

The NEW WINE PRESS

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

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BRINGING US NEAR

Gerry Downs

It was and remains amazing to me that divorce can be the end of one life, but more importantly, the beginning of another.

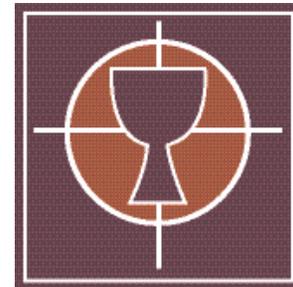
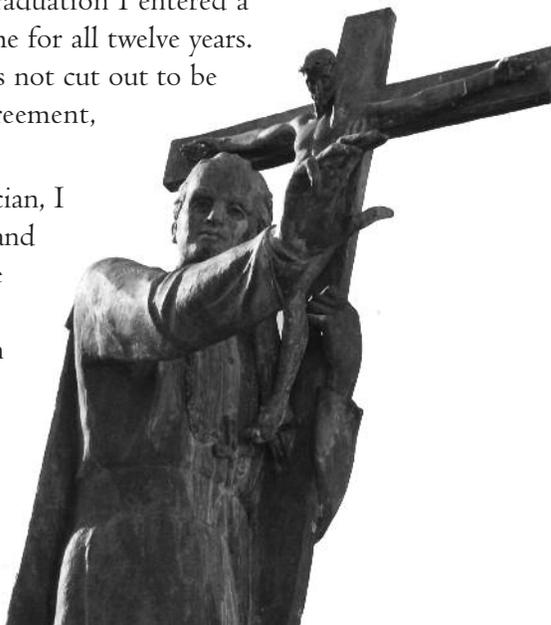
When my former husband told me that he wanted a divorce after almost 25 years of marriage, I thought my life was over. My four children were out of the house, and I had to find a place to live and some way to make sense of my life again. A very good friend, who was a widow, had a large house and was willing to take me in. I had no money, except what spousal support I got, and my friend was willing to accept what I could pay. A young man, Jeff Keyes, a musician in a local Precious Blood Parish, also lived there. The loving atmosphere in that home made me feel welcome, gave me comfort, and most of all, brought a measure of peace and hope to my life. Involvement in my local parish was a great support and the close-knit parish community was my refuge and my help.

A Place for Church

From childhood Church has always played a large part in my life. I went to Catholic grammar school and high school, involved in May crownings, pageants, choirs, and various saint's day processions. In high school I taught religious education, though I wasn't much older than some of my students. My parents were examples to me of what a Christian should be. Following high school graduation I entered a convent with the same sisters who had taught me for all twelve years. It didn't take long for us all to realize that I was not cut out to be in vowed religious life. With all parties in agreement, I went home.

While working as a student surgical technician, I met the man who would become my husband, and after a short engagement we were married. We began our family and in the course of the next several years had four children. He continued in the Navy and ultimately made it a career. That meant lots of separations and time alone with the children, but the Navy family and the Church community, which often were the same folks, were there for support and encouragement. I became involved with the social service arm

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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.

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LEADERSHIP NOTES

Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S.

A number of years ago a marriage counselor mistakenly scheduled two couples for the same time. Since he didn't want to turn either couple away he asked if they would be willing to meet together for a joint counseling session. They agreed. This ran contrary to the ethical rules of marriage counseling at the time and the therapist knew he might be risking his license. But in that session he found that the couples helped each other in their discussions more than he could have helped them alone.

Intrigued by the success of that session, the therapist discreetly asked some of his more trusted colleagues if they had ever met with more than one married couple at a time. Soon others were secretly trying this counseling strategy and finding positive results. Articles promoting this counseling technique started showing up in profession counseling journals, and discussions about its efficacy became common at marriage counseling workshops and conventions. Eventually the governing board of marriage counselors declared conjoint marriage counseling to be a valid and acceptable form of counseling.

How Change Happens

Change most always happens from the bottom up. It happens when the people “in the trenches” find something that works better or solves a new problem they encounter. The new idea trickles up to the directors, the bosses, and the governing boards. Ideally these people trust the experience of the workers and investigate the possibility of changing the rules to incorporate the new idea. At its best even the church has changed in this way.

At our Provincial Assembly in June, Dr. Richard Johnson spoke of the inevitability and necessity of change for any living organism or organization, including our community and the larger church. What does not change, dies.

Where does the movement for change in the church come from? From us. We are the people in the trenches. We are the ones who have the hands-on experience which tells us what works best in sharing the love of God with the people we serve. We are the ones who have the right—the responsibility—to pass on the wisdom of our experience to those in power in the church. We advocate for appropriate change not because we desire to do whatever we want, but because we desire to proclaim God's love in the most effective ways. What church leaders do with what we offer is up to them, but they risk becoming irrelevant if they refuse to believe that wisdom can come from the grass roots.

See *Leadership*, continued on page 19...



“Advocates for change are often viewed with distrust and suspicion regardless of the merits of their proposals. They are often labeled “unfaithful,” and no dialogue with them is permitted.”

GRACED WALKING

Daniel Torson, C.P.P.S.

In my teaching of ethics, one of the primary themes is the development of dispositions and attitudes. A primary disposition that I personally bring to the classroom is the awareness of graced time in which I have the opportunity to “walk” with my students. This “walking” occurs in various degrees as I interact with students and try to meet their needs both academically and personally. My primary disposition is most readily observed in modeling an attitude of personal attention to the students even in the midst of a classroom of twenty-five students.

It is this disposition of “graced walking” that I sought to bring to Summer Special Formation. I had the opportunity to mentor two outstanding and dedicated students, Bob Jansen from St. Henry, OH (Cincinnati Province) and Dominic Bui from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (Vietnam Mission of the Kansas City Province). Together we engaged in community living as a formation group and as part of the community residing in the Advanced Formation House in Hyde Park in Chicago.

Our summer began by traveling to St. Joseph, MO for the Kansas City Province Assembly. As our Kansas City professed membership declines, we are always enriched, inspired, and nurtured by the presence of Companions at all of our sessions. Thus, a spirit of vitality and excitement for ministry in the Church was communicated and renewed. After the Assembly an additional week was spent interacting with the membership in Kansas City, Liberty, and Sedalia. Fr. Thomas Conway offered a stimulating presentation of the history of the division of the American Province. On behalf of Bob and Dominic, I

express our gratitude to the Kansas City Province members and Province Center Staff for their hospitality and time spent with us.

The next four weeks in Hyde Park provided the opportunity for an intense and extensive study of our founders: St. Gaspar and Fr. Francis de Sales Brunner. With the assistance of Frs. Jerry Stack, Dennis Chriszt, Joseph Nassal, and a reading list of considerable length, our group reached an appreciation of our founders and identified the spirit of these men present in our Community today.

Most exciting for our group was the presence of Dominic Bui. Dominic is the first student from Vietnam

to engage in formation here in the United States. His presence and contributions brought to reality the missionary spirit of the Community in the twenty-first century. Both Bob and I were personally enriched through this cultural experience and exchange. Bob concluded his summer formation by participating in the Community Retreat in Belleville, IL, while Dominic returned to Vietnam to prepare for exams.



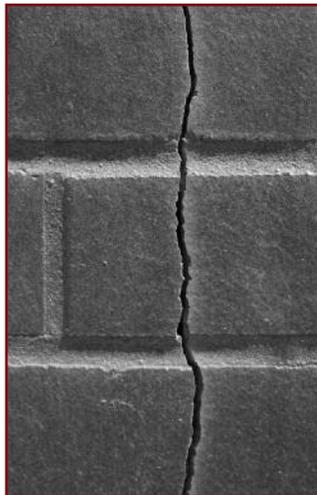
From l to r: Dominic Bui, Fr. Daniel Torson, Fr. Al Ebach, and Bob Jansen following Mass at Sacred Heart-Guadalupe Parish in Kansas City, MO.

In retrospect, I am grateful for the opportunity to have “walked” with two of our students and contributed to the process of formation within our provinces. The community experience of living in Hyde Park with our members greatly enriched our encounter with C.P.P.S. roots. I am grateful for the hospitality extended to us by Mark Peres, Dennis Chriszt, Jeff Kirsch, and Ton Sison. 🙏

Fr. Daniel Torson teaches at Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois, and serves as Director of the Summer Special Formation Program.

