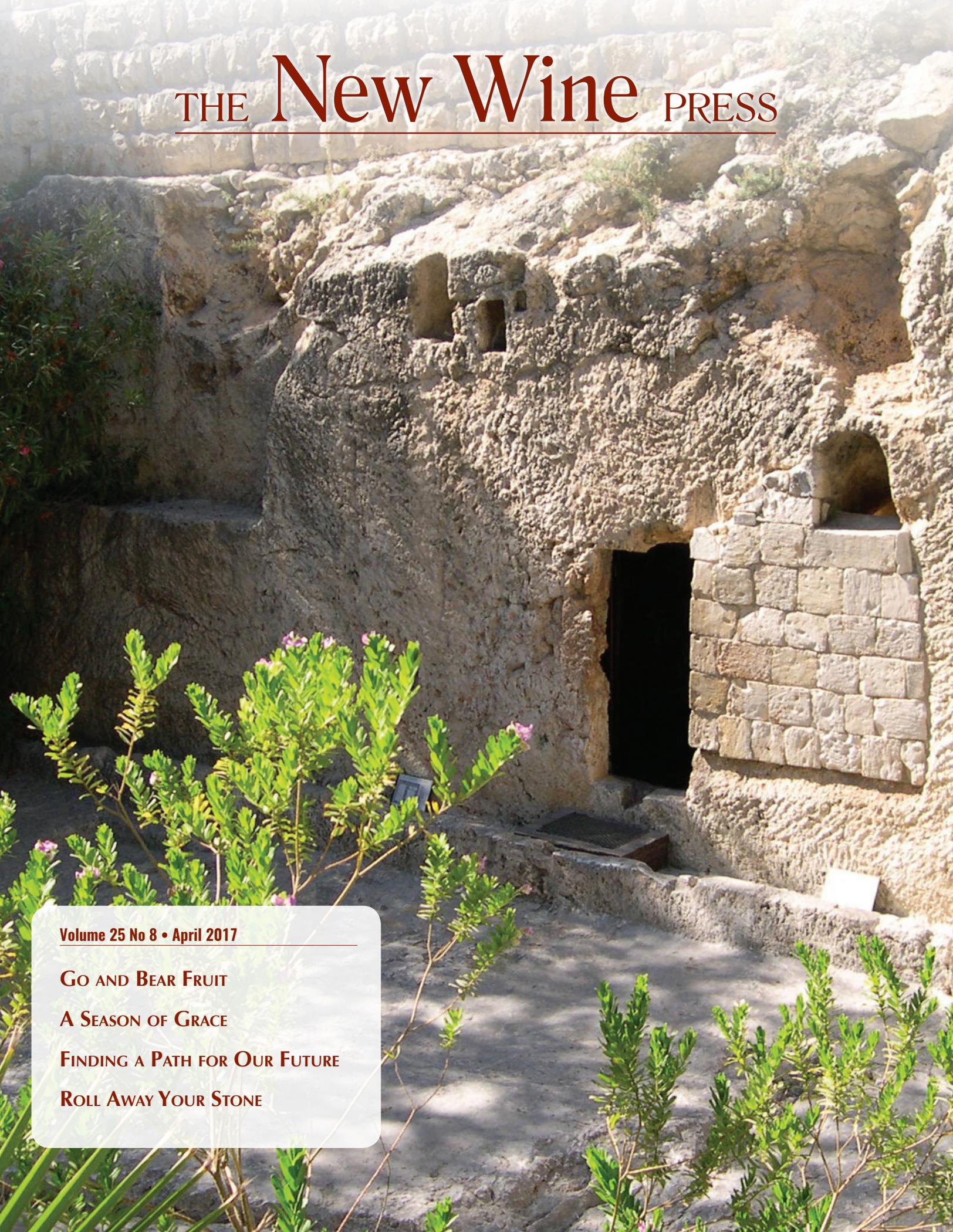


# THE New Wine PRESS

The background of the cover is a photograph of ancient stone ruins. In the center, there is a dark doorway leading into a structure. To the right of the doorway is a wall made of large, rectangular stone blocks. Above the doorway, there are several smaller, arched openings in the rock. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. In the foreground, there are green plants with small pink flowers.

**Volume 25 No 8 • April 2017**

**GO AND BEAR FRUIT**

**A SEASON OF GRACE**

**FINDING A PATH FOR OUR FUTURE**

**ROLL AWAY YOUR STONE**



# Let us serve God with holy joy.

*-St. Gaspar del Bufalo, founder of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood*

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# THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 25 No. 8 • April 2017

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Cover photo: Jesus' tomb, Isreal; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/48600082269@N01/2819155661>

The Society of the Precious Blood is a fraternal community of priests and brothers founded by St. Gaspar in 1815. Bonded through charity by a promise of fidelity, we are prayerfully motivated by the spirituality of the precious blood of Jesus Christ to serve the needs of the Church as discerned through the signs of the times and in the light of the Gospel.

