



Reflection from Fr. Garry 7/01/2020

July 1 is the Feast of the Precious Blood, one of the main feast days of my community, the Society of the Precious Blood. Those of us in the community, and many of us who have grown up in the church, know the biblical imagery and rich church tradition centered around the Blood of Christ. It is familiar, and it is part and parcel of our Spirituality. It is like a language that we understand and are at home with. It is closely connected to the language we use in the church in general. But not everyone these days understands that language. Young people especially who haven't spent much time in church or Catholic schools often find our religious language foreign and strange. More than once, when I've told people that I'm a member of the Precious Blood, they have asked if it is a blood donor organization. The whole area of church hierarchy and church laws and church rituals based on unfamiliar traditions strikes many younger people as strange, indecipherable, and uninviting. That is a pity, because those of us who are familiar with church life, theology, and practice know that there is much of value to be found there. So what do we do if we want to share with younger people what we value about church/religion/Spirituality if our usual church language doesn't make sense to them? It seems to me that we need to communicate what we value in a language that they already understand. One example is the recent protests surrounding the murder of George Floyd. Many of the protesters were younger people. Apparently they understand the language of justice, of the dignity of every human being, of how we are all connected. That is also what we within the church are about. Maybe we need to speak that fact more clearly in our rituals, in our parish outreach activities, in the public statements from our parishes, from our bishops, from our Pope. Pope Francis seems to be speaking this language a little more clearly in his public addresses. If people hear that message from us as a church, in a language they understand, they may be more willing to join with us to work toward common goals. Learning a new language is not easy. And we as a church do not have a history of embracing change quickly. But change in the church usually comes from the ground up, from individuals and parishes. One good thing is that we all speak the human language, because that is based on common human experiences. If we can speak to others in that language, mutual understanding will not be a problem. At its core, that is the language of love.

Peace, Fr. Garry