Continued from page 1...

of the Navy for support of families and children, and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to be of help to my neighbors and friends. I was again a



“It...remains amazing to me that divorce can be the end of one life, but more importantly, the beginning of another.”

religious education teacher, and at one point in late 1970 the local priest asked me to give instructions

to a young woman who wanted to become Catholic. That was a bit of a challenge since I had not done that before, but it gave me the opportunity to really talk about my Catholic faith and what it meant to me.

An Ending

After a 20 year career, my former husband retired. We bought our first home, became members of the local church, and both of us were hired there, he head of parish maintenance, and I as youth minister. After a year, we decided that his parish salary was not going to continue to support four children in high school and all that they needed. He found work in a school district several hours away, and though the money was better, we had less and less time together. We realized that our marriage was not working, sought counseling and tried to put things together. It helped for a while, but the years of separation had not helped our relationship. We had both grown, only not in the same way, or with the same ideas and goals. One day he did not come home at all. And, finally, when he did, he asked for a divorce.

I needed a job and the first place I looked was to my Church friends. I got the position as receptionist/secretary at a parish staffed by Conventual Franciscans. As God would have it, the former parish convent was serving as the Provincial House for the Pacific Province of the Society of the Precious Blood. I met many of the priests who lived there, because of my duties at

the parish, and because of their involvement in the parish. During that time, I also made the decision to go back to school. Jeff told me about the Rensselaer Program for Church Music and Liturgy at St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana. I really did not know much about the community, and I did not have an undergraduate degree, but I was so encouraged that I applied to the program, thinking all the while that it would go nowhere.

A New Beginning

In the spring, Fr. Larry Heiman, program director, brought me near when he accepted the program application and the next summer I was on my way. I was still working at the parish and for three years

the pastor was generous enough to let me have the six weeks each summer to attend the program. I loved it! Rensselaer is not, weather-wise, the place one really wants to spend six weeks from late June to early August, and one can, in the heat of a quiet night, truly hear the corn grow. But those three summers were some of the best in my memory. I learned more than I thought possible, made friends from across the country, enjoyed concerts, and wonderful liturgies. I got my first taste of preaching at celebrations of Liturgy of the Hours, celebrated with other students, and was encouraged by their response to my preaching.

At Rensselaer I also learned much more about the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. I became interested in the community and what they did, and the charisms of reconciliation, forgiveness, dedication to the Precious Blood of Jesus and “bringing those who are far off near.” When my musician friend became a member of the Community, I became more and more interested. Several years later, when Fr. Jeff Keyes invited me to become a Companion, I wanted to move into formation to learn more about reconciliation and forgiveness. I had felt far off because of the bitterness I felt toward my former husband.

Learning Reconciliation

I learned that reconciliation does not mean that everything is put back together just as it was before, but it does mean that life can go on in a different way. My desire was to be brought near by the Blood of Christ and to live in that place in peace and forgiveness. I believe



My desire was to be brought near by the Blood of Christ and to live in that place in peace and forgiveness.

that the Precious Blood of Jesus does sustain life and bring new life. The new life I was living included ministry in the Church and the ability to use my gifts for the building up of the Church. I learned to accept forgiveness for myself and to forgive my former husband because of my new understanding of reconciliation.

After much prayer, I applied for an annulment and it was granted. By that time I had successfully finished the course of study at Rensselaer, had changed jobs, and had become the Associate Pastor of a parish. We had a priest on the team, but he was not the pastor. The sister who was music director, the priest, and I were the Pastoral Team, and we worked together to shepherd the parish. While working there I entered the Master of Theological Studies program at the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, completing my studies a few years later and finishing formation to become a Companion.

A Preaching Ministry

My membership in the Community and the spirituality of the Precious Blood has brought me support, help, prayer opportunities, involvement in ministry and great comfort. It also gave me occasions to strengthen my preaching skills by participation in a group which met weekly to study the Scriptures and develop a homily for the following Sunday. As Associate Pastor, I was on the preaching rotation of the parish and the weekly meetings with other preachers were just what I needed.

After I left the parish, Fr. Greg Comella recommended that I become a preacher for Isaiah Ministries, a group providing preached parish missions across the country. I was an itinerant preacher for the next four years, and in my presentations on reconciliation, I often had the opportunity to draw from Precious Blood spirituality. Eventually I accepted the job of Mission Coordinator for the Isaiah Ministries, scheduling missions, recruiting preachers, doing marketing, creating brochures, paying bills, and doing my best to keep the ministry running. I recruited Precious Blood priests as often as I could. Fr. Comella was already a member of the preaching team, as was Fr. Lee Flaherty. Later Fr. Bill Nordenbrock, and Fr. Dennis Chriszt joined the team.

Back to School

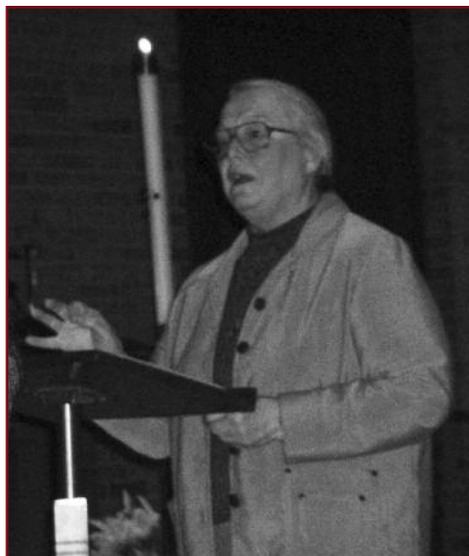
I have always loved learning, and since my two previous academic ventures had been successful, I decided to enroll in a distance learning program at the Graduate Theological Foundation in Donaldson, Indiana—a two and a half year program in which classes could be taken at a degree granting institution near one's home. I did most of my academic work at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and graduated with a Doctor of Ministry degree. Over a period of 11 years, I had attended classes at some

combination of Rensselaer, GTU, and GTF almost year round to accomplish my academic goals. Many, many people, mostly my Precious Blood community, supported and walked with me during the entire time. I thank God for them and for the gift of perseverance!

Proclaiming Abundant Love

In the interests of spreading Precious Blood Spirituality, Fr. Jeff Keyes, Fr. Jim Franck, Fr. Jim Sloan, Sr. Toni Longo, A.S.C., Companion Maureen Lahiff and I began to dream of a parish mission dedicated to that spirituality. We came up with a four night mission called "Renewing the Covenant," and presented it in a Precious Blood Parish during the following Lenten season. It was presented in several other venues as well. Several years later,

when Fr. Dennis Chriszt was asked to begin a mission-preaching ministry, he invited me to be a part of the initial team working together to create a Precious Blood mission. For the last five years, "Proclaiming Abundant Love" has been presented in many parishes around the country, and plans are underway to create a second mission with a focus on reconciliation.



Companion Gerry Downs during a recent "Proclaiming Abundant Love" Parish Mission.

Because of my commitment to the Community and to

Precious Blood spirituality over the last 17 years as a Companion, my life has become one of prayer, hope, mission, travel, and continued active involvement in the life of the Church. Though my parish is not a Precious Blood parish, the parishioners there are aware of my commitment to the Community and to the Spirituality. Opportunities to travel and preach Precious Blood missions as a Companion and fellow missionary have been a joy, because they provide me with more opportunities to speak about reconciliation and forgiveness, and the saving power of the Blood of Christ.

See [Bringing Near](#), continued on page 11...

+COMPANION FRIEDA GALLAGHER

Cathy Gallagher Pankiewicz

Appearances can be deceiving. Looking at my mother a year ago, it was hard for most people to believe that she was ninety three years old. She seemed to have avoided many of the typical pitfalls of ageing. She still lived alone in her home, drove her car, went to daily Mass, played a great hand of bridge, kept up on politics, and handled all of her finances. Everything she wore coordinated beautifully and she kept enough tint on her hair to keep it a light brown. But things inside Mom were changing.

