

WINTER 2024

CPPS TODAY

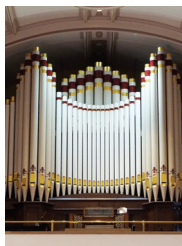
MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD



Sing a New Song

Historic Organ Gets a New Voice

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

WINTER 2024

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Going All In

There are a couple of different ways we can go about any pursuit. We can dabble. A lot of us have a half-finished project gathering dust on a shelf because our interest ebbed away and we just could not commit to it for the long haul. Or, the thing grabs us, sometimes unpredictably, and we find that it moves from the periphery to the center of our lives. Perhaps it even gives our life purpose, or IS the purpose. Jesus, for instance, knows how to get into the very center of our hearts and minds.

In this issue of *C.PP.S. Today*, we explore how something (a historic organ in a thriving parish) or someone (Jesus, especially as he presents himself in the Eucharist) can capture our attention and turn our thoughts toward heaven.

At St. Augustine Church in Minster, Ohio, where Missionaries are in ministry, the organ, built in 1896, needed a complete rebuild. It was a demanding, time-consuming and expensive project, but the parishioners, along with their music director, saw the organ as essential to their worship. All worked enthusiastically together to bring the organ to a new phase of life. It was no patchwork job. The 3,400 pipes of the organ and its miles of wiring were all rehabbed or replaced.

It took years, plus a high level of commitment and patience to see the project through. But the results, all agree, are magnificent. The organ is in daily use at the parish, supporting the singing of the people of God. That is what it is to go all in.

Another way to go all in is explored by our Fr. Ben Berinti, C.PP.S., an author, preacher and pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Melbourne Beach, Fla. Fr. Ben speaks the truth when he writes that we often take the safe approach and keep people at arm's length. It is usually easier to talk about sports or the weather than the things that really matter.

But Jesus will not stand for that. We can try to play it safe with Jesus, but he wants to be inside, at the center of our lives. The question is, will we let him in?

In the United States, we are entering the third year of the Eucharistic Revival. As Missionaries of the Precious Blood, we believe this is a great time to exult the Precious Blood of Jesus, poured out on the cross and offered daily on the altar, as a remedy for the division and disharmony in our world. The Precious Blood of Jesus has great power. It can heal us and energize us. We just have to go all in.

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





Sing a New Song

Historic Organ Gets a New Voice

Many people picture the keyboard and pedals when they think of a church's organ. That is just the console. An organ lives and breathes through its pipes, as the people at St. Augustine Parish learned.

It's a long climb into the choir loft at St. Augustine Church in Minster, Ohio, so long that music director Jared Post tells his choir members to allow plenty of time, once they reach the loft, to collect themselves before practice begins.

He means, to collect their sheet music and get themselves settled, but also to collect their breath. This takes less time, in general, for members of the children's choir, and more time for members of St. Augustine's adult choirs.

Once up there, they are in the warm embrace of the church's historic organ, which recently underwent a two-year renovation that has given it new life and an even richer voice.

"The façade is all brand new," Jared said of the section of the organ most visible to the congregation. "The wood that you can see and some of the pipes are brand new, the mechanism is all brand new. Between 30–40 percent of the organ's 3,400 pipes are from earlier rebuilds. But a lot of the pipes, between 25–30 percent of them, are original from 1896."

It's a good metaphor for parish life, which the Holy Spirit continually renews, but is built on a foundation laid by ancestors in faith. That is evident at St. Augustine, where the cornerstone of the church was laid in 1848. It became the mother church of many parishes in Auglaize and bordering Mercer Counties, most of them founded and served by Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

"There's a lot of history of the Precious Blood here," said Jared, pointing out a stained-glass window of St. Gaspar del Bufalo, the founder of the C.P.P.S. Fr. Ken Schnipke, C.P.P.S., has been the pastor of St. Augustine and seven other parishes in the Christ Our Light Family of Parishes since 2022, assisted by Missionaries of the Precious Blood Frs. Ken Alt, Mark Hoying and Matt Josefiak.

