 'warrior king'! In the highest levels of United States government, including the Secretary of Defense, there exists this belief that Jesus will return as a conquering ruler who will execute judgment and establish a literal kingdom on earth. But why would God wait another 2,000 years to come again and conquer when it would have been more expeditious to have completed the job back then? One could rightfully

then ask, "What game is their God playing with humanity?" And are they not actually 'forcing prophecy to pass' by supporting (and voting) for their own notions of faith to occur? I just shake my head at their delusion. While not in the majority, they are clearly dangerous as they are opposed to democratic norms and dislike any form of plurality in favor of their version of a Christian nation.

Since I began this reflection, the President of the United States posted a meme of himself as Jesus and has repeatedly chastised the Pope 'not to interfere with his invasion of Iran.' Never in my life would I have thought such a combination of blasphemy, impudence and arrogance could exist in one man let alone the President of the United States! Adding insult to injury, the Vice President (a convert to Catholicism) inferred that the Pope isn't aware of theology and should stick to preaching the Gospel. Does he know the Jesus I know? Has he ever read the Gospels? Who was his catechist? It's all rather frightening.

As for other fellow Catholics, I can also somewhat understand the stance of some Catholics, although I am deeply saddened that they also made the same Faustian deal. But as many popes have said—issues of 'morality' are broader than the sexual issues that have so dominated the culture wars. Over and beyond those, the "Catholic vote" has traditionally been concerned with advocacy for the poor, the downtrodden and the marginalized in society. The huge cuts, for example, to USAID were so sad as they affect so many less-advantaged people.

One could see social media posts before the cuts discussing how some of the funds were being misused hence they were necessary. Surely, all things 'government' need constant upkeep and reform as we strive to become better members of a nation.

So how does one reconcile with and fix the division in basic understanding of the Christian faith as it affects our current politics? As so many lament, the damage might already be done. Will there at least be a return to an outward semblance of normalcy? Barbara Kellam in *Bad Leadership* states, "The process of going from bad to worse tends to be steady, not sudden or hasty. Once the system is close to being completely corrupted, it's maybe too late. By then bad leaders and new followers are so entrenched that they control the system itself." More hopefully, she also states, "That without followers, nothing can happen, including bad leadership. Leaders and their followers can bring out the best in people."

In different times, perhaps a 'sound faith system', while not attached to politics, could help influence a return to civility, justice, equality and other universally held societal ideals. Could such a return be possible with such a high proportion of the faithful 'in cahoots' with the wealthy corporate elites and their enablers in government? Clearly the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament, the traditions and teaching of the Catholic Church, and recently the teachings of Pope Leo all call for a different direction in the world. Everything at present seems to be working for the elite, for 'white privilege', and not the average citizen; a case in point being the huge amount of tax dollars to start and fund the war in Iran.

Life is hard for the average person with so many demands. Our modern society needs faith in our system of government

and its institutions. We need faith in them to protect, foster and maintain a society that is conducive to happiness and a good life for all in the world. The call to make one country or another 'great again' at the expense of so many of its own citizens' welfare and the happiness of all the world's citizens is not consistent with a basic understanding of any faith, especially the Christian faith.

Perhaps a better understanding of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, the shedding of His Blood, and the sharing of His Body in the breaking of the bread at the Communion table could change the current political trajectory. It seems to me the sacrifice of Jesus could be a healing and unifying factor in times when division is the norm. The Blood of Jesus could have a 'cleansing and healing effect'. If Jesus did come again would He who is 'the essence of pure love and self-sacrifice' be accepted as a 'warrior king'? Would He be too 'woke' or 'unmanly' or 'too caring' for refugees and immigrants and minorities? Would Jesus even be recognized or would he be killed all over again? After 2,000 years of Christian teachings, is it not clear that politics and faith can guide each other but not be linked? After so long, shouldn't all Christians be a little embarrassed that the Sacrifice on the Cross and the shedding of His Blood has not healed earthly divisions and helped create a world where justice and peace and love are the ideals? Maybe we have more time. Maybe a future election will show that there is hope for change and a renewal to keep on the correct path moving forward regardless of political or religious affiliation. One can only hope.