A New Reality

My sister, Diane, and I saw what most others did not. Mom's macular degeneration threatened her driving and bridge game. Degenerating discs in her back sent pain throughout her body and made dressing progressively more difficult. Osteoporosis left her bones brittle. Bouts of vertigo came and went and a serious fall was only one episode of unsteadiness away. A cane became her constant companion on good days and a walker on bad ones. A new reality set in for my sister and me. Mom couldn't continue to beat the odds. She was failing and even she instinctively knew that some difficult times lay ahead.



Frieda Gallagher at her 90th birthday party, seated next to her blood sister, Sister Agnes Ann Kneib, a Sister of Charity of Leavenworth.

After many difficult discussions and more than a few prayers for guidance, Diane and I persuaded Mom that living independently at home wouldn't do anymore. But it was with a heavy heart that Frieda moved to the Living Community. Trying to decide what to take and what to leave behind troubled her. Realizing that without a car she was dependent on others made her angry. Mostly, though, she wondered just how long and how exhausting the journey would

be before she died. There was very little anyone could say that would reassure her. The vibrant little lady talked more and more about her longing to "go home." Don't get me wrong. My mother loved life and lived it to its fullest. But she couldn't help wanting to call the shots. She wanted to die on her own terms just as she had lived her life. She was not one to patiently "wait and see what happened."

Independence

Frieda was born on a farm, one of eight children who "always lived like it was the Depression." She grew up helping with all kinds of work, most of which would be considered much too hard for children today. She walked to a one room school house and graduated with highest honors from the Convent of the Sacred Heart.

Unlike many of her classmates, Frieda did not want to get married after high school. For more than seventeen years she worked at New York Life Insurance Company in downtown St. Joseph. She became a "city girl." Life was good, filled with girlfriends galore, lots of pretty clothes, money in her savings account, and plenty of boyfriends. Many asked Mom to marry, but she always said "no." She valued her independence too much.

Marriage and Family

Finally, a mutual friend introduced Frieda to my dad, Ralph, a bachelor farmer from Maryville who had had his share of girlfriends and independence too. He, however, was in the sad situation of caring for his mother who was dying a slow painful death with stomach cancer. A long courtship followed and, when my mother was 39 and my dad was 46, something changed Frieda's mind. Ralph proposed and she accepted. (She later confided in me that Dad's care for his mother was a pretty good indication of the kind of husband she knew he would be.)

After three children in four years Ralph and Frieda were famous for being the Abraham and Sarah of the community. Mom and Dad always loved kids, though, and I never felt like my parents were "old." They taught me that children are life's greatest blessing and one could always

count on God to help no matter how big the clan grew to be.

Mom said hard work gave her a sense of accomplishment and she seemed happiest when she was busy. Money was tight. We shopped outlet stores and garage sales. The church rummage sale was the fashion highlight of the year. Mom canned, pickled, and froze everything that grew on the farm from cherries to chickens. All of us helped her grow and harvest a huge garden. She sold cream and eggs for extra money. She washed our clothes in a wringer washer and we helped her hang them on a line in the sun. Between cooking for the hay men, mending Dad's overalls, and keeping a growing family in clothes that fit, the work never stopped.

When I was in high school, my mom broke with conventional thinking again, and got a job outside the home. It caused quite a stir in the old neighborhood. Most farm wives did not have jobs outside of the home. Mom got her nursing home administrator's license and became the administrator of Parkdale Manor in Maryville. She loved her work. The staff and the residents adored her.

Loss and Faith

As a child, my family spent an unusually large amount of time in funeral homes. I watched Mom deal with death time and time again. The elderly lady who used to baby sit me committed suicide. Mom watched her father die an agonizing death while bedridden for years with arthritis. My grandmother was always ill with breast cancer and heart disease. Two of my mom's sisters died from cancer leaving young families behind. Throughout her long life, my mom lost five of her brothers and sisters. The obituary pages of the newspaper were continually filled with funeral arrangements for her closest friends and family.

In 1970 my brother Jimmy was diagnosed with a malignant tumor. He died five months later. My mom and dad had lost their only son at the tender age of 14. My father aged ten years in six months. He tried to be strong, but it was Mom who got us all through it. She never lost faith that God would somehow, someday make it all OK. And Diane and I believed her.

Four years later, death rattled us again. On an icy New Year's Eve morning in 1974, my dad

went outside to hay his cattle. He died, pinned under a tractor that crushed his body when the load he was pulling slipped into a ravine. My sister and I found him.

Death and Dying

Mom still had a zest for life in spite of the holes in her heart. She sold the farm and moved to Maryville. She continued working at the nursing home, and began a ministry to the homebound and bedridden. She made new friends. She traveled to the Holy Land, Lourdes, and Fatima, three places she had always dreamed of visiting. She retired, sold her house in Maryville and moved to Saint Joseph to be near the grandchildren she loved.

Her ministry to the elderly took her into almost every nursing home in Saint Joseph. It would be interesting to know how many people received Holy Communion from Frieda over the years. With each visit she took plenty of time for extra prayers and words of encouragement. Death and dying were constantly present to her and she used her experiences to help others prepare.

As a Companion of the Precious Blood, my mother saw Christ in the marginalized elderly. Many of those who knew of her ministry told her they could never do what she did, because they would find it too "depressing."

The Final Ministry

In June of this spring, Mom came to our home to die. She had suffered trauma from internal bleeding with other complications we couldn't know about unless she agreed to a major surgery and a lengthy and painful attempt at recovery. With the help of our family doctor she decided that it was time to "let go and let God."

Frieda always saw things differently than most people. In good times and in bad, she was more excited about death than anyone I have ever known—not in a morbid way, but as faith in God would



"My family and I became the 'marginalized.'

We felt "on the fringe" as we faced what society tries so hard to avoid, the awareness that death awaits us all.

Mom began her last ministry, this time to the family that stood around her deathbed."

See *Frieda*, continued on page 19...

+COMPANION JOAN SAGE

Bill Hubmann, C.P.P.S.

Two years ago when Joan was diagnosed with an inoperable lung cancer one of her first phone calls was to me. She wanted to pick my brains since I had been an oncology chaplain. What should she expect? How long might she have? What should she expect from the treatments? Would she have much pain? These were really questions to ask her doctor, not me. But what she really wanted to know was would I pray for her, support her, celebrate the Anointing of the Sick with her with her whole family gathered and ultimately would I celebrate her funeral—with the emphasis on “celebrate”! Certainly, I would do all I could. Joan had been my dearest friend since 1978 when I was a deacon intern at St. James in Liberty.



From l to r: Companions Janet Dixon, Nancy Goeckel, Joan Sage, and Don Ollier, and Fr. Barry Fischer.

Joan had befriended the members of the community from the time we started helping out at St. James. Several of our priests helped Joan through the grieving and healing process after her divorce. Joan was parish secretary for 11 years after we were given the parish. She constantly advocated for those suffering through divorce. “Stay close to God. Make sure to receive the sacraments.

God will never abandon you. God is always there to heal and help.” Joan was a Companion and Missionary of the Precious Blood—an advocate and wounded healer long before there were Companions of the Precious Blood.

Joan treated everyone like family. There was always room for one more at the table. She was blessed twice over about 27 years ago when she married Jim Sage, who gave her a lovely home and helped her out with the needs of her family. Jim was a most kind and gentle partner who always supported Joan. He died several months before Joan’s diagnosis and several months before their 25th anniversary. Joan believed that he left to get things ready for her ultimate arrival. She knew he would be waiting.

As an artist Joan worked to make the world a more beautiful place by sharing her many gifts. Time spent with Joan were times spent in holy communion. She was always the host and steward, constantly solicitous of the others needs.

In the end Joan was not afraid of the pain, she was afraid that she might lose her faith. She didn’t. Joan was faithful, prayerful and cheerful to the end. We remember her as our beloved companion and pray for her children: Steven, Michael, Amy and Patrick.

May she rest in peace. 🌹

Fr. Bill Hubmann is a hospital chaplain at Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center in Chicago, IL.

