

FALL 2016

C P P S T O D A Y

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD



Transmitters of Grace

Campus Ministers
Relay God's Invitation

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



Fr. Vince Wirtner talks with a student on Saint Joseph's campus.

Page 2: Spiritual Support to Students

Our Missionaries are on hand at our two colleges to help students with their struggles. *Between the Lines* by Fr. Larry Hemmelgarn, C.PP.S., provincial director of the Cincinnati Province.

Page 3: Transmitters of Grace

College students are on their way, but not quite fully formed. It's up to campus ministers to help show them the way.

Page 10: A Divinely Inspired Choice

Discerning a vocation to life as a priest, brother or sister affects the whole family—but goes beyond the family. *Call and Answer* by Fr. Steve Dos Santos, director of vocation ministry.

Page 11: Cogito Ergo Sum

Students studying for the priesthood must take 30 hours of philosophy. But nobody says it is going to be easy.

Page 15: Chapter and Verse

News about C.PP.S. people and places.

Page 17: A Little Notebook

We have to have a way to capture all that divine inspiration on Sunday. *At Our House* by Jean Giesige, editor of *C.PP.S. Today*.



Greg Evers has to get along with history's great thinkers.

C.PP.S. is an abbreviation of the Latin name of the Congregation, Congregatio Pretiosissimi Sanguinis, Congregation of the Most Precious Blood.

FALL 2016

C.PP.S. Today is published by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, (Society of the Precious Blood), Cincinnati Province, 431 E. Second St., Dayton, OH 45402 937-228-9263 mission@cpps-preciousblood.org cpps-preciousblood.org
On Facebook, Missionaries of the Precious Blood Cincinnati Province
On Twitter, @cppscincinnati

Spiritual Support to Students

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood sponsor two colleges, Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind., and Calumet College of St. Joseph in Whiting, Ind. We're very proud of the work that's done at these schools, not only by our C.P.P.S. priests and brothers, but by the faculty and staff who support and spread the word about our mission.

At our colleges, students get an excellent education, but they're also offered spiritual support from the priests and brothers who minister there. Not all of these students come from traditional Catholic homes—in fact, the majority of them are not even Catholic—and campus ministry efforts reach out to all.

Transitioning into life on campus can be a big challenge. We believe it's important to have adults in place who can serve as mentors and spiritual guides for our students. Opportunities for prayer, worship and the Eucharist can help keep them grounded in their faith, but it's also crucial that people are on hand just to listen when times get tough, and to offer a nudge in the right direction.

And times can get tough! Also in this issue, we hear about Greg Evers, one of our C.P.P.S. candidates in initial formation, and his struggles to wrap his mind around philosophy, which became his major at St. Xavier University in Chicago.

