



Missionaries of the Precious Blood

United States Province

November 17, 2023

Dear Friend,

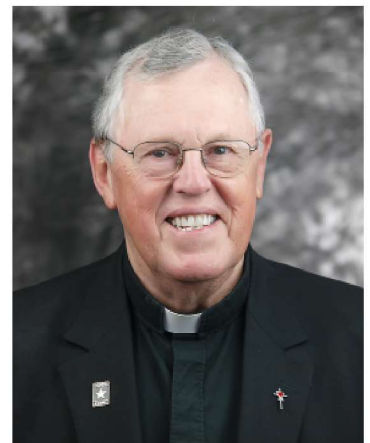
Fr. Ken Schroeder, C.P.P.S., is loved by all. That is a big claim, but it is true. And if not, that is okay because he loves you anyway.

He is committed to loving all of God's children in his life as a Missionary of the Precious Blood, and in his life as a Schroeder. It is the way he was raised, to make a commitment, no matter how seemingly impossible, and to stick with it.

In that he is following the example set by his mother, Ethel. She was a young woman, a telephone operator in the big city of Toledo, when a friend of hers talked her into coming to the small town of Ottawa, Ohio, so that Ethel could meet her brother, Aloysius, a farmer whom everybody called Alvie.

That seeming mismatch took off like a barn afire, and soon Alvie and Ethel were planning their wedding. Fr. Ken tells the story: "His family said, 'Oh Alvie, she won't be able to work on a farm. And Mother with a twinkle in her eye would say, 'I showed them.'"

Ethel and Alvie were desperately poor, raising a family of eight. "Mom did anything she had to do. She'd be so tired at the end of the day she'd crawl up the stairs on her hands and knees," Fr. Ken said.



Fr. Ken Schroeder, C.P.P.S.

The best thing that Ethel did was raise a family, eight strong children who loved each other, made friends, helped at home and worked hard in school. Well, not all eight were so great at school. Fr. Ken admits he was not a good student. When he went to the Missionaries' high school seminary, Brunnerdale, three hours east of Ottawa, he struggled at first to keep up with the rigorous academic schedule. "I don't know why they kept me," he said.

Fr. Ken was ordained in 1965 and has remained faithful to that vocation ever since. "I never for a minute thought about leaving the priesthood," he said. "I'm eternally grateful to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood for hanging on to me."

No one who ever knew Fr. Ken has ever wanted to cut him loose. He was popular as a pastor

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Yes, I would like to support our retired priests and brothers.

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at all the parishes where he served, including his last fulltime assignment to the Marion Catholic Cluster in Mercer County, Ohio, where he still attends Marion Flyer sporting events with great gusto. He had a decorated career as an active-duty US Army Chaplain, from 1978 to 2000, retiring at the rank of colonel. Now at age 87, he only recently gave up his weekends with Marriage Encounter, a ministry he carried out with joy and enthusiasm for 45 years. Many of our Missionaries can point to him as the person who first put the thought of a call to religious life into their mind.

Fr. Ken retired to our St. Charles Center in Carthagen, Ohio, in 2007. Until recently, he was a familiar sight at local parishes, where he happily served as a substitute. That is very common for our retired members—for many, “retirement” is an illusory concept, as they continue to pour themselves into whatever ministry presents itself to them.

Will you help support our retired priests and brothers, who like Fr. Ken said yes to God’s call many years ago, and stayed faithful to it? They went wherever God led them, whether in parishes, at schools and colleges, as preachers and chaplains, or in support of the religious community they love. Will you help us care for them in comfort and grace?



Fr. Ken lays hands on Fr. Gregory Evers during his ordination.

Fr. Ken has always known how to draw people near to Jesus, how to create a large and loving family from people of many different backgrounds. He learned from the best. “I have my mom’s personality. She was outgoing, she loved to be around people and could remember their names. I was good at that throughout my ministry,” he said.

He is also good at keeping promises, good at tending to his vows and supporting others in their vows. Of all of his talents, which are many, this might be his greatest strength.

We want to be faithful as Fr. Ken is faithful. We are committed to caring for our Missionaries who have served so long and so well. Will you help us in our ministry to our retired priests and brothers? Please consider a donation to this very worthy cause.

May God help all of us be clear-headed about our commitments that we make and stick with them with courage and generosity. May we, like Fr. Ken, be stouthearted in our service to others. And may we see in each other a very real reflection of the love that the Father has for all of his children.

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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