From the *Kansas City Star*, July 15, 2008:

Joan Parle Sage, wife of James J. Sage, who preceded her in death, passed away at her home on July 14, 2008 in Liberty, Mo. Joan was born to Francis and Cleo Parle on February 23, 1931 in Excelsior Springs, Mo. Our beloved mother’s deep faith was an inspiration to us and all felt welcomed in her home. Joan had a unique gift of making a person feel especially loved by her whenever you were in her presence. Joan’s artistic abilities have been admired by many but more important to her was the enjoyment of painting with her companions. Joan will be remembered for her faith, dignity, grace and delightful sense of humor. Joan was the secretary of St. James Parish for eleven years until she retired in 1988. Joan was blessed to be involved as a companion in the Precious Blood Society.

+COMPANION JOHN RAUTH

Patty Hayes

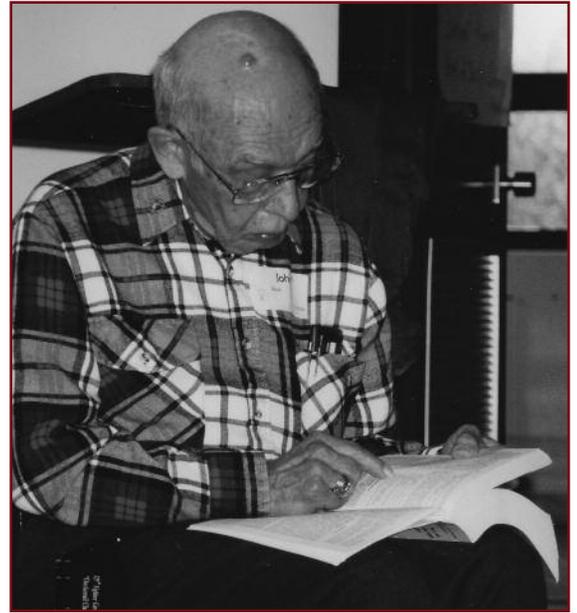
The name Albert Moon sounds like a character from a children's storybook but in reality he was a person who played a big part in bringing seven children into the world. Were it not for Albert Moon and World War II, John Rauth, a farm boy from Nebraska, and Elizabeth (Betty) Cobb, a city girl from Pennsylvania, would never have met, had a marriage that lasted sixty-four years and been blessed with seven children. Albert was Betty's cousin and John's classmate in flight school in 1942. A picture of Betty in Albert's footlocker caught John's attention and Albert introduced them when he and John went to Pennsylvania in December of 1942 while on pass from the Army Air Corps.

John was born January 15, 1921, to Aaron F. and Anna Theresa (Stander) Rauth, in Wabash, Nebraska; he grew up on a farm outside York, Nebraska and was the oldest of nine children. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in August 1940, starting out as a radioman and later becoming a Flying Sergeant with the 325th Fighter Group, also known as the "Checkertail Clan." John flew P-40s and P-47s in the Mediterranean theater and was shot down off the coast of Sicily. After 41 years of military service John retired as a Lt. Colonel with the Missouri Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force. In 2004, he wrote and published his memoirs, "7 Hours a Prisoner," which has been described as a life story, a war story, and a love story.

John married the love of his life, Betty, on August 5, 1944 at Sacred Heart of Mary Church in Jermyn, Pa. Seven children were born to the couple, Joyce, Eileen, Kay, Patty, Mike, Jeanne, and Reine. The morning of John's passing on August 2, 2008 he signed his 64th wedding anniversary card for Betty.

In 1953 John Rauth Construction Co. was founded and John served as its President until 1986, when he turned it over to his son, Michael, who continues the business today. In his business, John was a meticulous craftsman and woodworker. His practice was to measure twice and cut once. He wanted to be remembered as an honest businessman and the company's motto was "For Fine Craftsmanship." In John's memoirs he tells "of the most satisfying thing I have done with my life"—having been appointed the oversight committee chairman on the 1990's renovation of St. Francis Xavier Church and being on the parish building committee meant the world to him. He attended weekly meetings with the then pastor, Fr. Michael Volkmer, C.P.P.S. and would stop in almost daily

to survey the progress. In John's own words he expressed his pride in accomplishing the makeover of the church building: "I was very proud of what we had done for St. Francis Xavier parish. It was one of



John F. Rauth

my life's most rewarding experiences, and I thank God for that."

John was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He demonstrated his faith, love of family, and love of country daily. He man of great faith, he had a deep devotion to Jesus and His Blessed Mother, Mary. John has said that he did not push the throttle of his airplane forward without saying a prayer to Mary for his safety.

John and Betty have been members of St. Francis Xavier Church in St. Joseph, Mo. for 56 years. Having been invited by Fr. Jim Urbanic, in the 1990s to become Companions of the Precious Blood, John and Betty were in the original group. To be invited into this newly formed association with the Precious Blood community became another way for John to express his faith, and he wore his Precious Blood Companion lapel pin daily. Although health problems kept John from attending Companion retreats and functions the past few years, he always renewed his covenant on time with the commitment to pray for the Precious Blood priests, brothers, and Companions daily. Thank you, John, for all your prayers, you will be deeply missed. 🙏

Patty Hayes is the daughter of John and Betty Rauth, and a member of the St. Joseph, Missouri Companions Group.



FROM THE GARDEN, THE TABLE, THE CROSS

Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S.

July 5, 1987. I arrived in Rome for the workshop for Precious Blood formation and vocation directors. Father Anton Loipfinger, the moderator general



+Fr. Greg Comella, C.P.P.S.
1946-2008

at the time, was waiting for me and drove to the college where we would be staying. After a quick shower and a change of clothes, Father Anton gave Greg Comella and me a quick tour of the Vatican and St. Peter's.

We arrived just in time to see the pope peek out of his window and give a brief noon message with the Angelus.

I had not seen Greg since he facilitated the six-week summer special formation program at St. Charles in Carthage nine years before. Greg introduced me to the spiritual exercises during a directed retreat and facilitated forays into the false self to help me and others identify and embrace the true self.

Friend and Mentor

Rome was the last place I wanted to be that summer of 1987 and Greg knew it. He was aware that my brother had committed suicide less than a month before the workshop began and during those weeks in Rome and later in Salzburg, Greg was an encouraging and supportive friend.

During the long bus trips to places of historical importance to Gaspar and Brunner, members of the General Council and those facilitating the retreat would often take the microphone to either lead us in prayer or point out a place of Precious Blood significance. Just before arriving in Salzburg, Greg took the microphone and said something to the effect, "We have been reflecting on the suffering Jesus endured and how he could love in his losing." Then he mentioned my brother Ed and asked all on the bus to hold him and my family in prayer. Greg's compassion and care during that summer will be forever etched in my memory.

Greg was a mentor who became a good friend and brother in the blood of Christ. In the early 1990s, we worked together on developing common

formation policies for the North American provinces. But it was during that summer workshop in 1987 that Greg offered practical questions and suggestions to challenge how we perceived our role as directors and our relationship with candidates in formation. From imaging Precious Blood spirituality in our lives to providing prayer experiences that flowed from our life as a community, Greg offered us solid material on spirituality and charisma and how to make it an integral part of a house of formation.

Invited to the Garden

Looking back at my journal from that summer of 1987, Greg gave a reflection on Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. "From the garden, the table, and the cross," he reminded us, "Jesus invited others to enter into his life, his way of life." Greg noted how this is the primary function of the formation director that Jesus used so effectively with his "candidates." What Greg called the "emerging question" more than twenty years ago continues to echo in my mind and heart as a Precious Blood person: "As Jesus took the risk to allow James and John and Peter to enter his brokenness, his pain, his confusion and fear in the garden, can I take the risk to invite another into my garden?"