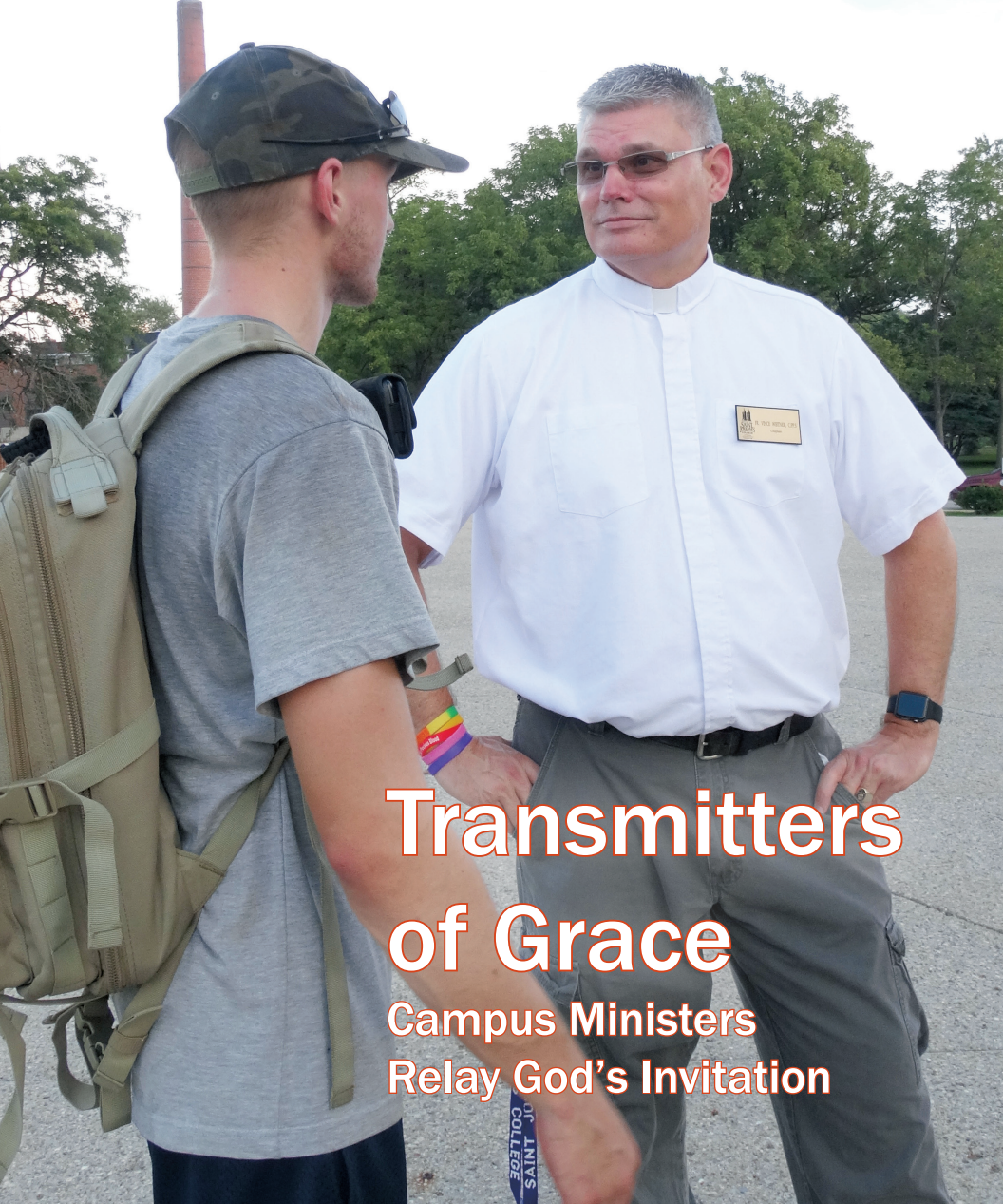
I can relate to Greg's story. When I arrived at Saint Joseph's College as a freshman, I had earned a respectable GPA from Brunnerdale, our former high school seminary. So I was placed in an advanced philosophy class—and almost flunked out. I really struggled with that class. The only thing that saved me was that the instructor, the late Fr. Ambrose Heiman, C.P.P.S., fell and broke his hip—sorry, Fr. Ambrose. The college sent in a substitute instructor, and he didn't feel comfortable flunking anyone, so I squeaked by.

I tell young people that at every level of education, the amount of required reading and writing doubles. I had to do twice as much in college as I did in high school, and the amount doubled again once I got to grad school. And that's probably a conservative estimate.

College students can be under a lot of pressure. I'm glad that the Missionaries at our two colleges are there to lend a hand, and are making a difference in the lives of young people who will soon be expected to step into leadership roles in our world. May God bless them all, teachers and students alike!

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





Transmitters of Grace

Campus Ministers
Relay God's Invitation

Fr. Vince Wirtner, C.P.P.S., talks with a student on the Saint Joseph's College campus.

Young adults go off to college to learn about history, accounting, literature, medicine. But they also need to learn more about themselves—and their faith.