Pride of Place

Leaders in the parish knew that St. Augustine's venerable organ was struggling to keep up with the needs of its music-loving congregation. The

organ was built in Louisville by Henry Pilcher's Sons Organ Company. At that time, "everything about it was mechanical, including the wind system—it was handpumped," Jared said.

That required an extra set of hands up in the choir loft, someone to work the bellows. The organ console, where the organist is seated, had a knob, labeled "bellows signal." When the organist pulled that knob, it rang a small bell. "That told the bellows guy to start pumping," Jared said.

The pumper pumped, the air flowed, and as the organist followed the score on the console's music rack, the mechanics connecting the keys, pedals and knobs to each of the organ's pipes pulled open the leather valves below said pipes. Air flowed through, and music flowed out. Air, the breath of the Spirit, the singing of the people of God, pouring their hopes and dreams, sorrows and worries, toward the ceiling of the church.

Then as now, the organ was meant to support that singing.

"That bears itself in the organ having a warm and broad sound that helps to carry the voice. In the Catholic church, voice is given pride of place—second is the organ because it carries the voice," Jared said.

Not a Joyful Noise

The organ was electrified in 1939 (no more need for an extra man to work the bellows) and reworked again in 1968 and 1972 with the liturgical reforms of Vatican II. Bright and clear sounds were added to suit the musical tastes of the time.

"So what we had was an amalgamation," Jared said, and a failing one at that. The leather valves from 1939 had dry rot. The organ was no longer reliably living up to its mission. Jared will never forget Easter 2019, when the stop control system got stuck in the middle of a hymn, and it was not a joyful noise.

No wonder, then, that the congregation quickly supported a capital campaign to rebuild the organ.

A restoration committee was formed in the parish. Jared gave the committee a crash course on organ construction and music theory. "That committee put a lot of time and effort into studying the best way forward," said Steve Eiting, a parishioner who also sings baritone in the men's choir.

After asking four firms to submit bids, the committee selected Reynolds Associates from Marion, Ind., to rebuild the organ. Work began in March 2020.

The whole organ (pipes



An organ should have “a warm and broad sound that helps carry the (human) voice,” said Music Director Jared Post.

and console) were removed a week before the world shut down due to COVID, Jared said.

“It was a wonderful and challenging thing at the same time,” he said. “So many people were eager to learn and take part in this project.

From March 2020 to Christmas Eve 2021, the people of St. Augustine worshiped without their organ. Jared primarily used the piano, with the brass ensemble stepping in for major festivities. The people knew that organ parts were coming

back, reworked or maybe entirely new. They were anxious to hear the results.

“On Christmas 2021, there were minimal amounts of the organ I could play. Over the next months, more sections would come online. Slowly, slowly, sections were built up and became playable,” Jared said. The organ was declared complete in October.

It would be hard to overestimate the importance of the organ, which “makes a big statement” now that it is wholly restored, Jared said, “and it



Give the Choir a Try!

This is a public service announcement encouraging everyone to sing at church. You're not as bad as you may think you are.

"There are very few people in the world who cannot sing," said Jared Post, the music director at St. Augustine Church in Minster, Ohio. And he went a step further: "Most people, given the right tools, the right support and training, can make very fine choir members."

What say ye to that, o people of God who remain mute in the pew when the hymns begin? Might you consider singing next Sunday? Or taking the big step (or steps) up into the choir loft?

Steve Eiting encourages you to consider it. The son and grandson and great-grandson of longtime members of the fabled men's choir of St. Augustine Church, Minster, Ohio, Steve was always unsure of his own voice. "My father always told me I sing like my mother, and my mother can't sing."

Steve held back for a long time, even though there were so many connections for him; not only the generations of men in his family who had joined the choir, but the choir sang at the first Mass of his newly ordained uncle, Fr. Larry Eiting, C.P.P.S., in 1968.