John Tries resides on a small hobby farm a few hours north of Toronto. He is almost finished restoring a 150-year-old brick Victorian home and enjoys welcoming his large extended family and friends. His interests include ancestry research and gardening.

OUR APOSTOLATE



C.P.P.S. MISSION PROJECTS has been deeply committed and dedicated for the past 50 years. Over this time, our projects have provided essential services—clean water, education, healthcare, and sustainable development—always with a focus on marginalized communities.

Yet the call to missionary discipleship extends beyond geographical boundaries. The urgent needs of the Church invite us to new horizons. Grounded in the spirituality of the Precious Blood, C.P.P.S. Mission Projects is now prioritizing evangelization, formation, and social development in underserved communities around the world.

Together, we remain committed to fostering new missionary endeavors that bring Christ's reconciling love to the margins of society. Living the Gospel is bringing real hope and compassion where it is needed most.

Find us at cppsmissionprojects.ngo.



PRAYER TO THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

O Precious Blood of our salvation,
we believe, hope and trust in You.

Deliver all those
that are in the hands of the infernal spirits
we beseech You.

Protect the dying
against the works of evil spirits
and welcome them into
Your eternal glory.

Have mercy on the whole world
and strengthen us to worship
and console the Sacred Heart.

We adore you,
O Precious Blood of mercy.
Amen.



Unio Sanguis Christi (USC)

The Union of the Blood of Christ is the spiritual family fostered by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, founded by St. Gaspar del Bufalo. Established by Fr. Francesco Albertini, its aim is to deepen and promote devotion to the Blood of Christ. Members commit themselves to live this spirituality daily and to witness to it through prayer, service, and works of charity.

RULE OF LIFE Members follow a program of spirituality firmly rooted in the traditions of the Catholic Church. Motivated by the love of Christ, who gave His life for us—not by mere obligation—they embrace a rule of life shaped by His self-giving love. Conversion and reconciliation are ongoing paths, nourished by an appreciation of the Word of God, strengthened by the Eucharist, and sustained within a life of prayer.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE USC Any practicing Catholic may become a member of the Union upon completing a period of formation. For information on joining the USC or establishing it in your parish, please contact Fr. Gerardo Laguartilla, C.P.P.S., at uscatlanticprovince@gmail.com.

Mass Association Since 1883, with the approval of Pope Leo XIII, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood throughout the world have offered 4,000 Masses annually for those enrolled in their Mass Association. Enrollments may be made for both the living and the deceased.

HOW TO ENROLL

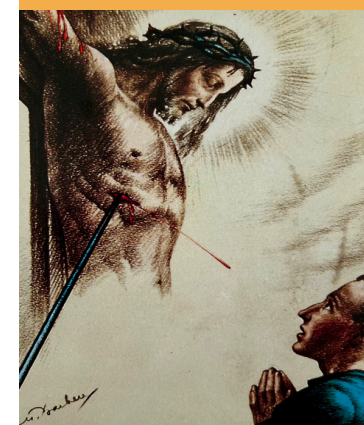
In Person or by Mail: Shrine of St. Gaspar
540 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, ON M6C 1A4

By Telephone: 416.653.4486

Online: Visit preciousbloodatlantic.org and click *Donations*.

Suggested Offering: \$25.00, plus \$4.00 postage if the Certificate is mailed.

Additionally, you can request a single Mass or make a donation to support the spirituality of the Precious Blood and the ministry of the Missionaries by completing the required fields on the website.



Vocations

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood continue St. Gaspar's Ministry of the Word by preaching renewal and conversion through missions and retreats. We bring the love of God to parishes, schools, hospitals, and prisons.

As missionaries, we serve where the Church needs us most and where the Good News has not been heard. We walk with Jesus by sharing the joys and sufferings of the people entrusted to our care.

For more information, please contact **Precious Blood Vocations** at 705.507.4288 or preciousvocations@gmail.com.



THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY

100 Pelmo Crescent
North York, ON M9N 2Y1 Canada
info@preciousbloodatlantic.ca
www.preciousbloodatlantic.org
416.656.3054