It was a Tuesday night after dinner at Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind., and Fr. Vince Wirtner, C.P.P.S., was walking around campus. Well, it was after dinner for most people in Rensselaer, perhaps, but on a college campus, time is much more elastic so students were still coming and going from Halleck Hall, which holds SJC's cafeteria.

Fr. Vince ran into Joe, a senior who is studying accounting. After graduation, Joe intends to enter the Marines. They had a quick conversation about his plans and his progress toward his goal. "That's great!" Fr. Vince told him. "I'll see you on Sunday." Joe usually serves at the 11 a.m. Mass on campus.

And that, in a way, is campus ministry. Or a big part of it. It's presiding at Mass and organizing retreats and community service events and leading prayer services and hearing confessions. But a lot of campus ministry, as Fr. Vince is coming to understand during his first fall on campus, is just walking around.

"It's my role to say to the students, 'Tell me what's going on in your life.' To stop and listen when someone says, 'Hey, Father, can I talk to you for a minute?'" he said. "I absolutely love that. Those interactions with young people are the best part of my day. Those conversations mean everything."

It's just that simple, but it's also a lot more complicated. On campus at both of the colleges that they sponsor, Saint Joseph's (SJC) and Calumet College of St. Joseph, in Whiting, Ind., the Missionaries of the Precious Blood minister to increasingly diverse groups of students who are likely not to have grown up in traditional Catholic homes. The Missionaries are rethinking what it means to be a Catholic college and how they can best serve all students, some who are Catholic and some who are not. C.P.P.S. priests and brothers in higher education ministry are continually trying to figure out the best way to be faithful.

Love Them All

"We hope that by this time in their lives, the students have a faith that's been planted and nurtured by their parents," Fr. Vince said. "We want to help them grow in their faith. But we also recognize that as young adults, they may be questioning and weighing everything that their parents have taught them. They may be asking, 'Who am I as a Christian, as a Catholic?' And we want to help them with all those questions."

It's easier with some than with others. There are students at SJC who are ready and eager to interact. The campus

traditionally has long offered ministry opportunities to its students, under the leadership of Br. Tim Hemm, C.P.P.S., an avid outdoorsman who is very good at hooking students on the idea of living out their faith, and reeling them in to get involved with spiritual pursuits while on campus. SJC students take the lead with Kairos retreats, which offer participants a weekend away from college life, a time to pray and worship and talk about their faith apart from the normal college pressures of reading, writing and studying to keep up in their classes.

Many also take part in Christian service projects such as a campus-wide Christmas party where underprivileged children and their family members are invited for a night of gifts and feasting.

And students turn to the Saint Joseph's twin-spired chapel for Mass and other sacraments.

Just as many, though, go happily about their time on campus without making their faith life a priority. It's up to campus ministers to make all feel valued and welcome on a Catholic campus.

"Our job is to love them all, no matter what," said Fr. Vince. "If you choose to come to chapel for Mass on Sunday, we're going to try to make that experience as good as possible. If you're in

chapel only occasionally, we want you to feel like you're coming home. We say to those students, 'Come to the chapel for some quiet time. You're welcome in this holy place.'"

Strengthening the Mission

There was a time when the Missionaries were much more visible on the SJC campus, but as with most Catholic colleges, priest and brother sightings are rarer than they once were. That's why it's so important, said SJC President Robert Pastoor, to make the college's mission clearer than ever, to everybody.

"I've made it known since I got here that it is one of my priorities to strengthen the mission of this institution," said Pastoor, who was inaugurated as SJC's 18th president in October 2015.

Pastoor says he keeps the mission at the forefront as the college works to refine and amplify it. He is convinced that the college must be transformational. That means that their days on campus will transform the SJC students into their best possible selves, in accordance with God's plan for them.

Those are all just words until put into action, so he's quick to light the fire under students, faculty and staff. This year's



SJC President Robert Pastoor in the college cafeteria, where he has lunch every day. *(Photo by Jean Giesige)*

Forty percent of our students are Catholic, and 60 percent are not. It presents two challenges: how do you invite students in the first place, and then how do you invite someone who is not Catholic into the mission of a Catholic college?