During the past several years as his body began to break down and betray him, Greg had to answer that question many times. Though I was not one of those invited into his garden in person very often—the last time I saw him was last November when I visited Berkeley and we went to



"As Jesus took the risk to allow James and John and Peter to enter his brokenness, his pain, his confusion and fear in the garden, can I take the risk to invite another into my garden?"

dinner at one of his favorite restaurants in the East Bay—we kept in touch via email. Now and then he would send me a book or a DVD he found valuable in his work of enlarging the spaces in our minds and hearts so that all could find a place at the table. In one of our last emails I received from him, I had asked if he were directing a retreat at Maria Stein this summer. He replied that he would be at Maria Stein July 20-27. Then he noted, "I think this will be my last summer...after six consecutive ones." Less than a week after concluding that retreat, Greg died.

Unimaginable Inclusivity

Earlier this summer, Greg conducted a retreat for diocesan priests from a Midwestern diocese. Following the retreat, Greg sent an email to some of his friends about the retreat and how he “mentioned that perhaps the most significant gift of the life of Jesus was his understanding that the new covenant was characterized by unimaginable inclusivity.” This was certainly one of the key themes in Greg’s repertoire and he was not afraid to talk about it in light of present day issues affecting church and society. After Greg died, I came across a blog by one of the priests who had attended that retreat. Fr. John Nolan wrote how Greg “was severely handicapped by Parkinson’s Disease that disabled the muscles of his legs, but not his spirit, his enthusiasm or resolve.”

Lift Up Your Hearts

Greg Comella was one of the more gifted teachers of spirituality and preachers of the Word our congregation has ever produced. He was a man immersed in spirituality. When the email arrived informing us that Greg had died, I was giving a retreat in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Retrieving the email after the morning conference and before the Eucharist that Monday, the invitation, “Lift up your hearts” became a strenuous spiritual exercise. A heavy heart is hard to lift. But standing at the table of Eucharist that morning, I knew that Greg now enjoys the freedom and fulfillment of God’s reign and the eternal banquet he spoke about so eloquently. His spirit, his enthusiasm and his resolve will continue to inspire precious blood people and all he encountered to keep stretching our hearts and minds so that all are welcome and all find a place at the table. 🍷

Fr. Joe Nassal is an author, retreat master, and a member of the Province Leadership Team.



IN MEMORY

+Liberty Companion Joan Sage.
July 14, 2008.

+Amicus Gregor Dues,
a former member of the Kansas City Province
and one of the founders of the AMICI.
He is survived by his wife Barbara
and daughters Fran and Elena.
July 24, 2008.

+St. Joseph Companion John Rauth.
His wife Betty and daughter Patty Hayes
are also members of the
St. Joseph Companions group.
August 2, 2008.

+Father Gregory Comella, C.P.P.S.,
of the Cincinnati Province.
August 2, 2008.

Bringing Near, continued from page 5...

A Place at the Table

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood and the rock of Precious Blood spirituality have been there for me almost since the beginning of this post-divorce period of my life. During these years the community has provided inclusion, belonging, continued growth, direction, challenge, and involvement in ministry. My divorce was terrible and very difficult to deal with, but with faith in God, a new understanding of reconciliation from a Precious Blood point of view, and the help of my friends, I lived through it. I am more than blessed to have the company of priests, brothers and Companions in community who are friends and who share my journey.

It continues to amaze me that my divorce was, in fact, the end of one life and, more importantly, the beginning of another. My new life includes answering the call to serve the people of God and to help bring them near by the Blood of Christ. I am sure that God knew all along the direction for my life. Since I have allowed God to lead, it has become a life of prayer, hope, friends, community, learning, and opportunity, all bathed in the spirituality of the Precious Blood. I am grateful that the Community found me, and even more grateful that I accepted the invitation to become a Companion of the Precious Blood. 🍷

Gerry Downs is a Precious Blood Companion from Sonoma, California. She serves in parish ministry and as a member of the Precious Blood Parish Mission Team.

A CONTEMPLATIVE BYPASS

Alan Hartway, C.P.P.S.



I'm sure St. Gaspar del Bufalo would have said, if I remember reading his annual retreat letters correctly, "Plant a vineyard." I've not seen vineyards in this part of Colorado. But I did plant a garden—six tomato plants, seven different kinds of lettuce, a variety of herbs including lots of basil and parsley, peppers, and some artemesia for border and keeping out the bugs. In hindsight, I was very glad I had troubled myself with these two raised bed plots in the backyard. The planting has become a literal life saver for me in recovery since my quadruple bypass surgery in late June, and such a garden has come to have several symbolic layers for me.

The physical therapy of the garden was helpful in that it got me outside and moving, albeit quite hesitantly at first. The garden required preparation and maintenance, and so does our own inner life of prayer. The problem with my heart was almost the same.

Preparing for Recovery

I was fortunate in that my annual cardiac stress test in late May revealed the accumulating problems setting me up for a heart attack. My cardiologist recommended doing the bypass procedure *before* a heart attack, because operating in an emergency is never the best of situations and also because a heart attack most of the time leaves permanent scarred heart tissue and muscles. As the schedule was set by the physician, I had a whole month to prepare myself.

After talking with a number of people who have had bypasses and gleaning the wisdom of their experiences, I realized there are numerous obstacles in the stages of recovery. For the first week in the hospital I wouldn't have access to books, the ability to read, and many of the things of daily life. I would have much leg pain where they take the saphenous veins, and chest pain where the sternum is cut open. In fact I found myself right down to almost nothing, like that embarrassing open-at-the-back hospital gown. (No one knows why it is called a gown.) It was a kind of emptiness that I am not used to.

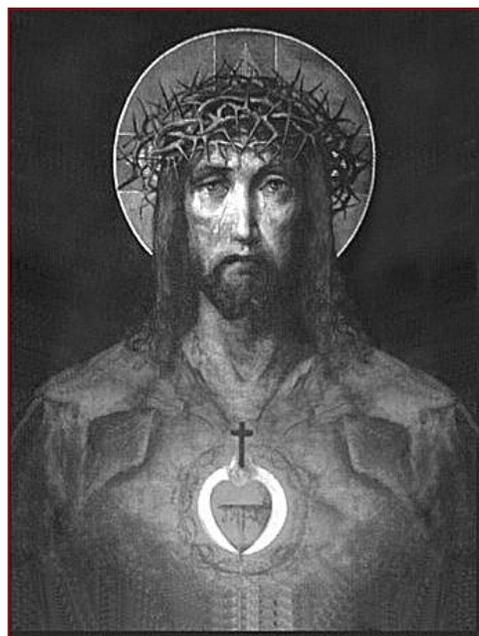
Exposed

It felt like the landscape of a desert or a very dense jungle. In this unfamiliar terrain, the mind has plenty of opportunity to play with wild thoughts, fears, and a dark night of the soul. The mind swings from thoughts to feelings like a monkey in the trees. Every kind of imagination comes up. From the very first moment of return to consciousness, I listened and felt for every internal sound and movement, thinking to myself all the while that surely it is something going wrong. Continuing this way was going to get me nowhere and even intervene in the healing process, which is not merely physical. One nurse told me that my heart was opened up, my innermost self exposed; she very wisely said that this is not just

a physical matter, but something very deep and intimate. The "noise" however is pretty loud. But there is a way to stop all this.

Contemplation

Depending on your definitions, the words *meditation* or *contemplation* arise. Without getting into all the technological differences of the theologians, a practice of contemplation can still the mind and open it up to a very different view. The American philosopher William James, in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and going all the way back to Plato in the Symposium called it "an oceanic vastness." Catholic mystics call it the



"I realized that the movement and flow of the Precious Blood of Jesus even during his suffering and pain symbolized the movement of the flow of my own blood through its new bypasses, and that through this suffering, life and healing are possible."

grace-filled experience of the divine presence. Elijah knew it at the entrance to the cave as the tiny whisper, a translation I've never liked, because the Hebrew "qol demama daqqa" is much closer to "a voice of fine/sheer/pure silence." This view and this sound is the healing presence of God available to us. Getting there in prayer helps us to get "out of ourselves" and take another view of the suffering we are presently in. There are some relatively easy ways to get there, but like everything they require some discipline.

The Sacred Heart

I knew that a particular holy card of the Sacred Heart which I've carried around for years would get me through this ordeal. I had it hard laminated. The image itself is almost gruesome when compared to the more rococo "prettified" images one typically finds on holy cards. This picture rivets and almost repels the mind. Blood and the color red dominate the image—especially when the card is in full color.

