

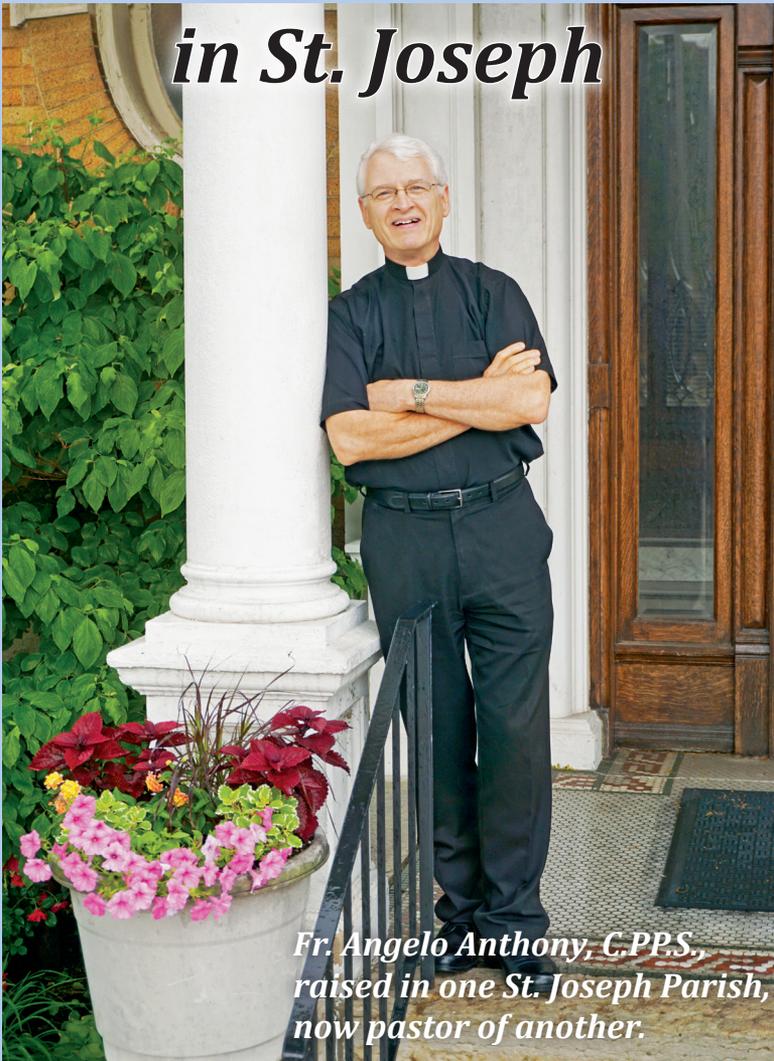
SUMMER 2021

C P P S T O D A Y

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

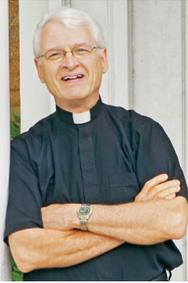
FINDING A TREASURE

in St. Joseph



*Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S.,
raised in one St. Joseph Parish,
now pastor of another.*

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



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St. Joseph
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Dayton.**

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**Bishop Joseph
Charron, C.P.P.S.**

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

SUMMER 2021

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What's in a Name?

What does your name mean to you? Maybe it has special significance to your family, or maybe your parents chose it for you just because they liked the sound of it, or they were running out of names. It has been interesting for us as a religious congregation to learn more this year about our Missionaries who are named Joseph, as we ask them to tell their stories in this Year of St. Joseph.

Even for those of us not named Joseph, the name often has special significance. For me, it is the name of my alma mater, Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind. Many of us, perhaps like you, feel a connection to St. Joseph because of the kind of person he was, and the central role he plays in the life of Jesus, stories we've heard all our lives. Or maybe you grew up in St. Joseph Parish—after all, it's the most popular name for parish churches in all the world.

For at least one of us, Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S., St. Joseph is a special treasure. Fr. Angelo writes in this issue about his childhood in one St. Joseph Parish, in Wapakoneta, Ohio, and his ministry at another, St. Joseph in Downtown Dayton. He has been living in the shadow of St. Joseph, one way or another, for most of his life.

You will read more reflections in this issue by other Joseph's in our Congregation. Each of them views the life of the saint from a unique angle, and each of them finds something in St. Joseph to admire and emulate.