—SJC President Dr. Robert Pastoor

new and returning students participated in a day of service in and around the town Rensselaer, during fall semester's orientation, even though the skies opened and one crew from the college scrambled to plant trees in the pouring rain. (Fr. Vince was on hand to bless the tree.) Pastoor has also initiated a Mass of the Holy Spirit on campus, meant to

inspire the college family at the beginning of the school year.

"Things like that are an outward sign of our inner life of the Spirit," he said. "At that Mass, we invited the Holy Spirit to move us all forward in learning and in our lives. We had over 400 students attend, the faculty in their full academic regalia, and Fr. Larry Hemmelgarn

(the provincial director of the Missionaries' Cincinnati Province) was the presider. It was the first time the college community had really gathered to start the academic year with a Mass of the Holy Spirit, a ritual that dates back to the 1200's."

More than 400 students is a respectable portion of the student body at SJC (enrollment: 1,000), and it was a real accomplishment to get so many to attend Mass. As always, it's a challenge to appeal to everybody.

"Forty percent of our students are Catholic, and 60 percent are not," Pastoor said. "It presents two challenges: how do you invite students in the first place, and then how do you invite someone who is not Catholic into the mission of a Catholic college? We have to define it as something more than Mass attendance."

Pastoor has been busily lining up allies in this effort. He wants

to make sure everyone from faculty to staff to the RA's in the residence halls can support the mission of a Catholic college.

"If an RA is trying to enforce our rules, which are consistent with Catholic teaching, we want them to be able to explain all that, as opposed to just saying no," he said. "Unfortunately, a lot of students see the Church as a church of no—you can't do this, and you can't do that—so we can't miss the chance to have a dialogue about all the positive ideas that the Church has to offer."

He is even attempting to relate the mission from the highest point on campus; this fall, for the first time in years, the SJC chapel features fully-functioning bells that toll the hours from those twin spires. The sound of the repaired and restored bells, Pastoor hopes, will draw students' thoughts to a higher plane.

Missionaries in Ministry at SJC:

Fr. Phil Gilbert, C.PP.S.
Br. Tim Hemm, C.PP.S.
Fr. Tim McFarland, C.PP.S.
Br. Rob Reuter, C.PP.S.
Fr. Bill Stang, C.PP.S.
Fr. Vince Wirtner, C.PP.S.

Transmitters of Grace

Those bells drew the attention of Tony Butler and his five-year-old son, Owen, who were out in their yard not far from campus when they first heard the bells ringing last summer. The sound of the bells stopped both father and son in their tracks. "I said, 'Owen, can you hear the bells?'" Tony Butler said. "I grew up near my parish church, so hearing



Br. Tim Hemm, C.P.P.S., and Fr. Vince Wirtner, C.P.P.S., talk with an SJC student at a soccer game.

(Photo by Jean Giesige)

church bells has always meant a lot to me.”

Butler was hired last year to lead campus ministry efforts, the first lay person to serve in that role. It’s hoped that with him organizing events and attending to the details of the work, the Missionaries will have more time for sacramental duties. Like Pastoor, he feels an urgency in defining the mission and then passing it along in a contagious way to the rest of campus.

Butler said that when he came to SJC, he wasn’t sure at first that he had a good grasp of Precious Blood spirituality as practiced by the C.P.P.S. priests and brothers. But, he said, “they seem happy and well respected,” so he was ready to give it a try.

He’s thought about it a lot, he said, and he thinks it is centered in the cup, the cup of sacrifice, the cup of peace and reconciliation, the cup of Christ’s Precious Blood. “I’m thinking about the cup: how we’re called to be the recipients of God’s grace, but we’ve also got to pour it out. We are called to be the transmitters of grace,” he said.

In God’s Time

There’s a traditional Catholic prayer to guardian angels that asks one’s angel to “light and guard, to rule and guide.” That’s a little like the job description of a campus minister, although Fr. Vince’s marching orders were even more joyful. “When I came

to campus, I wasn't sure what was expected of me," he said. "Then they told me, 'We want you to be yourself and have fun. You know how to do this.'"