Steve helped out at the parish in many other ways, serving as chair of the finance committee with the effort to restore St. Augustine's historic organ. Something about that project, learning the inner workings of the organ and all that was required to make music, gave him the push he needed. "I finally got the guts to try out. I didn't tell anybody else that I was doing it," he said.

The result? Choir director Jared was true to his word. "I was

(Continued on page 14)

makes a big statement when it's not used, as when we chant during Lent. The organ is the unsung hero, supporting the singers. The organ is the constant undergird of what music happens here. It is exuberant and brilliant for a bridal march, dark and somber for a funeral, and literally everything in between."

Music as Ministry

The music that flows from the organ and from the people is such an important part of worship, said Fr. Schnipke.

"Music has a long been an integral part of faith and life itself, lifting our hearts to the Lord," he said. "St. Paul says, 'Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts.' Music is an essential and inspiring part of our worship. We trust and pray that our newly refurbished organ will continue to enhance our worship, drawing our hearts and lives together in praise and lifting them to the Lord."

The console and the façade are all that anyone sees of the organ, but up a wooden ladder and behind a narrow door are most of the 59 ranks of pipes, some thinner than a human finger, some more than 18 feet tall.

Some of the original pipes are made of wood. Others are made of a lead-tin-zinc alloy of mixed ratio according to the desired tone of the pipe: more lead for a darker sound, more tin for a brighter sound, and zinc for material strength.

The pipes look like a choir, standing ready to sing. Out front, the human choirs show up for rehearsal once a week from September to May, ready to put in the work. "This con-



Some of the wooden pipes, which are original to the organ.

gregation boisterously sings,” Jared said. “They’ve had this tradition for more than 116 years, it’s not something I did.”

The men’s choir, the mixed choir, the women’s choir, the children’s choir, the brass ensemble, the folk group, the funeral choir—all gather to practice at their own appointed time, then show up at liturgies to sing. “It is a ministry,” Jared said. “Our men’s choir sings almost every Wednesday for rehearsal, from September through the end of May. I joke that I see some choir members more than some members of my family. There are around 40 on the active roster of the men’s choir—they love to sing and are very dedicated.”

Jared will lead several of the parish’s choirs during a per-

formance tour of Austria and Germany next summer.

All of St. Augustine’s choirs sang during its annual Christmas concert on December 17. Jared was at the organ console, his human hands on the keyboard, feet on the pedals.

From him came the directions not only for the choir but for the 3,400 pipes—“I use every one of them,” he said—connected with miles of wires, running through a motherboard, powered by a five-horsepower electric motor that runs a small turbine in the old church’s basement, in an area dug out by the ancestors, moving dirt, driving mules, hauling stone, the vision always before them of the people of God, united, singing God’s praises, in one voice.



*Pipes of a
lead-tin-
zinc alloy.*

Organists in High Demand



Stop knobs on St. Augustine's organ.

The organ is the unsung hero of liturgical music, says Jared Post, music director of St. Augustine Parish in Minster, Ohio. But without an organist, the organ cannot sing.

Church organists are in short supply these days, according to Fr. Ken Schnipke, C.P.P.S., the pastor of the Christ Our Light family of parishes in Mercer and Auglaize Counties, Ohio. "There is a serious shortage, and it is growing," he said.

Many church organists started young—Fr. Ken's mom, Dolores, was the church organist at St. Isidore Church in Cuba, Ohio, when she was just a girl. Often their piano teacher spotted a special talent in them, and a church organist encouraged them along the way.

That was the case for Nick Wilker, the director of worship at Christ Our Light, and director of liturgy and music at Holy Redeemer Church in New Bremen, Ohio. "One of the things that fostered my love of church music was that my piano teacher, who was also the music director at St. John the Baptist in Maria Stein, Ohio, and she invited me many times to come up to the choir loft and watch her play for Mass," he said. "Eventually she asked if I wanted to play a hymn, and that turned into me playing for the monthly First Friday Mass when I was in the fifth grade, and I am now doing the job full-time."