St. Joseph set aside his own priorities and preferences to serve the greater good. Most of us strive to do that in our lives as Christians. We look to St. Joseph and his quietly heroic life, and we may say, "I could never follow God's will so well or so constantly!" But I meet a lot of people who do their best to listen to God's message and follow God's commandments. They walk in the footsteps of Jesus and inspire others, though they may live lives that are quite ordinary. Like Joseph, they are common folks who are called on to reach farther than what they may have thought was possible. They struggle through all sorts of sorrows and hardship. They never lose their desire to stay close to God, and they never stop looking for ways to smooth the path for others. And the world is a much better place because of it.

So may we, like Joseph, take on the task that God sets before us and do it faithfully and well. Like St. Joseph, may we finish what we start and keep all of our promises to God and to each other.

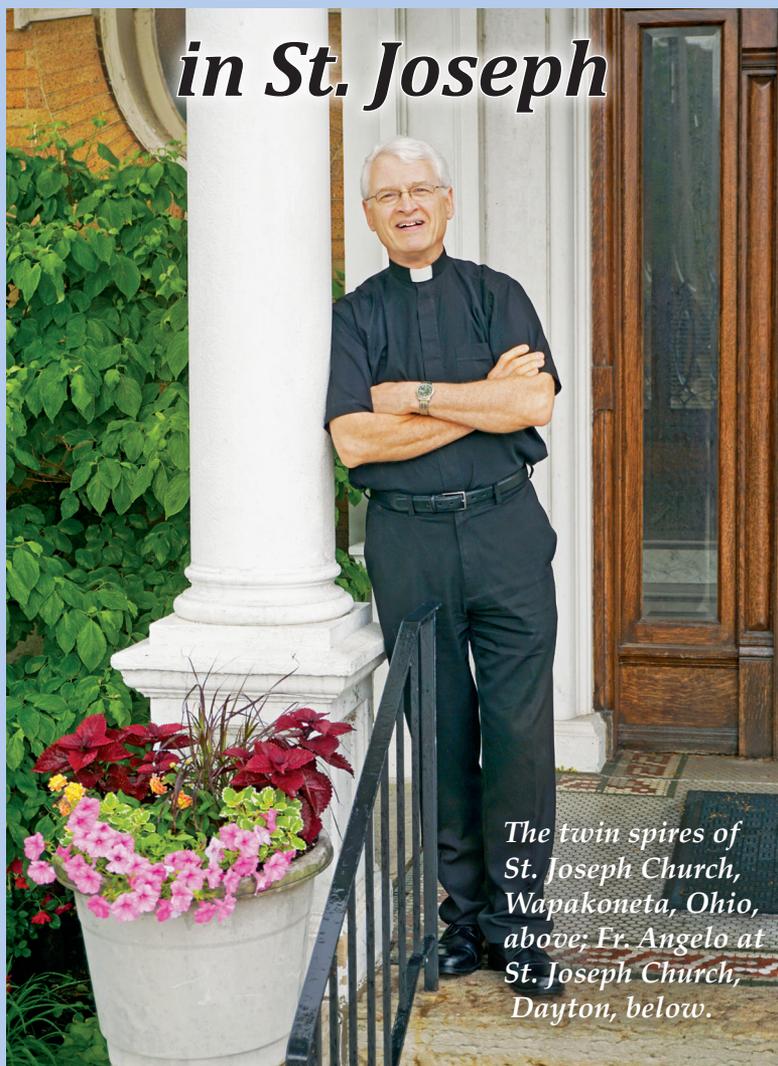
*Between
the Lines*
by Fr. Jeffrey
Kirch, C.P.P.S.





FINDING A TREASURE

in St. Joseph



*The twin spires of
St. Joseph Church,
Wapakoneta, Ohio,
above; Fr. Angelo at
St. Joseph Church,
Dayton, below.*

By Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S.

Have you been on a treasure hunt lately? Growing up outside of Wapakoneta, Ohio, my siblings and I enjoyed going out on treasure hunts to an old dump site tucked deep in the woods. Digging around in the mud and mess we would find little treasures that must have belonged to early pioneers.

In pursuit of treasures some people travel near and far to find antiques hidden at garage sales or estate auctions. Others find a vintage baseball card on eBay or go out with a metal detector to seek for a rare coin. In reality, it is not enough to simply stumble upon a treasure. The key to treasure hunting is the ability to recognize the treasure as something of value.