On the night of his Tuesday stroll, he ended up at the soccer field, where the SJC men were taking on the Bethel College Pilots. Students filled the bleachers and a faithful family group or two, who had traveled to the game in their RVs, were watching the game in lawn chairs under the RV awnings. Fr. Vince stood under the pine trees near the sidelines. A student named Rick called out to him.

Rick was planning to use Fr. Vince as his subject for an assignment in an exercise physiology course. They talked for a while, trying to come up with a time that would work on Tuesdays, which was the day Rick would have preferred. It was hard because Fr. Vince's Tuesdays are often jammed up with meetings, always a part of life for any working person on a college campus. Rick told Fr. Vince that he was writing up a set

of exercise goals for him.

"Anything to help you get an A," Fr. Vince said.

Whether Rick will really get an A is not exactly up to Fr. Vince. And that too is the life of a campus minister. Or, rather, nothing is up to him, and everything is up to him.

As with everything else on campus, Pastoor observed, time will tell whether their efforts bear fruit. All in God's time. "If the seeds have been planted in their earlier years, we are here to nourish them and allow them to grow—but we also know that they (the students) will probably leave here before the growing season is over," Pastoor said. "We don't necessarily see the final product.

"Our role in higher education is nearly as important as the parents' role. Parents have had them for 18 years and now they are handing them over to us. We have them at a stage of development that is inquisitive, that is exploratory, a stage where they are really laying the foundation for their future. Where that future takes them is up to them and up to God. As we say in a prayer attributed to Oscar Romero, we know that there are limitations to what we can do, and we are liberated to know that. We know that we are not the master, we are workers."



*Coming in the Winter
2017 issue of C.PP.S.
Today: Faith in
Action at Calumet
College of St. Joseph.*

A Divinely Inspired Choice

About three weeks after I had told my family of my plans to enter formation with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, I was helping my father to run some errands, driving him around in his car. As we sat at a stop light, I heard a deep sigh from the passenger seat and these heartfelt words: "I guess I'll never have a grandson." My initial reaction was to remind him that this was about something bigger than our family, but I held my tongue and let his words seep in. There it was. My father's deep feelings about my choice to enter formation. There is no doubt but that he loved his two granddaughters, but he was a man of his generation and wanted a grandson to carry on the family name. Even though I am the youngest of nine children, my decision meant that the family name would likely come to an end.

My father expressed a real challenge presented to families when a son or daughter hears and responds to God's call to service. It is a challenge that is heightened by the smaller size of contemporary families. The desire for grandchildren is, of course, normal and good. Children are a blessing from God and a source of joy, not just for their family but for the whole Church. I can only imagine what it is like to realize that you will not have grandchildren because your son or daughter has decided to enter religious life.

At the same time, however, it's helpful to remember what it is that we believe about the vocational call. In talking to young people, I remind them that their vocation isn't simply a choice or decision that they have to make in life. Rather their vocation is divinely inspired by God and given to them from the first moment of their existence, even before their baptism. To discover and live one's vocation is the surest path to holiness and our greatest joy. For most, that path lies in marriage and the raising of a family, for some others that path leads to the seminary or the convent.

My decision to become a Missionary of the Precious Blood and a priest affected my father's desire for a grandson. We talked about it, and I recognized his sadness. I also asked him to see that my decision was rooted in the belief that this was my best path in life. As happy and as holy as I might have become as a husband and father, it would never compare to the joy and holiness I sought in following God's call to be a priest and a Missionary of the Precious Blood. I don't know that it ever fully soothed his loss, but he accepted it. And every day I am thankful for the many blessings of my vocation.

**Call and Answer
by Fr. Steve Dos
Santos, C.P.P.S.**





At first, the study of philosophy just about killed a C.P.P.S. candidate, but he stuck with it and learned to love the pursuit of wisdom.