Jared began piano lessons as a second grader. As a fifth grader, he asked for organ lessons as a Christmas gift and was soon playing the organ at St. Bernard Church in Burkettsville, Ohio.

Organists like Nick and Jared speak glowingly of the people who supported and encouraged them along the way in their musical vocation—could that be you?

"I think it is imperative for any parents or grandparents to reach out to their local music directors if their children or grandchildren may be showing an interest in church music," Nick said. "It will only be through encouragement that we can train a new generation of church musicians.

"If this doesn't happen, many of our beloved church organs face the real possibility of being silenced forever."

Preparing for the Jubilee Year

The Church places the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord at the end of the Christmas season to remind us that the truth and beauty of Christmas does not end. Rather, like Jesus, we are entrusted with a mission given to us at our baptism. Our mission is to keep the flame of faith alive in our heart, always following Christ's example of proclaiming the Good News of the Father's unconditional love.

Next year, 2025, the Church throughout the world will celebrate a Jubilee Year entitled "Pilgrims of Hope." To prepare for this Jubilee Year, Pope Francis is inviting all the faithful to participate in a year of prayer, both personal and communal. In a world marked by polarization and division, we are given the mission to be the voice of Jesus, to proclaim the Good News of faith, hope and love to all we meet.

Years ago, a musical friend of mine gave me a framed quote that says, "Life is a song; God's love is the music." The words we put to the song of life are our contribution to the mission Jesus has given to us. For our words to be in sync with the music of God's love, we need to foster a healthy life of prayer, so that our words and actions are authentic to the music God has placed in our hearts.

In preparing for the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis said, "Prayer is the royal road to holiness, which enables us to be contemplative even in the midst of activity. In a word, may the year 2024 be an intense year of prayer in which hearts are opened to receive the outpouring of God's grace and to make the Our Father, the prayer Jesus taught us, the life program of each of his disciples."

Our founder, St. Gaspar, often encouraged his Missionaries to be contemplatives in the home and apostles in the field. Prayer keeps us tuned into the voice of the Father so that the mission we undertake is not our mission, but the mission of Jesus. Each of us has been given the vocation, the call to holiness, to become like Jesus Christ as we journey through life.

When we live our vocational call to holiness, we live into a sense of fulfillment because we are striving to be the person God created us to be. Like breathing from both lungs, personal prayer helps us to grow in our relationship with God and communal prayer, like participating in Mass, helps to expand our awareness of God's mysterious and unconditional love. Both are important in vocational discernment so the music of God's love will truly shine through our words and actions.

**Call and Answer
by Fr. Angelo
Anthony, C.P.P.S.**



WHEN THE BODY & BLOOD OF CHRIST GET INSIDE OF US

We can try to keep Jesus at arm's length. But when he offers us his Body and Blood, and we accept it, our lives become something else entirely.

By Fr. Ben Berinti, C.P.P.S.



When you think about it, as crowded with people as our lives seem to be at times, we can easily keep people at a distance if we want to. Despite all the wonders and magic of our contemporary media tools and the purported connectedness they promise—it's actually still quite easy to keep people on the edges, just beyond our mind and sight.

In fact, it's usually the safest approach to take: be pleasant, but not overly welcoming; shoot

the breeze about the weather, or sports, or a favorite movie, but avoid any topics that really matter; sit next to people in church, but try not to make extended eye contact (at least not when they are looking directly at us).

It's when people get to us—when they get inside of us—when they truly touch some deep chord within us—then things begin to happen. We become vulnerable, and from this place of openness, we are capable of

great joy and sorrow;
deep love and rejection;
lofty expectations
and gut-wrenching
disappointments.

Once we've given our
whole selves and fully
received someone else
into our lives, we can't
play it safe anymore.

It seems fairly
easy and perhaps wise
to keep people at a
distance, but
not when they get
inside of us, especially
not when they offer us
their body and blood!