On December 8, 2020, Pope Francis invited the whole Church to go on a treasure hunt, to discover the spiritual riches found in the life of St. Joseph. This Holy Year marks the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Joseph as patron of the Universal Church.

In honor of this milestone, Pope Francis wrote an apostolic letter entitled *Patris Corde*, "With A Father's Heart." In this letter, the pope says, "The life of St. Joseph reminds us that those

people who appear hidden or in the shadows of life can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation." Think of the hidden people who have touched your life in ways that left a lasting impression.

A Hidden Treasure

When I stop and think about it, St. Joseph has been a hidden treasure in my life since birth. I grew up in St. Joseph Parish in Wapakoneta. At my home parish, I received the sacraments of initiation and went to school seeing a statue of St. Joseph holding a staff of lilies. I didn't know why he was holding lilies, but it fostered in me an early desire to work as a florist.

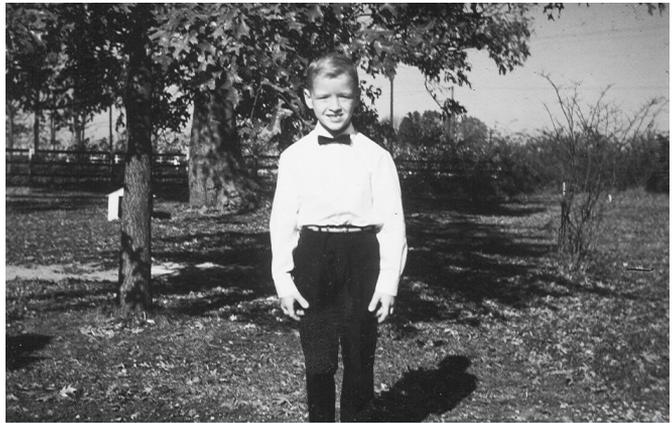
The Lord had other dreams in mind for me. After becoming involved in my home parish, I was invited to consider a vocation to the priesthood with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. This new path took me to Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind. The only thing familiar to me was the name of the college's patron, St. Joseph.

Years later, after ordination, I was assigned as director of vocation ministry for the Cincinnati Province and moved to, you guessed it, St. Joseph's Parish in Dayton, where our provincial office is located. After being elected provincial

director in 1998, I remained at St. Joseph Parish for 12 years, living in the shadows of the parish church. When I finished my terms as provincial director, I was assigned to be pastor of the Downtown Dayton Pastoral Region, which included St. Joseph Parish. St. Joseph has always been a steady support to me, in the midst of a lifetime of changes.

The Gift of St. Joseph

In this Holy Year in honor of St. Joseph, I have had a chance to ponder the gift of St. Joseph, a treasure that has been hidden in plain sight! Isn't this true of the presence of St. Joseph in Sacred Scripture? We have various passages in the Gospels that include the person Joseph, but no words of his are recorded. He is comfortable being in the shadows and yet he played a crucial role in salvation history. Without Joseph, Mary could have been stoned to death because of the pregnancy



St. Joseph has been a hidden treasure in my life since birth.

Fr. Angelo after his first communion at St. Joseph Parish, Wapakoneta, Ohio.

outside marriage. Without Joseph, the child Jesus would have been hunted down by King Herod and put to death. Without Joseph, Jesus would not have had the experience of strong, just and faith-filled father figure in his life to teach him. What a treasure we have in St. Joseph!

One of the gems that Pope Francis shares in *Patris Corde* is the invitation to see St. Joseph as our mentor and intercessor when things don't turn out the way we want or think they should. This past year, living with COVID-19 gave us so many challenges and disappointments. We have a friend in St. Joseph. There were many times in his life

when things did not go as he had planned. What we see is a person who learned to trust the will of the Father and accept the things he could not understand or change.

Pope Francis notes, “The spiritual path that Joseph traces for us is not one that explains but accepts.” Like Joseph, we need to set aside all anger and disappointment and embrace the way things are, especially when they do not turn out as we wish. Jesus learned how to follow the will of the Father from Joseph. Even in his most difficult moment at Gethsemane, Jesus chose to do the Father’s will rather than his own.



Fr. Angelo celebrates a baptism at St. Joseph, Dayton, above, and St. Joseph, Wapak, at right.

Not Mere Resignation

Coming to acceptance is a gift, a treasure. It is not mere resignation, but a realization that with God all things will be well. It doesn’t matter if everything seems to have gone wrong or does not turn out the way we think it should. God can make flowers spring up from stony ground!