St. Thomas Aquinas, philosopher and doctor of the Church, was born in the 13th century to Landolph, the Count of Aquino, and Theodora, Countess of Teano. Before Thomas was born, a holy hermit said to his mother, "He will enter the Order of Friars Preachers (the Dominicans), and so great will be his learning and sanctity that in his day no one will be found to equal him."

Things were a little different for Greg Evers when he was growing up on his family's farm

in Maria Stein, Ohio. "I thought about being a policeman," he said.

But now their two lives have intersected, St. Thomas Aquinas and the kid from Maria Stein. Like thousands of college students before him, Greg ran smack-dab into the great philosophers of the world in his college career. Unlike many others, he decided to make friends with them.

Greg, who is 24 and in initial formation with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, is

completing his senior year at St. Xavier University in Chicago. Working toward a philosophy degree was something he never dreamed of when he was back in high school, playing trombone in the marching band and having fun with his friends.

But philosophy loomed in his path as he entered religious formation. And so he had to get philosophical. "After the first day of classes, I remember thinking, 'I have no idea what I've gotten myself into,'" he said. "But I also knew that usually, people don't drop out of the seminary because of academics, so I knew I could probably find a way through it."

The Study of Wisdom

Philosophy has been defined as the study of wisdom, and there are people who study it their entire lives without ever feeling that they have attained a full understanding of it. Socrates himself said he was a "lover of wisdom," not claiming that he was truly wise.

Students entering formation for the priesthood are required to complete 30 hours of philosophy before moving on to higher studies in theology. "With that many hours, it might as well be your major," said Greg, who studied agricultural science at Wright State University's Lake Campus in Celina, Ohio, before

transferring to St. Xavier.

"In philosophy, you're pursuing the truth. At least that's how I would put it," Greg said. "It's helped me in my ability to think critically about issues. It's helped me to see things from other perspectives as well. It's helped open my mind up about a lot of things."

But it wasn't so easy at first. He said he was coached in his studies by his then-housemate in the C.P.P.S. House of Initial Formation, Corey Knapke of St. Henry, Ohio, who is now in formation with the Dominicans.

"I was lucky to have someone living in the house who had a good grasp of philosophy and could help me get my feet on the ground," Greg said. "Cory told me that you have to be patient and give yourself time to digest it. He told me, 'Be patient with yourself; you will catch on.' And that was true, big time. That doesn't mean that there weren't times when I'd have to re-read the material two or three times."

He's had to refine his thinking through the many papers that he's written at St. Xavier. "It hasn't been too bad because the professors are there to guide us. They've done a good job of explaining the different concepts and ideas," he said. "St. Xavier is a smaller school, and you tend to have the same professors in many of your

**Philosophy
is “one of the
hardest things
I’ve ever done.
But it’s been
a good
challenge.”**

**—Greg Evers on
his family’s farm**



courses. You become familiar with their teaching style, and they become familiar with you. They really challenge you to achieve.”

The Power of Synderesis

Last spring, Greg was hard at work on the big daddy of papers, his senior thesis on St. Thomas Aquinas. “The course was on the philosophy of human nature, with a focus on free will,” he said. Philosophers differ on whether humans really have free will, or whether there are conditions beyond our control, including factors of which we are barely aware, that determine how we think and feel.

“Thomas Aquinas believed that people had the power of synderesis and that this power

helped people know what is good and what is not good. That made me think, ‘If we have this power, why don’t people just automatically ascend to what is right or good? Why does evil exist?’” he said.

That’s one of life’s big questions, and it takes a philosopher to handle it. “Thomas Aquinas said that as you do good or bad deeds, you develop virtues or vices. If you become habituated in vice, you become less able to know what is good. Whereas the road to virtue takes time; in many ways it is a harder, more challenging path,” he said. “That rang true to me.”

So how did he do with his thesis? “I got an A,” he said.