In our Precious Blood spirituality, I held this card daily in the hospital, fixed my attention on it, and never had it far from my hand. I realized that the movement and flow of the Precious Blood of Jesus even during his suffering and pain symbolized the movement of the flow of my own blood through its new bypasses, and that through this suffering, life and healing are possible. This helped me out of focusing on the pain and worrisome thoughts into a whole different level of holding the mind.

The daily hospital visits of Fr. Bill Breslin, pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Boulder, were an additional blessing. Each evening he stopped by, took me on my twice around the floor walks,



and prayed with me. He also had a personal stock of this particular holy card.

I found myself shortening and adapting the pattern of prayer from St Francis de Sales' *Introduction to the Devout Life*. I had used this text during my years as summer formation program during the 1990s.

Stillness

To begin I first made my mind focus on my body's position and my breath, taking in the Spirit and exhaling the pain. This helped prepare me for the next step of a short memorized

prayer, repeating over and over and slowly in the mind and moving the prayer as deeply into myself as possible. I used short lines with the holy card like "Glory to the blood of Jesus." I moved between praying the words and focusing myself on the image and leaving alone my mind's focus on the pain. As I moved from the words to just the image alone, I brought up the grace represented by the image in the power of the Precious Blood and centered my mind and my body's heartbeat with its newly relocated veins on that thought. Finally I invited and welcomed the grace presented in the image within my own blood flow and heartbeat. The result through the hospital days especially and the very lonely days of the month of July at home was a stillness, a calming, and an immersion in an "oceanic vastness," a getting outside of myself.

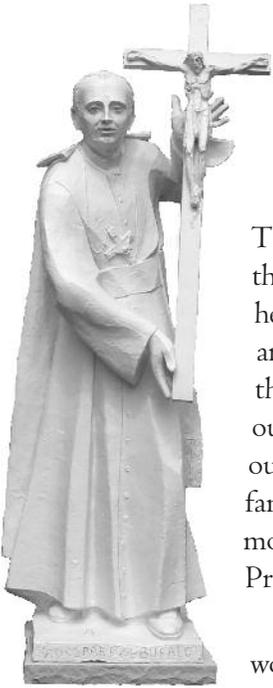
Now I am past the seven-week mark, doing cardiac rehab, preparing for Fall semester, even driving again, walking, losing weight, and all the other things now a part of my life. I am grateful for the gift of Precious Blood spirituality that enabled me to see and experience this whole trauma and at the same time for the gift in my life to change and to endure. I am also grateful for the emails of prayers from the members of the province. ❧

Fr. Alan Hartway teaches at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado.

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VOCATIONS OFFICE

Joe Miller, C.P.P.S.



Our Precious Blood Community has just celebrated another birthday. August 15th is the Feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven. St. Gaspar had a great devotion to and love of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. We see that in the letters he wrote as well as our Community's mission cross. So, it is no surprise to me that he would have founded our community on one of Mary's feast days.

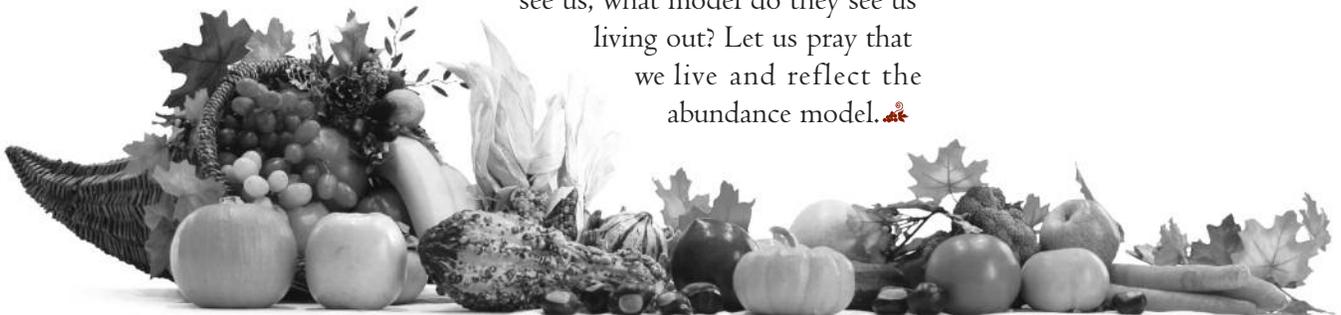
This year, we celebrated the 193rd birthday of our community, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. St. Gaspar, even though he stayed in Italy, was truly a missionary and we as a community are also called to be missionaries. As such, we are sent to reflect through Precious Blood Spirituality the presence of Christ to our family. We do that by the love and compassion we show to our family (our blood family, our community family, or the family of people we are sent to serve). Mary's love for Jesus is a model for us as we are sent each day to be Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Sharon Crall and I recently attended a vocation ministers' workshop in Chicago, led by Fr. David Couturier, O.F.M. CAP., titled, "Vocation Ministers as Spiritual Guide" He spoke about two models out of which people might function or communities might live—the scarcity model and the abundance model. He asked: Which one do we sit in; which one does our community sit in?

Scarcity is the way in which God is portrayed as stingy and we have to make it on our own. It tries to convince us that the more we have the happier we will be. It feeds into the whole concept of consumerism. In this model one is encouraged to depend more upon oneself and his or her talents than on God. The intimate connecting to the divine is a sign of weakness. This model freezes us and we fail to grow.

The abundance model is spiritual and counter-cultural. It emphasizes that God is all good to all at all times. God's goodness is without limits. In this model, people work together with one another and with God to create a better world. The abundance model produces gratitude.

We know which model Mary and St. Gaspar lived out of. What model do we live out of as individuals and as a community? When people see us, what model do they see us living out? Let us pray that we live and reflect the abundance model. 🍷



Fr. Joe Miller is Province Vocations Director



“I need a job.” *Here’s a job referral. Next Please.* “I need some clothes.” *Here’s a voucher. The Salvation Army will set you up. Next Please.* “I need some food.” *Here’s a food box. Next Please.* “I just got out of jail.” *Here, jump onto my assembly line and I’ll get you everything you need. Next Please.*

Assembly Line Viewpoint

Before joining the staff at the Precious Blood Center, I believed that simply handing people what they needed would make a difference in their lives. When I was working with former inmates in Nashville, TN, I often met five or six new clients and even more return clients each day. All I was capable of doing was to help with a few basic needs. If someone stopped coming to the office, I assumed they got the help from somewhere else.

I brought this assembly line viewpoint to my work here in Chicago. I expected finding a job for a youth would change his life. And buying a school uniform would get him an education. And making him a sandwich would keep him from robbing someone. But there were kids who would come once or twice and not be seen again. Where were they getting the help? Their schools are just passing them along. Their families are struggling to make it day to day. Their friends usually get them in more trouble than out.

Over the next three years, my eye opening exposure to these daily and life-long struggles began to transform my perspective of the true needs of these youth.

The Transformation

The transformation came over time. I was sitting with Willie during the third month that I was at the Center. I was pushing him and pushing him (down the assembly line) to get a job and stop selling drugs. He turns to me with absolute apathy and said, “Ian, you’re 23, I’m not going to live to be 23. I gotta live my life right here, right

now.” Floored me.

Every decision that I had made in my life—education, work, building a great group of friends, eating right, exercising—was formed with the knowledge that my energy will pay off in the future. Willie’s life is different. Too many times he has seen people fall victim to gang violence, drug overdose, domestic violence, and incarceration. The people he knows often don’t get to become something more, don’t get to be 23. The people he knows just get pushed along by the system and the community. They get pushed along—and here I am pushing him along. Something has to change in *me*.

How do I change? How can I really make a difference in the lives of these youth? Some clarity came just as Steve Delaney was rapping up his time at the Center toward the end of my first year. I was struggling with how little success I was seeing. I got a youth into school; he got suspended. I helped him find a job; he got fired. On and on. As Steve and I talked, he told me “Ian, you’re great at really pushing these kids to do more for themselves. I’m happy with just playing basketball with them.” Steve was right, I was still pushing and the basketball time was too few and far between.