The Precious Blood of Jesus teaches us this lesson. His Blood is the font of life. Like Joseph, we must continue to work in the shadows, raising awareness of the dignity of life, working to create safe environments for others so that they know they are accepted and loved. Think to yourself, “In what hidden



way is God wanting to use me to proclaim the reconciling Blood of Christ?"

Because of the hard knocks of life, we can lose our determination to go and find the true treasure in life. Maybe a cynical attitude has ended the search. Maybe we have become satisfied with the status quo and simply coast along from day to day without any desire to deepen the search for the treasure to be found in the Kingdom of God.

This is why we must take time for prayer, study and reflection so that we know the value of the treasure we seek and recognize it as such when we encounter it. In his quiet, hidden way, St. Joseph teaches us to keep our eyes on our true and lasting treasure, Jesus.

Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S., is the pastor of the Downtown Dayton Parishes, which include St. Joseph, Holy Trinity and Emmanuel. Formerly a provincial director, he now serves on the Congregation's general council and its vice moderator general.



Fr. Angelo with the cornerstone of Dayton's St. Joseph Church.

We must take time for prayer, study and reflection so that we know the value of the treasure we seek and recognize it as such when we encounter it.

*St. Joseph Church is a special shrine in 2021!
Visit stjosephdayton.org to learn more.*

St. Joseph Parish is Building Its First Parish Life Center

St. Joseph Parish has been a spiritual presence in downtown Dayton since it was established in 1847. Its beautiful historic church, built in 1909, has survived a major flood of the nearby Great Miami River in 1913, and the people of St. Joseph have navigated all the ups and downs of parish life over the years with grace and gumption.

But the one thing St. Joseph has never had until now is a parish life center. Supported generously by the parishioners there, that is now under construction across the street from the church on E. Second Street.



Decorative medallion for the new parish life center features symbols of St. Joseph.

“The vision of this project is to have a facility that would enable us to promote evangelization outreach, workshops for personal and spiritual growth, days of renewal, space for family reunions, funeral luncheons, hospitality nights for new parishioners, parish potlucks, movie nights, senior card-club gatherings, quilting sessions, health ministry presentations...and yes, coffee and donuts,” said Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S., the pastor.

The 5,500-square foot building is being built on the site of the former parish school, which was demolished in 2020.

Parish leadership hopes that the new parish life center will be ready for occupancy later this year.



Please Join us in Prayer

Asking for your prayerful support of the following intentions

St. Joseph Church in Downtown Dayton, where Missionaries remain in ministry (see page three). C.P.P.S. Frs. Angelo Anthony, Matthew Keller and Ken Pleiman, and Brother Matthew Schaefer serve there.

Lord, please watch over the people of St. Joseph Parish and their brothers and sisters at Holy Trinity and Emmanuel, as together they form a faith family. Lead and protect them, and keep them close to you always. Amen.



Missionaries of the Precious Blood and Companions (lay associates) who are involved in parish ministry.



Lord, bless the hands of your people who grab an oar and help to guide or paddle the boat of parish life. Grant them faithfulness and imagination, energy and enthusiasm, as they nurture their faith community. Amen.

For all who minister in schools, colleges and universities.

Lord, please be with those who minister to students of all ages. Give them wisdom, patience and a sense of humor that helps them through their working days. Help them remember what it was like to be young, and to treasure the young souls in their care. Amen.



Who Is a St. Joseph Today?

I think it's a good bet that St. Joseph would have thrived in religious formation. Okay, maybe not St. Joseph himself—his vocation was clearly to marriage and to be the head of the Holy Family. But a man like St. Joseph would be an excellent candidate for formation as a Missionary of the Precious Blood. His holiness and devotion to God and his family are traits that are essential to any life of service.

I wonder what St. Joseph was like as a young man? There are three things that we know about him from Scripture that can help us imagine what he was like. We know he was a righteous man (Matt 1:20), that he was a skilled craftsman (Matt 13:55), and that since no words are attributed to him in Scripture, we can surmise that he was a man of few words.

What would he look like if he were in your parish today? I ask because I think we can get some new ideas about young men whom the Lord may be calling to life as a Missionary of the Precious Blood.

Carrying forward the three qualities we identified above, it's a good bet that the young man in question is a man of prayer. He has a relationship with God that is important to him, and which guides the decisions and choices he makes in his life. He is working every day to become a saint.