Greg will graduate from St. Xavier in December with a degree

in philosophy. "This is probably one of the hardest things I've ever done," he said. "But it's been a good challenge. I feel a sense of accomplishment and a sense of pride that I've been able to read and understand the concepts that great thinkers have developed over the course of their lives."

On a more practical note, he's had to learn "how to budget my time. I still have a tendency to push things off, but I don't procrastinate as much as I

used to."

Those are all useful things, and they will remain useful in the life of a priest. "One of the lessons I learned in philosophy was to slow down to really understand what's going on," he said. "Also, it taught me to take into consideration more than one point of view. There are always multiple sides to every story. And that will be helpful no matter where life takes me."



5K RUN

IN SUPPORT OF VOCATIONS



Saturday, November 12, 2016
St. Charles Center, Carthage, Ohio

Run or walk through this fun family event that supports religious vocations. Sponsored by K of C 1991, Coldwater, OH
Deadline to register:

October 26 (with shirt) **November 5** (without a shirt).

Registration fee is \$12 without shirt; \$27 with a long-sleeved running tech shirt

Race day registration: 8:30–9:40 a.m.

Race begins at 10 a.m. sharp.

For an entry form, go to cpps-preciousblood.org



World Youth Day: Fr. Tony Fortman, C.P.P.S., led a group of 22 youth and adults from his parish, St. John the Baptist in Glandorf, Ohio, to World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland, last summer. Fr. Vince Wirtner, C.P.P.S., was also in attendance.

Along with young people and adults from around the world, the group from Glandorf participated in daily Mass, prayer and catechesis. They also saw Pope Francis twice. They visited Wadowice, the hometown of St. John Paul II, and the former Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz, where St. Maximillian Kolbe was martyred. Another side trip took them into a Polish salt mine 430 feet below the earth's surface. Polish miners built a chapel in the mine that could hold the Glandorf

parish church, Fr. Fortman said.

Even better than the sites they saw was the faith that was built on the trip, he said.

"My favorite part of the trip was the opportunity for us all to be together," he said. "I told the group many times, 'This is not a vacation, this is a pilgrimage. It is a deliberate encounter with God, through prayer and our encounters with each other.' We got to see God in each other."

"We spent 12 days with each other, all day long. God tested us to be patient and understanding and forgiving. It wasn't always comfortable. We stayed in university dorm rooms where there were a dozen or so people to one shower and we had to share. There were an extra 1.5 million people in Krakow that week, which meant you couldn't always eat when you wanted to eat because of the long lines. Surrounded by all those people, you were definitely out of your comfort zone. And they understood that."

The Glandorf group spent over two years raising funds for the trip, said Diane Utrup, the parish's coordinator of religious education. "There were 11 adults and 11 youth on the trip, so we all took turns



Youth from Glandorf meet young Catholics from Korea at World Youth Day in Krakow.

watching out for each other,” she said. “I loved seeing the faith on display at World Youth Day. It rejuvenated me and my belief that the Catholic faith is alive and well all over the world. It was inspiring to see all the youth there. Everyone was so friendly, talking with each other. It was great to see it. We adults can learn a lot from the youth.

“My advice to anyone would be if you have any thoughts of going or sending you child, don’t question it: do it. We can always come up with excuses, reasons to talk ourselves out of it. But it’s a life-changing experience for most of these kids.”

In Memoriam: Br. Jude Brown, C.P.P.S., 88, died on August 2, 2016, in the infirmary at St. Charles Center, Carthage, Ohio.

He was born Richard E. Brown on March 14, 1928, in Bradford, Ohio, to Arden and Florence (Petitjean) Brown. He entered the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in 1951 and was professed a religious brother on July 1, 1953.

After his profession, Br. Jude was assigned to work on the Community’s farm in Burkettsville, Ohio. In 1965, he was appointed to the business office of St. Charles Center (then a seminary) in Carthage, Ohio. There he spent nearly 50 years in ministry and was instrumental in the administration of the facility. He maintained a prodigious garden that helped feed the people of St. Charles.