The Kansas City Province—incorporated members, covenanted companions, and candidates—united in prayer, service and mutual support, characterized by the tradition of its American predecessors, are missionaries of these times with diverse gifts and ministries. In a spirit of joy, we strive to serve all people—especially the poor—with care and compassion, hope and hospitality.

*The New Wine Press* seeks to remain faithful to the charism of our founder, St. Gaspar, and the spirituality of the Blood of Christ with its emphasis on reconciliation, renewal and refounding. We accept and encourage unsolicited manuscripts and letters to the editor.

## THE New Wine PRESS

Missionaries of the Precious Blood  
Kansas City Province

Precious Blood Center  
P.O. Box 339  
Liberty, MO 64069-0339  
816.781.4344  
[www.preciousbloodkc.org](http://www.preciousbloodkc.org)

Editor  
Richard Bayuk, c.p.p.s.  
[rbayukcpps@mac.com](mailto:rbayukcpps@mac.com)

Layout & Design  
Margaret Haik  
[communications@preciousbloodkc.org](mailto:communications@preciousbloodkc.org)

Printed on recycled paper by  
McDonald Business Forms  
Overland Park, Kansas



## A Precious Blood Attitude

by Fr. Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S., Editor

As I write this I am in Guadalajara, Mexico for three weeks brushing up on my Spanish and enjoying the people, food, and culture of this wonderful country. While I can still access newspapers from the U.S. through my computer, it is nevertheless quite interesting to get a grasp of the news from this side of the border, especially as it pertains to relations between our two countries.

One recent incident that received significant coverage down here concerned a group of college spring-breakers on a cruise ship off the coast of Cancun, filled with tourist from both countries. These young Americans—evidently irony-immune—felt moved to vocalize their support for nationalism and xenophobia as they chanted, “Build the wall!” According to one newspaper article they chose not to stop the chant, despite the complaints of some Mexicans who had to endure such offensive and rude behavior. I guess if you are racist at home you will be racist while traveling in another country.

As I reflect on the different articles in this issue, I am aware of how much our spirituality and charisma and call is an invitation to something quite opposite of the attitudes reflected in the previous incident. Consider these brief quotes from throughout this issue:

“Pope Francis goes on challenging us to not only give money, but as we give, to reach out and touch the person—look them in the eye and acknowledge them as a brother or sister. More than just passing by or tossing a coin, this human engagement lessens the distance between the haves and the have nots and invites the giver and the receiver into a relationship.”

“Our work of reconciliation is about breaching the barriers and dismantling the walls that keep us apart and disconnected. It calls us to move beyond what is comfortable to the uncomfortable.”

“The work of inclusion, like the work of creation, is at times hard and can often be overwhelming. When our boundaries are expanded, we enter into what [author Eric Law] defines as the ‘grace margin,’ which allows each of us to have the time and space to explore, discover and reflect upon what has drawn us together.

“In her [Companion Rose Schmidt] world everyone was welcomed.”

“Jesus still enters locked rooms, tight places, and desolate corners of our world through you and me. He will go anywhere to be with his loved ones. The ‘where’ just doesn’t matter to him. It’s the ‘who’ that matters,

*continued on page 9*

# Search & Rescue

by Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S., Leadership Team

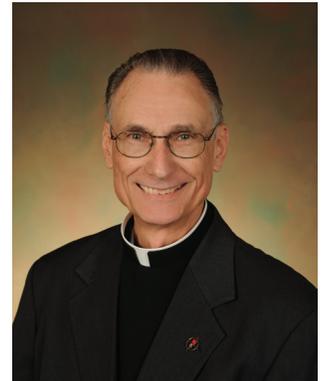
In his book, *Who is this Jesus?*, Max Lucado has the reader stand in the shoes of the Roman soldier, Claudius, who was assigned duty during the crucifixion of Jesus. He rolled dice with the other soldiers on duty and won the seamless cloak of Jesus. He was overjoyed and showed it off to all his friends as he made his way home where he shared his joy with his wife. But he got called back on duty the next day to guard the tomb where the body of Jesus had been placed. The soldiers took turns through the night. When they woke Claudius an hour before dawn, the night was black. The moon was small and the stars were hidden by the clouds. He stood guard on one side of the tomb as another soldier stood on the other. Suddenly the ground began to shake—violently. It shook so hard they fell to the ground. Dangerous rocks tumbled down from the walls behind them. Sparks flew from the fire that they had built. The soldiers asleep on the ground jumped up. Claudius could see the faces of the other soldiers as if it were broad daylight. The rock had rolled back from the tomb entrance and light roared out—a burst of fire with no heat. A gust of wind blew from the tomb, put out the fire, knocked the soldiers back, and the next thing he knew, the tomb was empty.