But that's not all. He's also a worker, and a good one. He may not necessarily be the skilled craftsman St. Joseph was, but he's a hard worker. He's a young man you can depend on in a pinch to get the job done well. He may also be a guy who keeps his head down, preferring to work behind the scenes, allowing others to be out front.

Finally, since St. Joseph is not quoted in Scripture, we say that he was a man of few words. But given his other qualities he was also a leader. The result is the quiet leader who really is able to lead from behind, helping to move a group forward as it achieves its goal. He is more interested in achieving the goal than getting the credit.

Look around your parish. Who are the quiet, prayerful, hardworking young men of your parish? They are the St. Josephs. This is a good time to invite and encourage them to consider life as a Missionary of the Precious Blood. And even if God is calling them to something else, who doesn't want to be told that they remind you of St. Joseph?

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



The Year of St. Joseph

Pope Francis has proclaimed this the Year of St. Joseph. We're asking our Missionaries who are named Joseph to reflect on their name, its connection to the saint, and what it means to them.

St. Joseph is A Role Model For Bishop Joe

Bishop Joseph Charron, C.P.P.S., who likes to be called Bishop Joe, is the bishop emeritus of Des Moines, Iowa. He is a member of the Kansas City Province.

How did your parents choose the name Joseph for you? Were you at least in part named for St. Joseph?

My mom and dad had eight children. When it came down to the last two, we were named Joseph and Mary. I don't think that was a lack of creativity on their part, that they just got tired and went to the easiest names they could find! I think that it was a consequence of their Christian faith—naming me Joseph and my sister Mary was a natural choice.

I was born on December 30. The Christmas before I was



Bishop Joseph Charron has ordained many Missionaries.

born, my mom had to be pretty uncomfortable! So I've thought often of Mary walking all the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem, probably at a fairly good clip. It had to be five or six days of hard walking, especially in her condition.

Can you describe the connection that you feel with St. Joseph?

I consider St. Joseph my patron saint. He is a good spiritual guide and helper. When you are named Joseph, it's a natural connection to look to St. Joseph as a patron.

Throughout the years, part of my devotion to St. Joseph was lived out by collecting statues, icons and pictures of him. Sometimes these were of St. Joseph, and sometimes of the holy family. I have collected these from my travels all over the world.

Incidentally, when I became a bishop, somebody from the Community said, "In the American provinces, if you're going to be a bishop, you have to be named Joseph!" (*Missionaries who were ordained bishop include Bishop Joseph Dwenger, 1837–93, and Bishop Joseph Marling, 1904–79.*)

Are there times when you felt St. Joseph's influence in your ministry? How would you describe him?

Joseph was a thoughtful person, as I see him depicted in Scripture. When he finds out that Mary is pregnant, he thinks it through, he tries to find a way to protect her.

That image of Joseph as a thoughtful man is an image that I want to follow: to think things

through. Like anybody else, I can jump on top of things and make decisions too quickly.

A main theme in the life of both Mary and Joseph, it seems to me, was "be it done to me according to thy word." And that was Joseph's spirituality too: to understand God's will for him, then follow through.

That's been my lifelong spiritual goal, and struggle. For me, it is particularly a struggle as I get older. When I was younger, it was easier, or more spontaneous, to really want to do God's will. We can have the tendency to give everything to God, but then little by little, take it back.

To be able to let go and do God's will: it is still a struggle, because it goes against so much of how I like to be in charge of my own life. When you give everything over to God, you find yourself being pushed or called to areas where you would rather not go. That's uncomfortable for me. I always say, "Yes, Lord, I'm going to do your will—but I need to understand a little bit more about what you are requiring of me."

So what is required of us is to ask, what is God asking of me at this time in my life? As we age, that kind of discernment remains very crucial. I sense that Joseph was good at that.



Let St. Joseph Sleep on It

Fr. Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S., is a member of the Kansas City Province. An author and former provincial director, he is engaged in retreat and renewal ministry.

How or why did your parents choose the name Joseph for you?

Joseph was my father's name and his father's name. My dad's father died when my dad was only four years old, so we knew very little about him. As we were growing up, I was rummaging through a box of old photographs and found a picture of my paternal grandfather holding my father when my dad was one or two years old. Looking at my grandfather's face, I finally found out where I got my nose!

