

A NOTE FROM FATHER PHIL



I have been donating blood for a long time. One of my most memorable experiences of donating was during my senior year at Mount Saint Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Maryland. To accommodate the number of students who were giving blood in a relatively small room, the workers paired the tables, placing them as close together as they could. Luckily, I was paired with a pretty sophomore. She had never given blood before and appeared to be a little nervous.

After the two of us were hooked up to the medical paraphernalia and after staring at the ceiling for a few minutes, I turned to her and said, "You know we are going to have to stop meeting like this." She started to giggle and it became contagious. I started to laugh. In fact, we were both laughing so hard that the phlebotomists had to watch us carefully to make sure the needles didn't come loose. Then the attendants started placing bets on which one of us would fill our pint first. She won. But, so did I. Besides meeting a wonderful new friend, I had given a part of myself that could be used to save a person's life, or could be used for tests that would help someone later.

This weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is a celebration of life that our communion with God brings. Moreover, it is a celebration of our kinship with each other.

This feast is a recognition of the real presence of the Resurrected Lord. On the night before he died, Jesus chose bread and chose wine and blessed them. These would become his body and blood. Oh, not a body like one might see on the cover of a men's health magazine, nor, say, type A+ blood. Rather this real food and real drink would be the simple media by which the Spirit of the Risen Lord would maintain a physical presence in the Church. On Easter Sunday evening two disciples from Emmaus recognized the Risen Christ in the breaking of the bread. We have been celebrating the real presence of Christ in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup ever since.

Like those who are recipients of blood donations, it is through the Eucharist that we are given a transfusion of new life. Our communion with God means that it is the very Spirit of Jesus that is pulsating through our veins. Our relationship with God becomes stronger and healthier. And, because we share the same blood and are of the same body, we are family. When we celebrate the Eucharist, we celebrate both our intimate communion with God and with each other.

Blood centers have been found to be great places to find a date. Our blood drives at Holy Family may also provide such an opportunity. And every weekend, our church has been found to be a great place to be with Christ and to be reunited with family.