In all honesty,
when it comes to Jesus
the Christ, many of us
play it safe. Despite
the prayers we utter,
the beads we carry, the
Masses we attend or
preside, the "good persons"
we always deem
ourselves to be—we keep Jesus
at a distance—simply because
we know the consequences of
really letting him in to work
on our hearts and souls, our
thinking, and our acting. Our
lives must change—and those
changes must be visible to people
around us.

And herein rests the great
and awesome joy, and the humbling,
very troubling challenge
of professing to be a Eucharistic
people—once we are bold



Once we are bold enough
to let Jesus get inside of us—
things must change!

enough to let Jesus get inside of
us—things must change! Not
tomorrow, not next week, not
when we have enough money
saved, not when we're finally
retired, not when the kids have
grown, not when our parishes
are bursting with more people,
but now...today...as we dare to
approach the altar and let Jesus
get inside of us.

No wonder it often seems
to work better for us to keep
Jesus at a distance. But when

someone offers us his Body and Blood—and we accept it—and he gets inside of us—then a new story must be told in our life, a story guided by Gospel values and not those of the culture in which we are enmeshed. A new depth of commitment to being a Christian, a Catholic, a person of faith must be lived in ways we have not previously done so.

“This is my Body, for you. This is my Blood, for you. Take and eat, take and drink.” In essence, I hear the Lord saying, “I’m not interested in staying on the fringes of your life. I want deep inside!”

We can kneel before the Blessed Sacrament in

the tabernacle, call for more hours of Adoration, add a few more Eucharistic songs to the liturgy, or for that matter to say, “Amen” to the Body and Blood of Christ in a communion procession—but in all those ways, we must also let Jesus truly get inside of us—into the very marrow of our bones. It’s really easy to keep people at a distance, isn’t it? But what about when someone offers us his Body and Blood?

Fr. Ben Berinti, C.PP.S., is the pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, Melbourne Beach, Fla. He is also an author and retreat leader, and serves on the provincial council.

Give the Choir a Try

(Continued from page seven)

welcomed with open arms,” Steve said.

It’s no small commitment. The choir practices every Wednesday from September through May. “If you don’t learn the music on Wednesday, you’re not going to sound very good on Sunday,” Steve said.

But it’s well worth it, he says. There’s a comradery in the choir loft that those of us in the pews will never know—unless we try it.

“I got to know a lot of people I wouldn’t have known at our church if I hadn’t joined the choir,” Steve said. “There are a couple of 80-year-olds in our men’s choir, I’m in my mid-50s, and there are men in their mid 20s. It’s just a great group. The women’s choir is great too, and we enjoy it when we sing together.

“I knew I would enjoy being part of the choir, but I like it even more than I thought I would.”



CCSJ: Of Grants and Goalposts

Calumet College of St. Joseph (CCSJ) in Whiting, Ind., has received a grant of \$500,000 from the Lilly Endowment through its initiative, Advancing the Science of Reading in Indiana. The purpose of the grant is to prepare educators to teach reading more effectively. CCSJ, which is sponsored by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, is one of 28 Indiana colleges to receive reading-related grants from Lilly Endowment, an Indianapolis-based private foundation.

CCSJ regularly works with Catholic schools in the Diocese of Gary, and with the Whiting school system, preparing its students to be effective educators in those and other districts.

Education has long been one of the majors available at CCSJ. "Education is one of the original majors we established, one that carried over from our days as an extension of Saint Joseph's College," said Brian Lowry, a CCSJ alumnus and adjunct professor who is now the college's director of communications. "We are often referred to as 'the teacher of teachers' in the region."

In other great news from Whiting, the college's sprint football team claimed the Midwest Sprint Football League crown when it defeated St. Mary-of-the-Woods, the reigning postseason champions.

Sprint football has the same rules as college football, except that all players must weigh 178 pounds or less.

This is the second year for the sport at CCSJ. It was "very exciting to see our team pull through the adversity of the season," said CCSJ President Amy McCormack.