I was mostly called Joe as I was growing up and throughout my life, though I knew I was in trouble when I heard Mom call me, "Joseph!" This happened recently when I was home to visit Mom. Since she is 93 and no



Fr. Joe Nassal, right, with his mother and his brother, Bob.

longer drives, I did the grocery shopping and found most everything on her list. But as she was making a sandwich for lunch, I heard her yell from the kitchen, "Joseph!" Turns out the head of lettuce I thought I was buying was actually a head of cabbage. Being her resourceful self, Mom shrugged and made coleslaw.

Do you consider Joseph a personal patron saint? Can you describe the connection that you feel with St. Joseph?

I do consider Joseph my patron saint and have relied on his witness of faith throughout my life. Though I didn't make the connection at the time, one of my favorite assignments was as a deacon at our parish in St. Joseph, Mo. The parish is named for the patron saint of the Missionaries of the Precious

**The Year of
St. Joseph**

Blood, St. Francis Xavier. Inspired by these two patrons, those six months were marked by the founding of the House of Bread, a food pantry that continues to serve the needs of the poor and homeless more than 40 years later.

My two favorite images of Joseph from the Scriptures remain a constant source of inspiration for me. The first is Joseph as the original “Quiet Man.” He doesn’t say a word. In fact, when he learns his beloved Mary is pregnant, because he loves her and doesn’t want to expose her to ridicule and shame or worse—the law said a woman in Mary’s condition should be stoned to death—he “decided to divorce her quietly.” Everything about Joseph is quiet.

In response to the angel’s words to him, Joseph is silent. He doesn’t say a word. The Gospel of Matthew even tells the story about the birth of Jesus from Joseph’s perspective. It begins with the genealogy that places Jesus in the line of King David and tells of three dreams given to Joseph. Which brings me to the second image of Joseph the dreamer.

In the first dream, the angel tells him that Mary hasn’t betrayed him but rather her pregnancy is the result of the Holy Spirit, so Joseph should trust in God and take Mary as his wife. After the birth of Jesus,

an angel appears to Joseph in another dream and tells him that King Herod is on a rampage. He should take Mary and Jesus to Egypt until Herod finishes his slaughter of the innocents. Then when Herod dies, Joseph has a third dream in which the angel tells him to take the Holy Family home where the Scriptures notes “he settled in a town called Nazareth.”

Like his namesake in the book of Genesis, Joseph was a dreamer. Joseph trusted in the power of his dreams. The three words that define Joseph in the Scriptures are: “When Joseph awoke.” When Joseph woke up from his dream, he did as God had commanded him. Though he could not comprehend all the implications, Joseph trusted in the promises of God.

I have heard that Pope Francis places his prayer intentions at a statue of a sleeping St. Joseph that he has near his bed. He often tells people he will let St. Joseph sleep on their intentions because when Joseph wakes up, God’s will be done.

At times when we face difficult decisions, we sometimes say, “I’ll sleep on it.” With the morning’s light, new clarity may come. Blessed are we when we remember our dreams and act on them.





SOYMEAL TO HAITI: For 20 years, Brother Nick Renner, C.PP.S., has been coordinating shipments of soymeal to Haiti. Two or three times a year, he and a group of volunteers fill 55-gallon food-safe barrels in a barn in rural Burkettsville, Ohio, then load it onto a trailer where goes first to Columbus, then by rail to New York. The protein-rich soymeal is then on its way via container ship then trucks to Jeremie, Haiti, where it is used as a supplement to the diet of malnourished pregnant or nursing mothers.



Brother Nick, right, with volunteer Tom Schwieterman.

One morning in March, the crew loaded 130 barrels, or approximately 42,000 pounds of soymeal, bound for the Haitian Health Foundation in Haiti, whose workers distribute it to women in 104 remote villages.

Brother Nick has a group of about 20 volunteers who cheerfully help with the loading. He continues to fine-tune the process so that he “gets the most bang for the buck,” meaning the highest levels of fat and protein in the meal. Meat is too expensive and difficult to ship, he said, but soybean meal works well.

It wasn’t possible to coordinate any shipments last year, during the worst of the pandemic. That was a sorrow to Brother Nick, who plans to make up for it this year. He’s very appreciative of his volunteers, mostly farmers.

“People have been really good about helping. I try to choose our work days so they’re in the off-season, so that it doesn’t interfere with farming,” he said. “We’re always overloaded with people who want to help.”