NEXT PLEASE

Ian Wilson

A Deeper Need

Of course, this is about more than just basketball. The youth have a deeper need. As I came to simply spend more non-assembly line time with the youth, we developed a more meaningful connection. They came to trust. They found a place to turn if they are having a problem. The kids came to see that I push them because I care about and believe in them. They know they can share their true feelings without being belittled or disrespected. In time, we have been able to develop an honest, positive relationship. These young men, who had been hurt, manipulated, and disheartened by others in their lives, now see the healing power of being connected to another person.

Indeed, this is a far stretch from the Next Please approach. Truly getting to know these young men—their families, hopes, hardships, talents—I have grown as a person and as a social worker. I have come to find great joy in their successes and great anguish at their failures. I have learned the healing power of relationship.

Ian Wilson completed his 3-year Jesuit Volunteer Corps Magis program this summer. While with the PBM, he served as mentor, counselor, chef, job seeker, computer repair guy, and friend for the youth who graced this place with their presence. Ian is moving to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to continue working to improve the Juvenile Justice System and to get married.



WHY I NO LONGER PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

Timothy Guthridge, C.P.P.S.

During my last year in Sweetwater, Texas there was a bad drought. The whole year brought only five or six inches of rain. The crops were ruined. Ranchers slaughtered their livestock because it cost too much to bring water in. Every minister of every denomination was asked to pray for rain.

One Baptist minister I knew got tired of people asking him to pray for rain. One Sunday morning, he told his congregation to stop asking him to pray for rain. He wasn't going to do it anymore. He told his congregation that if they wanted to get God's attention, they would do better to change their lives. They should stop drinking and gambling. They should read Scripture more and pray more. They should act more like children of God and learn to depend on God's love and grace.

A New Tack

I was thinking about this last Vocation Sunday. I entered the Catholic Church in 1976, and the Church was praying hard for vocations back then. During the last 32 years, the vocation situation has not gotten better, but rather has become significantly worse, and it doesn't look like it is going to get much better in the near future.

Perhaps we need a new tack. Maybe just praying for God to send us new vocations is not enough. I have begun to wonder if we should be asking God for more priestly and religious vocations at all.

Six months ago, I read Pope Benedict's book "Jesus of Nazareth." In the book, the Pope describes the ministry of Jesus as revealing the face of God to the world.

Reveal God's Face

Upon some reflection, I came to the conclusion that the primary mission of our community is to reveal the face of God to the world. The Society of the Precious Blood, through its various missionary endeavors, has been revealing the face of God to the world since 1815. Healing and reconciliation is the consequence of this mission. One cannot embrace the paschal mystery and not encounter healing and reconciliation.

Instead of asking simply for more priests, brothers, and companions, we might want to pray for the grace to embrace and be transformed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Such a grace might transform us into a community that people may want to join.

Priesthood and religious life are means to an end. The end is the mission of Jesus. The end is the Kingdom of God. It is not about keeping parishes, schools, and other institutions open.

Transforming the World

Let's invite people to look towards the Christ that is already in the heart of their souls and reveal that grace to others. Let's invite people to work with Christ in transforming the world.

Inviting people to embrace the life and mission of Jesus Christ sounds far more attractive than asking people to consider a life as a priest or a brother. This is especially true in a society where most people haven't a clue what being a priest, brother, sister, or lay associate is all about.

The Catholic ethnic parochial culture that produced vocations in the United States for the



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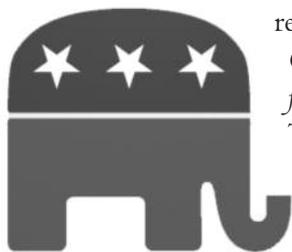
past 100 plus years is gone and it is not coming back. It's time to get back to the basics. Our society needs to hear the Good News more than any other time in history. Let's invite people to share in the mission of spreading the Good News. Let's invite people to share in the mission of Jesus. If we do this, I am convinced the numbers of priests, religious, catechists, etc., will take care of themselves. ✠

Fr. Timothy Guthridge works in retreat and spiritual direction ministry, and serves part-time at St. Francis Xavier Parish in St. Joseph, Missouri.

WHO WILL GUIDE YOU?

Mark Miller, C.P.P.S.

As we enter the final stretch of our political year and prepare ourselves for the national conventions and November elections, what criteria will we use to determine how we will cast our vote?



Voting is, after all, both a privilege and a responsibility. As our Bishops state in *Faithful Citizenship: The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, “In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group.”

Called to Participation

As Pope Benedict XVI stated in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, “We have seen that the formation of just structures is not directly the duty of the Church, but belongs to the world of politics, the sphere of the autonomous use of reason. The Church has an indirect duty here, in that she is called to contribute to the purification of reason and to the reawakening of those moral forces without which just structures are neither established nor prove effective in the long run. The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society, on the other hand, is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State, they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity. The mission of the lay faithful is therefore to configure social life correctly, respecting its legitimate autonomy and cooperating with other citizens according to their respective competencies and fulfilling their own responsibility” (par. 29).

Resources

There are several recent books which can help us “form our consciences” and restore our priorities more in agreement with our Catholic Social Teaching. Two of these books are written by Jim Wallis, who is editor of the *Sojourner Magazine*, a professed evangelical—but from a different perspective than Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson. He gives great credit to our Catholic Social Teaching. His two books are entitled: *God’s Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn’t Get It* and *The Great Awakening: Reviving Faith & Politics in a Post-Religious Right America*.

Two other books are written from our Catholic perspective: *A Nation for All: How the Catholic Vision of the Common Good Can Save America from the Politics of Division* by Chris Korzen and Alexia Kelley and *Be Not Afraid: An Alternative to the War on Terror* by Tom Cordaro (Pax Christi).

Hope, not Fear

We are confronted every day with the “politics of division.” It approaches life from a negative point of view, sees everything as a threat and invites people to respond out of fear. This is hardly how we are invited to respond from the Gospel message. Jesus came to offer us hope,

constantly tells us “do not fear,” and calls

us into a communion of the citizens of the kingdom. Our Catholic

Social Teaching also outlines a pathway that is positive and responsive to the needs of all—especially to the poor and marginalized—and places individual rights at the service of the common good.

The Common Good

What will guide our decisions this November? Will we be guided by the politics of division, by fear of the unknown, by demonizing particular groups, or will we be guided by

the Gospel of Jesus

Christ, by our Catholic Social

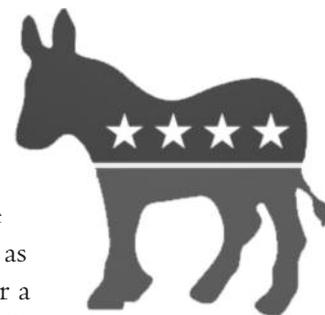
Teaching, by a reclaiming of the “common good,”

by re-interpreting the things of the past so as to offer a solution for a peaceful tomorrow? May

the choices we make lead us to justice which will lead us to peace. 🕊️

Fr. Mark Miller serves with Fr. Joe Uecker at St. Joseph and St. Anthony Parishes in Odessa, Texas.

“Our Catholic Social Teaching also outlines a pathway that is positive and responsive to the needs of all—especially to the poor and marginalized—and places individual rights at the service of the common good.”



THANK YOU

[Editor's note: Recipients of the 2008 Human Development Grants were featured in the previous issue of *The New Wine Press*.]

Thank you for the grant monies received through your Human Development Fund. We are grateful for your efforts to help people in the community, and are eager to continue our ministry to struggling families. Your generosity will help us in marketing and getting the *Families of Hope* program off the ground.