Renewal Center Offers Program on Conflict

The Precious Blood Renewal Center in Liberty, Mo., has been talking about "how to talk about politics." It is offering a program to explore ways to bridge divisions by fostering healthier conversations, using faith and religion as a frame.

On January 20, the PBRC and Precious Blood Spirituality Institute are partnering with the national organization Braver Angels to present "Depolarizing Ourselves: First Steps Toward Civil Engagement," from 10 a.m. to noon CT.

To register for this in-person event or to learn more about other programs the PBRC is offering, visit pbrenewalcenter.org/events.

Sorrowful Mother Shrine Celebrating 175 Years

The Missionaries' oldest ministry site in the U.S., the Sorrowful Mother Shrine in Bellevue, Ohio, will kick off its 175th anniversary celebration on September 15, the Feast of the Sorrowful Mother.

The shrine was founded by Fr. Francis Brunner, C.PP.S., who led the first Missionaries to the U.S. to minister to the German-speaking immigrants in Ohio, in 1850. The shrine's 120 acres include two large chapels and many smaller grottoes. It makes a great day trip from St. Charles!

The shrine is planning monthly events to mark its anniversary, including a blood drive, a May crowning, and a procession through its grounds. The celebration will conclude with a closing Mass on September 14, 2025 where Bishop Daniel Thomas of the Diocese of Toledo will preside. Fr. Jeffrey Kirch, C.PP.S., our provincial director, will concelebrate.

Keep an eye on the shrine website, sorrowfulmothershrine.org, to learn more about upcoming events.



**Progress at
Las Vados,
left, and
San Martin.**

Projects Progressing in Guatemala

Several projects in the La Labor region of Guatemala, where Missionaries are in ministry, are making good progress toward completion. These projects/faith communities have been supported by twinning partners in the U.S.

We are happy to see the progress, grateful to the people of God for the work they are putting into these projects, and the people of God in U.S. parishes who have provided their constant support.

Part of the Connection

In early December, during a normal working day, my keyboard conked out. At first I could not understand what had happened, and kept pressing on keys as if the problem was my own human pressure level. But it was not. The keyboard had died.

Without a working keyboard, a crucial connection was broken. When I occasionally talk to a class about writing, I always tell the students that writing is not hard. You pay attention to the thoughts in your head, then you let those thoughts run out of your head and down your arms and through your fingertips and onto a piece of paper or a computer keyboard. It's simple.

For nearly 30 years I have been writing, editing and carrying out other tasks for the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. When they hired me, I had a small but growing family that was a complete priority for me. They said that was okay, they would work with me. And so I became surely someone who was one of the first remote fulltime workers in our rural area.

The Missionaries have always honored and protected my primary vocation as a wife and mother. When our four kids were little, the whole horde of us, my husband and I, my mom as unofficial nanny, and the kids were welcome at their many ministry sites.

In return, they asked me, as best as I could, to help be their connection between their religious community and the people they serve. Of course they did this first and foremost through their own constant commitment to the people of God. But I was asked to articulate and share their mission, their story, to frame it in a way that they, being congenitally modest, could not or would not.

I hope I was serving God too. Many, many early mornings I would sit before a blank Word document, praying for inspiration. God would give me a little nudge, and off we'd go. Another day and another day added up to 30 years, who knows how that happens. And now it is time for me to say goodbye, as I am retiring from my work with the Missionaries.

I thank God for this life-giving opportunity, the Missionaries for their trust in me, my husband who is my partner in all things, and our wonderful kids, now grown. Most of all, I thank you, our faithful readers who pick up this little free magazine. Each of us can make a difference individually in this sometimes sorry and struggling world, but we can do so much more when we stay connected. Thank you for being part of the connection.

At Our House
by Jean Giesige





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 support C.PP.S. missions and ministries. Society members enjoy two events each year at St. Charles Center.

*Visit **cpps-preciousblood.org** to learn more.*

*Let
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hear
from
you*

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