Later Claudius sought and found the disciples of Jesus hidden in the upper room. They shared pieces of their experience of Jesus. Claudius asked, “Who is this man? Who is this Jesus?” He was silent when they answered. He couldn’t handle what he was hearing. But what he had seen at the grave, he could not deny. He leaned over and put his elbows on his knees and buried his face in his hands.

Thoughts rumbled in his head. He was so intent that he didn’t notice the sudden silence. Stillness reigned for several seconds before he raised his head. A light filled the room. He looked at the door and the window; they were still closed. Faces that had been cast in shadows now beamed. All eyes stared in his direction—not at him but behind him. But before he could turn to see what they were seeing, a hand was on his shoulder. When Claudius turned to look at the hand, he found the answer for his heart. The hand was pierced. “Peace be with you!” the voice said.

What is it that God wants to communicate to humanity today? “God loves you! Don’t be afraid. It’s going to be all right. Everything is going to turn out for the best.”

We as Precious Blood people have opportunities to share this same, loving Christ 24/7 if we are open to the nudges of the Holy Spirit.



*continued on page 9*

# One of God's Gifts

by Deacon Bob Schienebeck, Park Falls/Butternut, Wisconsin Companion



Rose Schmidt, Wisconsin Precious Blood Companion, received a gift from God for the 104 years she served him by serving others. God asked for Rose on Saturday, March 4, 2017. She entered into her new home with the Lord, leaving all of us—including seven children and one brother, and grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren numbering 110.

She was a Mother to a countless number of people—far more than just her family—and sister to even more than we will ever know. She knew she was blessed and rejoiced in that, because she trusted absolutely in God, and she lived according to that trust.

Rose was one of God's servants with a huge heart, who had room for everyone. She was a true disciple, one that God gave us, one who understood what the teaching of Jesus on the Mount really meant.

Rose also knew how to live as a Companion and had the love and patience to help many with the gift of Precious Blood spirituality. She hardly missed a Companion gathering, driving her stick-shift pickup truck until she was in her late 90s. Once she couldn't drive, someone would be there offering her a ride. Her children said she loved the Companions and wanted them to be part of her life.

She certainly enjoyed telling her many stories—and many a Precious Blood priest heard those stories, since she was already 11 years old when the first Precious Blood priest came to Park Falls in 1923.

She had many wonderful years and touched many people, as was demonstrated by the huge turnout for

her Prayer Vigil and Mass of Christian Burial. Many people told of how Rose helped them through life with her kindness and outgoing support, not only in words, but in action doing and accomplishing whatever it would take to help someone on their journey through life.

Of course she had her own rough days—with the death of her husband Bill in 1964 and the death of a daughter. She also lost her home to a fire. In her own words she said, "It was bad, real bad. I had nothing, but my brothers (she had 9) said they would build me a new house and it wouldn't cost me anything, so they built the house and all I paid for was the beer and that cost me \$2000."

She was funny, she was witty, and she was a very spiritual lady. She was devoted to St. Faustina and prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet religiously until shortly before her death. Our Companion group gathered before her bed a few days before she died and were gifted with her final goodbye; although she could no longer speak, she answered with a smile. We prayed with her and we all had one of her favorite drinks in her honor, which was a shot of kummel (she of course in days past had many stories to go with the kummel).

We all left knowing we had witnessed something very special. Although it was indeed the last that we would see Rose we felt something—and we all knew what it was: Precious Blood Spirituality. Sometimes we see it in words, sometimes we see it in action, and sometimes as with our visit to Rose, you just feel it, and know it's there.

Since her death we have had many thoughts about Rose. She was a warm and amazing person, one who will always be remembered for acts of kindness. In her world everyone was welcomed—with a hug.

She may not have invented hugs, but she certainly was instrumental in making sure her life was one, of offering her love to all.

Only God knows how many people she reached out to with a loving hug. Hopefully we as Precious Blood Companions can carry out some of that gentle love that she possessed, and one day we'll again be hugged by Rose. ✠

