

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

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August 1, 2017

Dear Friends,

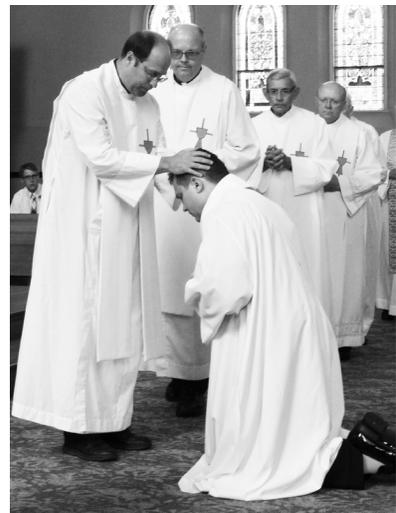
At my ordination, now 33 years ago (where does the time go?), the most profound moment for me was during the Litany of the Saints. As I lay on the sanctuary floor and the choir sang the names of the great saints, followed by “pray for us,” I had the overwhelming sense that I was putting my life in God’s hands and that the saints would be there to help me keep my promises as well as all those who I loved and were already with God.

None of us get through this life alone. I certainly have not. When I opened my eyes after the laying on of hands at my ordination, I saw that I was surrounded by my brothers in community, my fellow Missionaries of the Precious Blood. They too would be a significant part of the rest of my life, my second family. I have leaned on them at times over the years, and I think they know that they can lean on me.

One of the things that our candidates who are studying for the priesthood or to be a religious brother come to understand over the years is that the “bond of charity” that we talk about in our Community statutes is a very real thing. When we become Missionaries of the Precious Blood, we pledge to be there for each other, to support each other in good times and bad, and to be brothers to each other in a very real sense.

As you know, family life changes and evolves over the years, and the same is true of religious life. I have a completely different understanding, which I hope is more broad and deep, of what the “bond of charity” really means than when I was a young priest newly ordained. I’m in the midst of my second term as provincial director, charged with providing leadership for my C.P.P.S. brothers. When I was young, I would have seen this job as a real pain! And there are times when it is. There are a lot of meetings, phone calls, planning sessions and other obligations that you might not immediately connect with a life in ministry.

But I see it as a ministry. My whole life is about service to the Community: making plans, making sure the nuts-and-bolts are in place so that we as a Community can do the ministry we feel called to do. Those of us in leadership have to tend to the legalities and the structure of community life: to make sure our retirement is funded, so our priests and brothers don’t have to worry about that. To make sure



Fr. Tony Fortman, along with other priest-Missionaries of the Precious Blood, lays hands on the newly ordained Fr. Jim Smith.

(Please detach from letter and return with your gift in the envelope provided.)

Yes, I would like to support the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

- Enclosed is my gift of \$_____.
- I would like to pledge _____ a month a quarter
- My first pledge is enclosed. Please send me pledge forms.

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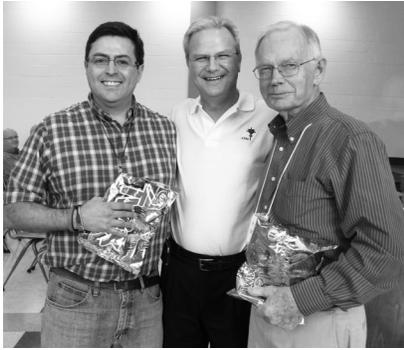
To make a donation by credit card, please use the reverse side of this form.

All gifts count toward the *Missionary Hearts* Mission and Ministry Society membership levels.

I ___ have or ___ wish to include the Missionaries in my estate planning.

there's money for the education of our candidates. To make sure we have policies in place for our members in active ministry, to encourage them to take care of themselves and live a life in right relationship with God, with the people they serve, and with each other.

It's also my job to assist our priest and brother members in their own personal journeys and in their ministry. They are my brothers and I take that very seriously. At times, they hurt, they celebrate, they're joyful, they're sad, just like me.



Fr. Larry Hemmelgarn (center) recognizing C.P.P.S. religious brothers, including Brs. Juan Acuña and Jerry Schulte, during the 2017 provincial assembly.

Just as in our families, there are frustrations. That's life. That's reality. None of us are perfect. But when I see one of my Precious Blood brothers happy in his life and in his ministry, doing good work for the people of God and for our Community, that makes me happy—as happy as I am when I'm with my own brother, his kids and grandkids. It's always good to see someone who is living out his call, who is happy where God has placed him. And to feel like you've been a part of that, that you've helped him along the way, is incredibly rewarding.

Community life is not that different from family life. The Missionaries you know are part of a family of people who believe in the power of the Precious Blood of Jesus to save that world, and they are putting that belief into action in many ways.

I hope that you will help our Precious Blood family as we are committed to helping your family. Our Missionaries are there for the people of God when they are hurting, when they are joyful, and all the times in between. Will you consider a donation toward the operating expenses of our Congregation? Your donation will help with those everyday expenses that help us tend to our priests and brothers and their needs. Your help gives us the freedom to reach out to the people who need us. Our donors reinforce the mission that we receive from God, as together we work to build the Kingdom.

For more than 200 years, our Precious Blood priests and brothers have been serving the people of God. They also serve each other, becoming brothers to each other. May we all feel like we're loved and cherished brothers and sisters in the family of God. May we all look out for each other along the way, so that no one feels alone or forgotten. And may God say to us, at the end of our journey, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Welcome home!"

Sincerely in the Blood of Christ,

V. Rev. Larry J. Hemmelgarn, C.P.P.S.
Provincial Director

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