



MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

CINCINNATI PROVINCE
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Summer 2018

Dear Friends,

We all move through the summer in different ways. Some of us travel and explore new landscapes and new ideas. Maybe you enjoy the more relaxed tempo of summer days, with the festivals and family gatherings that come with the season. If you're a farmer or a gardener, you go through the summer keeping one eye on the sky, hoping for just the right amount of rain.

If you're a parent, teacher, student or are otherwise involved in education, you know very well that summer is finite and that the days are ticking down to the start of a new school year.

I was a student for a lot of years, first as I was growing up in Greenwood, Ind., near Indianapolis. Then I was an undergrad at Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind., where I first met the Missionaries of the Precious Blood (C.P.P.S.). My education continued during my years of formation with the Missionaries. I liked and admired the C.P.P.S. members I met at the college, and felt at home with them—so much so that as I was discerning my vocation, I discovered that maybe I was meant to be a Missionary too.

So, after I graduated from SJC, I was accepted into the Missionaries' initial formation program, which at the time was located in the rectory of Precious Blood Parish in Dayton, Ohio. I moved there in August 1998.

I wasn't the only new person in the house. Also making his home there was Br. Jerry Schulte, C.P.P.S., who had just been appointed as director of initial formation, taking the place of Br. Bernie Barga, C.P.P.S. Among the others in the house were Brian Boyle (now Br. Brian Boyle, C.P.P.S.); our director of vocation ministry, Fr. Dennis Chriszt, C.P.P.S.; and the parish pastor, Fr. Mark Hoying, C.P.P.S.

We had to get used to living together. Because I came there straight from college, it wasn't a novelty for me to be living in a house with people I'd just met—but more than that, we were trying to create a community. That was a new experience for me: praying together on a regular basis, having our meals together, being a part of each other's lives.

I found I enjoyed it. The rhythm that develops in a Community house is a nourishing experience. You get to know people at a different level and appreciate their personalities. I'd met them all before, but it's a lot different when you live with people and see them first thing in the morning.



Fr. Jeffrey Kirch,
newly elected
provincial director.

(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 \$_____.

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We will send you pledge forms and envelopes.

Please make your check payable to: **Society of the Precious Blood**

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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.

As the house director, Br. Jerry was the glue that held us together. He's a very practical man, but he never got lost in the details. Although he was coordinating much of our daily life, it was clear that it was OUR house and it wasn't HIS house. By his example, he taught about ministry inside the house and outside the house.



Br. Jerry Schulte in the kitchen at St. John the Baptist Parish in Glandorf, Ohio, where he is now in ministry.

In the house, we participated in a rich variety of prayers. There was a small chapel in the rectory, and we celebrated morning Mass and had Evening Prayer right after dinner. It was Br. Jerry's ministry to introduce us to different kinds of prayer styles and help us learn how to lead prayer when it was our turn. Those daily opportunities to pray together provided a firm foundation for our spiritual growth.

I learned a lot in that house. Those lessons stayed with me, and I have carried them to every Community house where I've lived in the years since.

In May, my brothers in the C.P.P.S. asked me to serve as provincial director, and I accepted. Now the question of how best to live out our Community life, how to work and pray together in a way that strengthens us for our ministries to the outside world, are central to my own ministry.

What we hope you see in a Precious Blood parish or ministry site is a Missionary who has been formed and is ready for the task at hand. But you may not see that he's supported by a religious community that has educated him, encourages him, and gives him a home. Being part of a religious community strengthens us as Missionaries.

That religious community, just like a family, has needs: shelter, nourishment, education and care. We take care of each other like brothers because Christ has made us brothers. Behind every Missionary are hundreds of other Missionaries, each with his own calling to help God's people.

That religious community also has daily needs. We hope that you will consider a donation toward the operating expenses of our Congregation. By helping us create a Community life, you give our Missionaries the ability to go out into the world and reach out to others. Please consider a contribution that will help keep the lights on in our Community houses. Will you help us with our daily needs?

Throughout our lives, we all move from home to home to home. Each home—and each person in it—has something to teach us. May God bless you with good mentors, friends and family members who make your life richer and your faith stronger. And God bless you for your prayerful support of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Sincerely in the Blood of Christ,

V. Rev. Jeffrey S. Kirch, C.P.P.S.

V. Rev. Jeffrey S. Kirch, C.P.P.S.
Provincial Director

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