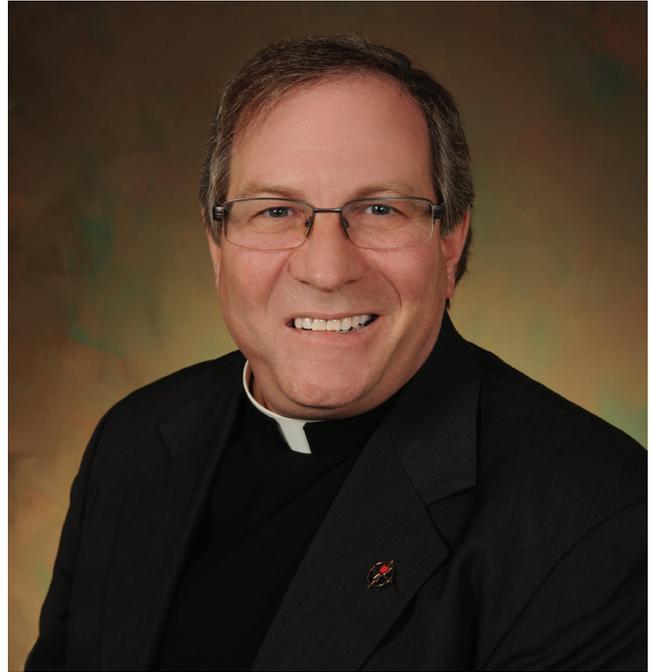
# Go and Bear Fruit

by Fr. Mark Yates, C.P.P.S., Iowa

Early last year Fr. Joe Nassal asked me if I would be willing to serve as the pastor/administrator in south central Iowa for three parishes we have not served before (except for Fr. George Heinzen, who served in Georgetown from 1983-1985). It would be an opportunity to increase the number of our members in the area with Fr. Jim Betzen in Ottumwa, Fr. Bill Hubmann in Centerville, and Fr. Mike Volkmer in Albia. It would also help the Diocese of Davenport, since the diocesan priest who served the three parishes was retiring. I agreed to go.

The parishes are St. Patrick in Georgetown, St. Peter in Lovilia, and St. Patrick in Melrose. As you can gather from the two with St. Patrick as their patron, the parishioners are of predominantly Irish descent. St. Peter Parish is of Slovenian, Croatian, Hungarian and Irish heritages. All three are rural agricultural communities. There used to be a coal mine near Lovilia, but it closed several years ago, causing many to look for work elsewhere. Lovilia and

*Waiting for Mass to begin*



Melrose are twenty-five miles apart with Georgetown being seven miles east of Melrose.

In April I made a reconnaissance trip to the area, since I had never been there before. I checked out which rectory I wanted to live in (Lovilia or Melrose), and I met with the pastor, Fr. Pat Lumsden, to get more information about the parishes—which operate independently.

On another occasion, I travelled to Davenport to meet with Bishop Martin Amos. We got acquainted with one another over lunch. He advised me to listen much and not to make many changes—especially to the Mass schedule—during my first year. This is the same sound advice I have heard from a number of pastors over the years.

I moved into the rectory in Lovilia the last week of June and began my assignment July 1<sup>st</sup>. I have been reminded numerous times of what the pastor in Chama, New Mexico told me when I left there to return to formation some years ago. I asked him what he did not learn in seminary. He extended his hands and exclaimed, “All this!” It did not take long to understand his comment and to realize I have much to learn.

My first weekend of Masses, I met many parishioners who expressed their gratitude for my coming. I

*continued on page 7*



by Vicky Otto, *Precious Blood Companions* Co-director

One of my favorite scripture passages that I always associate with Easter actually comes at the end of the Lenten season. The passage is from the prophet Isaiah, “Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise” (43: 18-21). I think that the reason this passage speaks to me is that it has such anticipation of all the good things that are possible with God.

But with the anticipation of good things we still have to work for it. We all know that the creation process is hard work for humans and sometimes even anticipation can be painful. St. Paul wrote in the letter to the Romans, “We know that all creation is groaning

in labor pains even until now, and not only that but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.” As I reflect upon this sense of anticipation and the good things that God has in store for us it seems a fitting description of where we stand today as Companions.

During the creation of *Gather, Send*, our vision statement of what we hoped to be in the future, we heard from Companions that they wanted younger Companions and they wanted people from different cultural traditions. As we move closer to making these dreams a reality we have come to understand that with anticipation there must be change and growth for all Companions. In his book *Inclusion—Making Room for Grace*, Eric Law wrote about these challenges: “By rejecting the simple, exclusive boundary

function of the religious establishment of his time, Jesus pushed his followers and the church out of their safe zone into an area that required constant reflection and reconnection with God as a living, compassionate being.” He also talked about the gifts that we have been given to do the work of anticipation. He writes, “In the grace of God, we can let go of our insecurity, let go of our rigid rules, let go of our power, and invite Christ to help us discern the will of our gracious God in the ministry of inclusion.” He concludes with a definition of the work that I believe each Companion must embrace to make our hopes for younger people and people of different cultures a reality: “Inclusion is a discipline of extending our boundary to take into consideration another’s needs, interests, experience, and perspective, which will lead to clearer understanding of ourselves and others, fuller description of the issue at hand, and possibly a newly negotiated boundary of the community to which we belong.”

