

I've had many occasions where my work required that I qualify in various forms of First Aid and CPR ... working with industrial LASERs ... flying on US Navy aircraft ... and administering a dormitory at a university.

For those of us who've taken these courses, you know there're videos, textbooks, and the inevitable CPR dummies.

In my most recent qualification, we had the dubious privilege to watch a video titled "Blood Borne Pathogens." That's certainly not something you'd watch while eating popcorn and drinking pop.

*What can wash away my sin?/ Nothing but the blood of Jesus; / What can make me whole again?/ Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

The month of July is dedicated to the Precious Blood of Jesus.

While this might seem odd, or even goofy to assign a month to a bodily fluid of the Divine Savior, there are traditions dating back to the Apostles that honor the Blood of Christ.

St. Peter, in his first letter says that we were ransomed, "not with perishable things like silver or gold" but "with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb."

When I think about perishable things, I think about food – butter, milk ... but in our present-day culture, I think it would be hard to consider silver and gold as 'perishable.'

But that is exactly what St. Peter is saying.

In the first reading, we hear about Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar. There's a lot of sinning going on in that story. Abraham has a son by another woman ... they have a slave ... Sarah beats the slave ... then the slave and her baby are sent into the desert.

Yet when all human resources are literally dried up for this poor woman, God intervenes and saves her.

And in the Gospel, there is a town which isn't keeping the Hebrew kosher food laws ... and there are some people who are sick, probably mentally ill, and are left to fend for themselves in a cemetery.

But Jesus steps into the picture, and heals the sick.

So, during this month, let us step up our own devotion to the Blood, the Precious Blood of Jesus. Let us allow His Blood to 'wash us' from anything that separates us from God, and let it 'make us whole again.' Then we can take our places in the Kingdom of Heaven, as daughters and sons of God the Father, redeemed by the Son, and united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.