

# MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

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Dear Friends,

Fr. Andy O'Reilly, C.P.P.S., serves a merciful God. We all do. And so that's the message that Fr. Andy has tried to carry to people in his nearly 50 years as a priest. God loves you, God cares about what is going on in your life, God offers you his mercy in a real, not an abstract, way.

Fr. Andy, who is now retired with his home base at St. Charles Center in Carthagen, Ohio, hopes that people have experienced God's love and mercy through his ministry — and he hopes that they have passed it along to each other. Fr. Andy is known as a good preacher, but he is not all talk. When you see him in action, you notice the unassuming way that he places himself among the people. He is a part of them, and they are a part of him. He slipped naturally into a leadership role at the parishes where he served, but he never placed himself on top of a pyramid. For him, it was always more of a circle.

"When you're a pastor, you need to be sensitive to a variety of people's needs. You have to be able to listen to people, taking their viewpoint into account," he said. "It's not that everybody gets their way, but that you are making room for a lot of different people, and they all feel they have a place in the parish."

His way of leading the flock, accompanying the people of God, made people comfortable with him and confident of their own role. Everywhere he went, he established connections with people, helped them see that they were all on the journey together. Then when their journey got hard, in times of sickness or loss or death, they knew they could turn to their pastor and he would make time to listen, to lean in and offer spiritual support.

That is how Fr. Andy went about the Lord's work, first at parishes like St. James the Less in Columbus, Ohio; Immaculate Conception in Celina, Ohio; and St. Augustine in Rensselaer, Ind. Then, when he was in his mid 40s, he had the chance to try something a little different.

Fr. Ken Pleiman, C.P.P.S., then the provincial director of the Cincinnati Province, mentioned to Fr. Andy, "We have a parish for you in Florida, but you'll have to learn Spanish."



Fr. Andy preaches at St. Charles Center.

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At the time, Fr. Andy didn't speak any Spanish beyond *si*. "But I'd always wanted to learn," he said. "I was always drawn to Hispanic ministry."

So when Fr. Ken asked Fr. Andy to be the new pastor of Resurrection Church in Winter Garden, Fla., a large and diverse parish near Orlando, Fr. Andy said yes. "It was a little late in life to start learning a new language, and I never was great at it, but I was able to relate to the people. They knew I was there for them." That's a language that everyone understands.

At the time, Resurrection had two parallel cultures, one for English speakers, one for Spanish speakers. Fr. Andy worked hard to bring them together. It took a lot of effort on everyone's part, and it probably would have been easier just to let the two groups co-exist. But Fr. Andy envisioned something better for the people of Resurrection. "And when I went there for a visit years later, I saw that they really are together now, definitely one parish that celebrates its different cultures. It was all worth it," he said.

Fr. Andy later served for many years as pastor of St. Andrew Church in Orlando, then at 60 took on another new ministry: preaching parish missions across the U.S., which he did for 10 years. It was in keeping with the traditional ministry of the Missionaries, who were founded in 1815 as a small band of preachers who offered renewal and reconciliation through parish missions in rural Italy.

Preaching parish missions gave Fr. Andy new ways to spread the message of God's reconciling love, offered through the Precious Blood of Jesus. "A parish mission is an intense experience. A visiting preacher can reach people in a way that a pastor might not be able to," Fr. Andy said.

Even though he retired in 2021, Fr. Andy is still using his gift of preaching to people about God's mercy, then demonstrating it for them. He helps out at parishes where he is needed, bringing that same message, convincing people that they are worthy to hear it.

For Fr. Andy, as for all of our older Missionaries, retirement is a fluid state. They may give up their taxing fulltime ministry, but they help with our Congregation's mission in other ways. They may retire, but they are never retired as Missionaries. Always, they are a source of fervent prayer in support of our Congregation.

Our retired priests and brothers deserve our thanks and our support, and as a Community we pledge to take care of them. Will you help us support those who have given so freely of themselves through their many years of ministry? Our priests and brothers continue to find creative ways to serve God. They said yes to God's call so many years ago, and they remain faithful to that call.

Thank you for considering a gift to support our retired members. And may the message of God's mercy be spread by all of us, throughout the world.

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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