The work of inclusion, like the work of creation, is at times hard and can often be overwhelming. As a Precious Blood community, we make the commitment to stand with people who are living at the margins. We are called to offer safe space so people can speak their truths. We have also each made commitments in our covenants as Precious Blood Companions. The future will call us each to individually reflect upon these commitments as we expand our boundaries and expand the space of our tents as the Isaiah calls us to do. When our boundaries are expanded, we enter into what Law defines as the “grace margin,” which allows each of us to have the time and space to explore, discover and reflect upon what has drawn us together. Because we are a people of renewal and reconciliation we are used to bringing others into this sacred space.

As Companions, we are now each called to enter a season of grace. We are called to look at our fears and anxieties, our prejudices and limitations, and try for a moment to step outside those circles to meet the other that might frighten us. My hero Archbishop Tutu described what the hope for our growth would be. He writes, “God’s dream is that you and I and all of us will realize that we are family, that we are made for togetherness, for goodness, and for compassion.” May this time of anticipation, this time of groaning bring forth the new creation that the prophet speaks about. Take a moment and “Perceive it!” ✠

*Go and Bear Fruit, continued from page 5*

began to figure out who did what. There is a permanent deacon, who is a parishioner of St. Patrick in Melrose and is assigned to all three parishes. Each parish has a part-time secretary/bookkeeper. They have been a wealth of assistance to me.

At the first parish council meeting of each parish, I told them I was there to serve them and invited comments on what I could do. The common response was: “Whatever you want, Father.” I replied that I was there to serve them. What did they think would work best for the parish? I have been told a couple of times to be patient with them, that this approach of servant leadership was new for them.

Due to the size of the parishes there has been cooperation between St. Mary Parish in Albia, St. Patrick in Georgetown, and St. Peter in Lovilia for a number of years, especially for Religious Formation and RCIA. I sit in on CCD classes in Melrose and then go to Religious Education classes in Albia on Wednesday evenings. The Albia Companion group is not only people from St. Mary’s in Albia but from throughout Monroe County. I make it a priority to attend their gatherings in Albia.

With this new appointment, there are new challenges and learning curves with new people, customs, concerns, distance, and situations. One of these challenges is moving from a city to a rural area. Since I grew up as a city boy, I find myself listening closely to the stories of those who work the land to learn more about rural life here in Iowa. I think it can help me bring the Scriptures more alive in my homilies, especially when the readings contain agricultural references. Parishioners from all three parishes have expressed that a number of people have quit participating over the years. Some have returned since I came, but there is still work to do. While there are challenges for me and for these communities, I view these as opportunities for growth in our faith together to bear much fruit. Living close to other members and Companions has been beneficial. I appreciate the advice of Frs. Jim, Bill and Mike, the Companions and parishioners as I live into my new position as a pastor/administrator in rural Iowa.

As Missionaries of the Precious Blood we have often gone where we are needed the most. Rural Monroe County is one of those places. We are called to serve those who live on the margins. Being on the western edge of the diocese—as in other areas of society—there

*continued on page 9*



by Fr. John Wolf, C.P.P.S., Future Task Force Chairperson

*“Living the Bond of Charity, our life reflects a multicultural communion of incorporated members and lay associates. Faithful to the missionary charism of Saint Gaspar, our mission houses are sacred spaces of hospitality and renewal for mission” (from the Vision Statement of xx General Assembly 2013).*

These few well-crafted words reflect the vision of the xx General Assembly as the delegates discerned the value of community life for our missionary congregation. Desiring to see these words put into action, the General Curia and Major Superiors of our world-wide congregation developed a pastoral plan for all the provinces or units to explore and flesh out the values of “authentic community life in the context of Precious Blood spirituality.” How does Gaspar’s model of mission houses play out for us today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? How can we better witness to a simple lifestyle? And in light of the new energy surrounding the movement of lay associates (Companions), how do we develop and grow a fuller “communion” together in our life, spirituality, and mission? Dialogue and conversation on these and other questions, as well as reflection on suggested writings will culminate in the Community Life Symposium in Rome this summer, with participating delegates from all the units of our international congregation. It remains to be seen how

this all comes together, but the plan is to create a “framework of shared understanding” of what constitutes authentic living in community. Then it goes back to the units for the continued work and practice of living into our common vision of community life in the context of our charism as Precious Blood missionaries.

In our Kansas City Province, we already had a vehicle in place to move this dialogue forward. The Future Task Force has been in place for the past year, leading the province members through several encounters and conversations on “reimagining our future” and deepening our commitment to community and a more intentional way of gathering in sharing our lives together. Part of the conversation was a fuller engagement of our Companions. So when the challenge came from Rome to take up the questions on community life, it was handed on to the Future Task Force to develop a discussion format. To that end we have the *Community Life Discussion Workbooks*, which are unique to our

province and which both incorporated members and Companions have been using as a guide for their monthly gatherings. We have been encouraged by the participation, even though for the incorporated members some of the initial questions seem redundant in light of what we have experienced over the past year in our encounters. It is our intent to continue surfacing new ideas and practices as we seek to renew our future. As the reported results come in from the ten member groups and the fifteen Companion groups, a summary will be published in the *New Wine Press*.