In addition to his other duties, Br. Jude managed the Congregation’s pension fund for many years, and helped many of its priests and brothers with their tax forms and estates. He helped oversee the sale of the Community’s farm and minor seminary, Brunnerdale, near Canton, Ohio. For many years, he also volunteered during the summer pilgrimage season at the Sorrowful Mother Shrine in Bellevue, Ohio.

Br. Jude gave all that he had to his God and his religious community, said his longtime friend, Br. Nicholas Renner, C.P.P.S. “He always said, ‘God gave me a good mind, and I’m going to use it.’ Mostly, he was self-taught,” Br. Nick said. “He was always good with numbers. He was the business manager of St. Charles for over 25 years; he ran the place, and ran it efficiently. He got the bills paid and kept things moving. And he was a man of faith—he never missed Mass.”

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on August 5 at St. Charles Center. Burial followed in the Community cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Cincinnati Province.



Br. Jude



A Little Notebook

Usually, as I'm walking out the door for Sunday Mass, I grab a little notebook and a pen and stick them in my pocket. Those two little objects free up my mind and spirit in a way that nothing else could.

I was given permission to do this years ago, when author and speaker Matthew Kelly gave a mission at our parish. He said that great thoughts and ideas can come to us during the Mass, and it's okay to bring along a notebook to write them down. Otherwise, he said, you'll drive yourself crazy trying to remember your great thoughts and you won't be able to concentrate on the rest of the liturgy.

I won't deny that once in a while what I am writing down includes "milk, eggs, bread . . ." But sometimes when I sit in the pew, fully engaged in the liturgy, my mind opens up and my normally narrowly constricted vision spreads out into the universe, into God's territory. That's when a person really needs a notebook.

Our everyday world is so noisy, so cluttered. The television is blaring. Chores pile up. The work crew down the street is playing country music at a decibel level normally reserved for Manuel Noriega. Days march along, sometimes without a moment of true peace.

Out of all that, we step into a place of enforced quiet to hear the word of God. And sometimes, like a mad scientist with good intentions, the Holy Spirit can electrify our brains and douse us with inspiration. For me, that sometimes means the amplification of a new phrase in a section of Scripture that I've heard a hundred times before. Or it might mean I'm presented with a possible solution to a thorny problem. Or it might come in the form of marching orders, as God places before me the faces of people who need a hand. I scribble their names and later add them to my to-do list for the week.

I hope that all of this is not distracting to my fellow parishioners, but of course it is. Sometimes I lay the notebook on the pew, thinking, well, that's that, now I can join in the singing like a normal person. And just then the Holy Spirit gives me another jolt of increased amperage. So I pick up the notebook again and resume scribbling. It must look a little unhinged.

So I rely on the mercy of the people around me. I hope that they will ignore my eccentricities, and I pledge to ignore their tickling cough or toddler kicking the kneeler or whatever. We all come to God with our foibles and weaknesses, our bad habits and our nearsightedness, and we plug into the current of God. It flows through us for an hour, and we leave the church, transformed.



**At Our House
by Jean Giesige**



Join in the Missionaries' mission through the



Missionary Hearts

MISSION AND MINISTRY SOCIETY

The Society provides support to the Missionaries through various annual giving levels. Annual gifts are used to educate and train new priests and brothers; support our retired members; and for our foreign missions. Society members enjoy two events each year at St. Charles Center.

Visit cpps-preciousblood.org and click on donate to learn more.

*Let
us
hear
from
you*

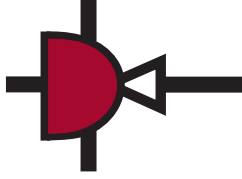
Send address changes,
comments, suggestions
or requests for
more information to:

**Jean Giesige, editor,
C.P.P.S. Today, 431 E. Second St.,
Dayton, OH 45402-1764
mission@cpps-preciousblood.org**

*Please include your name and contact
information so that we can respond to
your correspondence.*

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD
431 E. Second St.
Dayton, OH 45402

Return Service Requested



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Celina, Ohio
Permit No. 2