IN MEMORIAM: Fr. Ralph Verdi, C.PP.S., 76, died on May 10, 2021, in the infirmary at St. Charles Center, Carthagena, Ohio. He had been in failing health.

Fr. Verdi was born on September 21, 1944, in New York to Ralph C. and Inez (Gregorio) Verdi. He entered the Society in 1962 at

Saint Joseph’s College in Rensselaer, Ind., and was ordained on June 19, 1971 at St. Charles Center in Carthagena, Ohio.

After his ordination, Fr. Verdi returned to Saint Joseph’s College as part of its music department. He later attended Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. for graduate studies in music.



Fr. Verdi directs during a concert at St. Charles.

He then continued in music and education ministry at Saint Joseph’s.

In 2005, he was appointed parochial vicar at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Cleveland. In 2010, he served as sacramental minister at St. Rita and Precious Blood Parishes in Dayton, later becoming part-time chaplain for the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Dayton.

Fr. Verdi retired to St. Charles Center in 2015. With his health declining, he launched his search for a kidney transplant, which took place in late 2017. He faced numerous and dire medical obstacles during his recovery, but eventually made his way back to St. Charles Center, where he spent his last years.

Fr. Verdi wove music into his ministry as a priest. He was an accomplished musician and composer. He composed several hymns to the Precious Blood as well as a Votive Mass for St. Gaspar del Bufalo and the Precious Blood Founders Hymn Collection. He had a number of compositions published by GIA Publications of Chicago, including what is probably his most popular, “Come, Let Us Adore.”

His later years plagued with health issues, his strength fading, Fr. Verdi maintained a sense of mission, believing that God was calling him to something more. His own suffering made him even more attuned to the suffering of others. He once said, “All those people who were sick in the Gospels and came to Jesus—it’s easy for me now to say the same thing they said, ‘Lord help me.’ It teaches you empathy; it expands your ability to love. Suffering is a way of getting to the real truth of things: that we’re all fragile, that we all need each other.”

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on May 14. Fr. Jeffrey Kirch, C.P.P.S., provincial director, presided. Burial followed in the Community cemetery. May he rest in peace.

Memorial donations may be made to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Cincinnati Province (cpps-preciousblood.org).



Eighteen Contingency Plans

I was saddened to learn of the death of Astronaut Michael Collins in April, mainly because I still pictured him endlessly orbiting the moon. He wasn't, of course. He came back to earth along with the rest of the Apollo 11 crew, those magical men of my childhood.

Collins was the astronaut I liked best. He had a friendly face, and I sympathized with him being chosen for the crew but not getting to set foot on the moon like Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. As a third-chair clarinetist, I should say I empathized with him. I'm sure he was glad to be chosen for that mission and to have his name linked to the others for all eternity, but still.

After his death, I read of his own terrifying ordeal alone aboard the capsule, out of touch with all humanity during at least half of every lunar orbit when he was on the dark side of the moon, and at all times worrying intensely over whether the two other astronauts would get back safely so all three could return to earth together. On that fateful flight, Collins had around his neck a packet containing 18 contingency plans for rescuing his comrades. There was no guarantee, of course, that any of those plans would work.

How we like to plan for contingencies, us humans. I remember desperate late-night talks with my husband about my mom, even before she was really failing, about a five-year plan that would take care of her every projected need. We never did come up with the perfect plan. It's likely that if we had, its zigs would not have fit the zags of her life, or anybody's life.

St. Paul put his finger on this exactly when he spoke of seeing through a glass darkly. It's when we strain to see through that glass that panic is most likely to set in. It's terrible, in the dark of night, when I have to let our old dog outside while wondering, where exactly did I leave the vacuum cleaner? If I turn on a light, the dog thinks it's morning and also wants breakfast, and then none of us can get back to sleep. If I walk around in the dark, I'm probably going to trip over the vacuum cleaner and break a toe, at least.

O Lord, protect us when we are on the dark side of the moon. Help us feel your presence in the middle of the night, guide us around the pitfall of the vacuum cleaner, which we put there with good intentions. Please, we beg you, count all our good intentions in our favor and place about our neck the one true contingency plan, which is living at all times in union with you.

At Our House
by Jean Giesige



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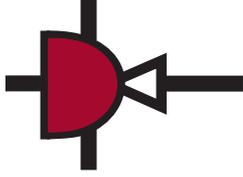
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