The Future Task Force is now turning its attention to our June Provincial Assembly, working in conjunction with the Provincial Leadership Team. The workshop portion of the assembly will be devoted to the statement our province will be making in response to the inquiries from our Generalate. How do we understand “authentic community life” in the context of our Precious Blood charism? What is the place of Companions in our community life as we go forward? But there is more on our plate than that. How open are we to imagining—creating something beyond our province and ourselves? We are engaging someone to assist us in our work at the assembly; someone who has had experience in leading religious congregations in the work of renewal and leadership formation. Sr. Mary Waskowiak, past president of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, will be presenting on the first morning of the assembly. Currently serving as the director of Mercy Center in Burlingame, California, Sr. Mary has facilitated and presented for groups of women and men religious in twelve countries. We look forward to benefiting from her vast experience.

This issue of the *New Wine Press* will be hitting your mailboxes around the same time as we greet the new dawn of Easter resurrection. In a recent article appearing in this publication, Provincial Director Joseph Nassal wrote, “when we trust each other enough to go deeper into the mystery of our relationships, we strengthen the bonds of love that are at the core of our life together.” That’s resurrection life! Living the bond of charity is part of our DNA as Precious Blood people. It was certainly part of Gaspar’s dream and vision. We seek his intercession as we try to understand it for our times. ✠

### *Go and Bear Fruit, continued from page 7*

is not access to what a larger city might offer and can lead some to think they are forgotten. Part of Precious Blood spirituality is to help people realize Christ’s presence among them. Christ is with them on the tractor; Christ is with them feeding cattle; Christ is with them while hauling grain or driving to town. It is also realizing how what they do impacts others. The land is God’s gift and stewardship of the land is one of God’s commands. The cattle raised here help to feed the hungry; the corn grown provides both food and ethanol—a more environmentally friendly fuel. As I live into my position, I hope to share Precious Blood Spirituality as I walk with the people. ✠

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### *Editor, continued from page 2*

and we are that ‘who.’”

Meanwhile there were perhaps thousands of spring breakers who spent their week or two away, taking part in mission trips of various kinds in a number of countries, presenting a very different face of the U.S. and living out the real meaning of love of country and world. ✠

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### *Leadership, continued from page 3*

Christ came into this world on a search-and-rescue mission. “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Our mission is to be part of that search-and-rescue mission in our own circles of influence. Our mission is reconciliation in the world. It might be in a prison cell. It might be in a hospital room at night, in the midst of wires, tubes, and monitors. It might be with an angry, stubborn penitent.

Jesus still enters locked rooms, tight places, and desolate corners of our world through you and me. He will go anywhere to be with his loved ones. It doesn’t matter if it’s in a nursing home or an Intensive Care Unit. It makes no difference if it’s in a palace, a guest room at the White House, or the back booth of some greasy spoon café late in the wee hours. The “where” just doesn’t matter to him. It’s the “who” that matters, and we are that “who.” We exist to share this Good News. We are instruments through which the Lord’s mission of salvation continues. “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:21-22).

May that Holy Spirit empower us to carry the Easter message into our circles of influence and beyond. ✠



# Roll Away Your Stone

by Tim Deveney, *Precious Blood Volunteers Director*

For Reflection Matthew 28:1-10

In my previous job with Unbound I traveled a lot. My position there had me out on the road working with the priests who invited people to sponsor. One of those weekends I was able to spend with Fr. Sam, who was a priest from the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Fr. Sam had spent much of his life as a priest working and living in a rough neighborhood in Baltimore. For those who have watched the HBO series, *The Wire*, the cityscapes he lived in were similar to what was portrayed in the series. During his sermon that weekend Fr. Sam described a message on a church sign in Baltimore that read: “We are an Easter people living in a Good Friday world.”

We have Good Fridays all around us. All we have to do is look at the nightly news where the headlines tell us about the terrible things humans do to each other. There are refugees fleeing terrorism in Sudan, hunger in Somalia, bombs being dropped on innocent

civilians by military aircraft in Yemen, and constant shelling by various armed factions fighting in Syria and Iraq. Although progress has been made in the last 20 years, in the United States we still have persistent problems of violent crimes, including murder. It is indeed a Good Friday world.

All of us have lived Good Friday when we have lost people who are close to us. We know the overwhelming emotions that accompany grief: fear; sadness; anger. The emotions that come out of grief, especially right after death happens, are some of the rawest we can have as human beings. The nights following my dad’s death three years ago are still some of the most intense experiences of pain in my life.

The women at Jesus’ tomb had to be feeling all of these emotions, especially when their friend, who was in the prime of his life, was sentenced to death and executed by an unjust government with the

*continued on page 12*



*Pope Francis calls us to reach out and touch the poor as brothers and sisters.*

## The Sacred Touch

by Fr. David Kelly, C.P.P.S., PBMR Director

I was recently invited to a cluster meeting of priests, religious, and archdiocesan personnel in our area. It was a gathering of the parish staffs of the Catholic churches on the south and southwest side of Chicago. Unlike many other priest clusters, this was a younger crowd—many serving Hispanic communities. I was invited to listen and reflect with them on the violence in and around Chicago’s south and southwest sides.

One by one, they shared their experiences with violence. One related that he had buried over 30 young people due to violence in 2016 alone; another spoke of his standing together with some parishioners near the church, when someone came through shooting.

These were good men and women who knew they had to respond in some way; merely preaching and teaching no longer seemed enough. The question

they wrestled with and that “held them captive” was what to do. What could they do to make a difference?

Later in the day, as I was sitting with some volunteers at the Juvenile Detention Center, we spoke of Pope Francis’ call to give to those who ask for money on the street corners and at traffic stops. We all admitted that too often we drive by them or even fail to acknowledge their presence. Our response was we didn’t want to give them money for fear they would use the money for drink or drugs. But Pope Francis’ response was give anyway, without thought or judgment, adding “If that drink was the one thing all day that gave them a moment of joy or peace, then how could we say no?”

Pope Francis goes on challenging us to not only give money, but as we give, to reach out and touch

*continued on page 12*

*Roll Away Your Stone, continued from page 10*

blessing of the religious leadership. So much lost at the hands of the Roman military machine and religious men fearing a threat to their power. All of the possibilities to laugh, cry, talk, learn and just be with their friend and teacher were buried in a tomb. They believe they will no longer be greeted warmly with his presence. There would be no more greetings of peace, an end to stories that challenged their vision of God, no more castigating Peter! Everything about Jesus is now consigned to memory.

In Matthew's version of the Resurrection the women who go to see Jesus' tomb are greeted with an earthquake. The stone is rolled away from the entrance of the tomb and an angel appears. This is terrifying stuff! So terrifying that the tough, and possibly battle hardened, guards "were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men." The women must have been terrified as well, but must have been able to overcome enough fear that they listened to the voice of the angel. The angel tells them "Do not be afraid!" and then to come in to the tomb to see that Jesus' dead body is not there anymore. Going into the tomb, must have been the most terrifying part of the experience for the women.

In the midst of their grief, their fear they are able to see and hear. They don't let fear, anger and sadness keep them from seeing the presence of the divine that is right in front of them. However, they must have felt great joy knowing that their teacher, their friend was raised from the dead. Their emotions had to be different from where they were on Thursday. On Thursday they had someone they were following, but it was part of their everyday life. On Friday it was all gone. On Sunday he was alive again and the joy they must have felt would have been overwhelming.

We cannot forget the Good Fridays in our world. Easter Sunday means nothing without it. At the same time we look at the Good Fridays in our world knowing that it is never the final answer. There is hope around the block. A massive stone can be simply rolled away. We can walk inside the tomb to see that it is empty and that our brother, our friend, our savior lives. Then we run out and tell the world all about it. ✠

*The Sacred Touch, continued from page 11*

the person—look them in the eye and acknowledge them as a brother or sister. More than just passing by or tossing a coin, this human engagement lessens the distance between the haves and the have nots and invites the giver and the receiver into a relationship.

Our work of reconciliation is about breaching the barriers and dismantling the walls that keep us apart and disconnected. It calls us to move beyond what is comfortable to the uncomfortable.

As I thought about the call of Pope Francis—a call we hear in a host of ways—I couldn't keep from thinking that here was the answer to the question in the cluster meeting. While wondering "what to do," what if we chose "touching" the men and women begging—for more than money—on the street corners and in the alleyways of their neighborhoods?

In his book *Just Mercy*, Bryan Stevenson says that in order to make a difference—a real and lasting change—we have to be willing to be proximate and be uncomfortable. Is that not the call of the Gospels and of our Pope today? We are called to draw near and lessen the distance between humans if this violence in our communities is to stop.

Jesus knew the need for touch and its power. He touched the outcast leper, the blind man, the woman caught in adultery, the dead child, the Samaritan woman at the well. He looked in the eyes of those unlike himself, he was not afraid to get close to suffering people. He could see what so many could not see and he touched them. It was in that touch that change happened.

It is not just giving, but it is in receiving as well. How often we are brought to a new place or given a new perspective and a new energy as we enter the life of another? In scripture, we hear how Thomas, in touching the wounds of Jesus, finds his faith and courage. The two disciples walking to Emmaus recognize Christ as they break bread together—touching one another through shared stories and a common table.

The sacred encounter of another person is a gift. Perhaps the call of Pope Francis isn't really so much about the one who is begging; perhaps, in reality, might he be thinking more of us individually and as Church! ✠



**Let us serve God  
with holy joy.**

**- St. Gaspar del Bufalo**



# Missionaries of the Precious Blood



**Cincinnati Province**

[cpps-preciousblood.org](http://cpps-preciousblood.org)

[vocation@cpps-preciousblood.org](mailto:vocation@cpps-preciousblood.org)



**Kansas City Province**

[preciousbloodkc.org](http://preciousbloodkc.org)

[vocations@preciousbloodkc.org](mailto:vocations@preciousbloodkc.org)

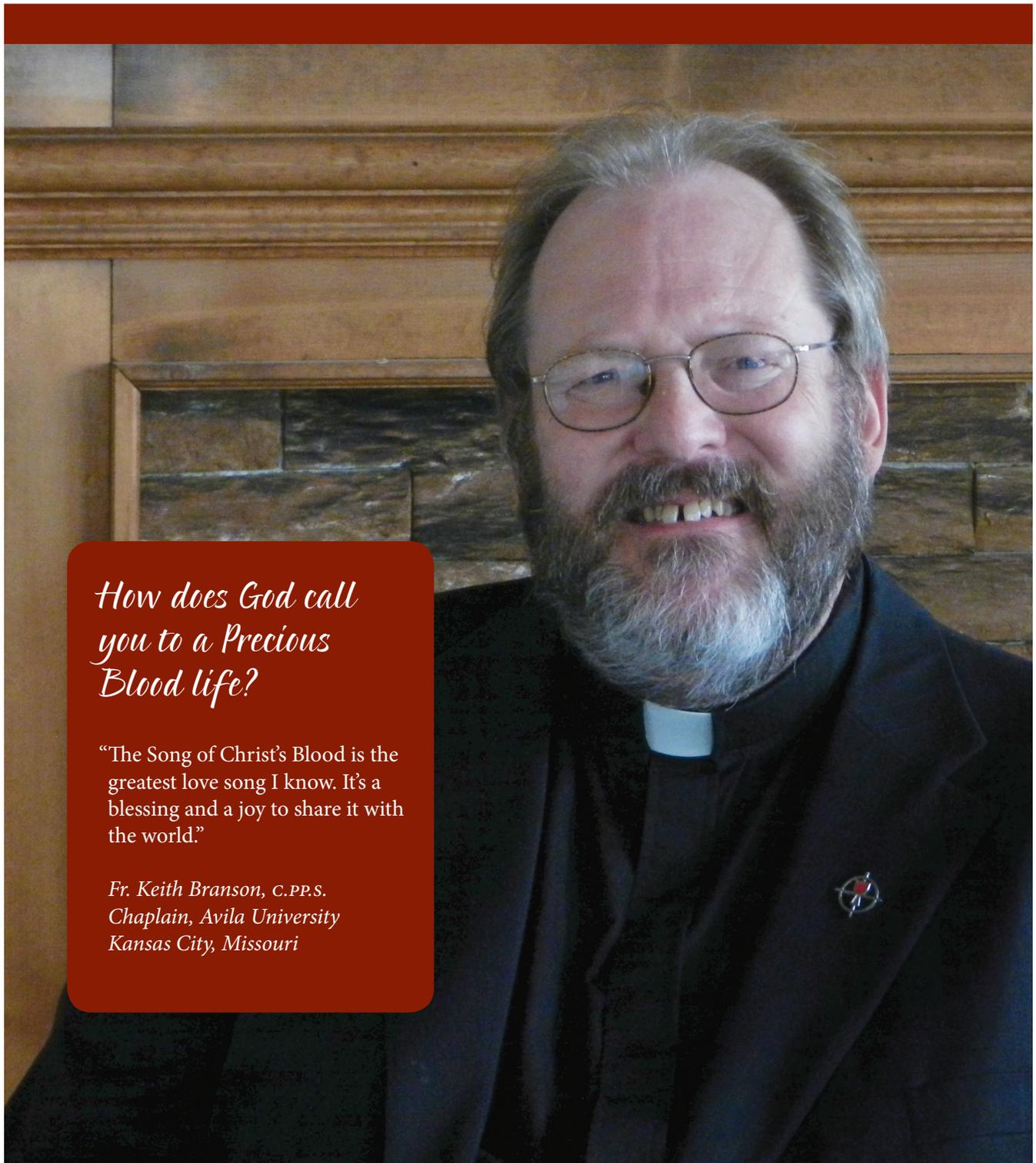
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greatest love song I know. It’s a  
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*Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S.  
Chaplain, Avila University  
Kansas City, Missouri*