Sister Doris Engeman
Shawnee Mission, KS

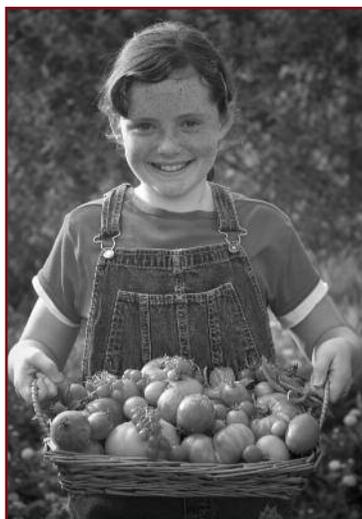
Thank you very much for your generous grant for St. Agatha Center and Food Pantry. We were in the midst of our staff meeting brainstorming for our Fall Educational Program when your letter arrived.

We try to help our folks in every way possible. However, there is always an educational component to what is given. With the economy in its present state, the needs become greater and greater. Some of our people struggle with food, utilities, transportation and—for some—trying to maintain a home. We are grateful that your community is willing to do your outreach to help us help others.

Sister Clare Ann Litteken, C.P.P.S.
St. Louis, MO

We appreciate your generosity in providing funds to help us establish the Catholic presence in the *Faith in Action* project. The ever-growing population of our senior citizens and their unique needs are creating a new area of marginalized individuals. We will keep you updated on the progress of our project and again are most grateful for your support.

Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S.
Jodean Ford
St. Joseph, MO



On behalf of Sacred Heart Parish, I want to thank the committee of approving additional funds for Hispanic ministry. We feel that this is a worthwhile ministry and is vital to the health and growth of our community.

Fr. James Betzen, C.P.P.S.
Pastor, Sacred Heart Parish
Sedalia, MO

On behalf of the Officers and Board Members of Northwest Missouri Enterprise Facilitation, I wish to thank the Society of the Precious Blood for its contribution. Our pledge to you is to effectively and efficiently use these funds to assist our rural six county entrepreneurs to realize their dream of owning or continuing their own businesses.

We are pleased that you could recognize the benefit our organization provides as an assist to the people of our economically depressed rural area.

Sr. Christine Martin, O.S.F.
King City, MO

You truly have been a life-giving spirit to the people of Guatemala with your generous support of the *Programs of Hope* in the last five years. Your financial help has enabled 17 young men from remote villages to obtain a high school education and 50-plus preschool and primary school children the opportunity to get a “head start” toward an education that would to have been possible without the *Programs of Hope*.

In addition, your support this year has allowed for 38 needy inner city children to receive scholarship funds enabling them to attend school. The *Programs of Hope* are only “a drop in the bucket” compared to the enormous needs, but for those persons it will be a life-changing experience that can only benefit them, their families and their communities.

Mary Ann and John Glenski
St. Charles Guatemala Project
Gladstone, MO

We want to let you know that your letter about our grant has reached Guatemala. I want to thank once again the Human Development Committee, especially for your generosity in awarding more than what was requested. Blessings on all you are about.

Sr. Dani Brought, A.S.C.
Sangre de Cristo Health Care Project
Guatemala

Leadership, continued from page 2...

Case in Point

Contraception is a case in point. The church leadership refused to seriously listen to the experience of its grass roots membership regarding what works best in expressing marital love. As a result the majority of Catholics have followed their own wisdom, making the church's teaching on contraception a moot point.

The same is probably happening with the issues of married clergy, homosexuality, and the ordination of women. It should be obvious by now that the papal directive forbidding even *discussion* of women's ordination was doomed to irrelevancy from the start.

Risk for the Mission

Advocates for change are often viewed with distrust and suspicion regardless of the merits of their proposals. They are often labeled "unfaithful," and no dialogue with them is permitted. We must risk this label when we find that change will help us proclaim God's Word/Love more effectively and clearly.

It has often been said that our community's mission is the renewal of the church through the ministry of the Word. Renewal necessitates change. Our serious commitment to that mission will put us at the forefront of keeping the church alive, effective, and true to its mission of proclaiming Christ's message of love. 🙏

Fr. Garry Richmeier has a counseling practice in Kansas City, serves as the sacramental minister at St. James Parish in Kansas City, Missouri, and is a member of the Province Leadership Team.

Frieda, continued from page 7...

have it. As a child I struggled to understand what she meant when she said we were not really at home yet. As an adult, I see what Mom was trying to say.

My family and I became the "marginalized." We felt "on the fringe" as we faced what society tries so hard to avoid, the awareness that death awaits us all. Mom began her last ministry, this time to the family that stood around her deathbed. I will always wonder what woke me from my sound sleep as I lay on a cot next to my mom's death bed on the morning of June 12 at exactly 5:15 a.m. Mom died peacefully and quietly. It was as if the silence of her not breathing jolted me with an electrical current. I can't help but think that, as Mom experienced her own joyful death, she tapped me on the shoulder to say goodbye and to let me know she was going home—this time to stay. 🙏

Cathy Pankiewicz is the daughter of Ralph and Frieda Gallagher. She and her husband Tom are members of the St. Joseph, Missouri Companions Group.

CONVOCATION 2010

*Who will speak the word to rouse them?
I can, I must, I will. Will you?*

A Convocation to gather the Precious Blood family to deepen our understanding of Precious Blood theology, to witness the Gospel, to embrace the anguish of the church and the world with redeeming love.

July 26-29, 2010
St. Louis University
St. Louis, Missouri

The planning committee is looking for poems, artwork and a unique logo/design.

Guidelines for Artists and Poets

This is the 4th Precious Blood Congress
The title is "Who will speak the word to rouse them? I can, I must, I will. Will you?"

Date: July 26-29, 2010

Expressions of Precious Blood spirituality

Suggested scripture reading: John 4:1-42

Designs are due September 15, 2008

Poems are due December 31, 2008

Please send all items to:

Lou Carey
Precious Blood Center
P.O. Box 339
Liberty, MO 64069

816-781-4344 • sec@kcprov.org

* * *

The Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation will be sponsoring a Circle Training Workshop. The Circle method fosters the sharing and telling of truth in a safe and respectful setting. The staff of PBMR widely utilize the Circle method and have found it to be an effective tool to foster the communication necessary for the promotion of reconciliation.

September 28-October 2

Spiritual Center, Maria Stein, OH

Contact Bill Nordenbrock, C.P.P.S.

bncpps@juno.com

Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S.

nojail@aol.com

or call PBMR at 773-579-0781

MY BACK PAGES

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

“When someone dies, a library burns.” (author unknown)

We are all, each one of us, a collection of stories, a history. The longer our life, the bigger the library. Some of those volumes we readily and easily lend out, while others are kept on reserve or in a separate and very private collection. We do not, of course, write our stories alone; we show up often as characters in one another’s narratives. And when we want to remember, we tell our stories—and those of others.

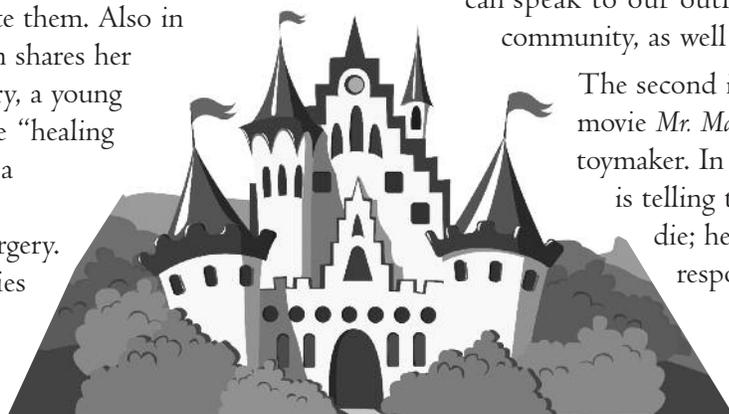
This newsletter exists in part to enable the lived spirituality of the Precious Blood to be described and shared and fostered. That is why we encourage our writers to tell their stories.

In this issue, we remember three Companions and one member who died this past summer—and we hear parts of their stories from people who helped write them. Also in this issue, a Companion shares her journey and her ministry, a young man comes to know the “healing power of relationship,” a member reflects on his recovery from major surgery. Stories completed; stories still being written.

While assembling this issue, I came across the book *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon. When he gave the traditional “last lecture” (usually given at the end of a long tenure) he was a young man, facing certain and imminent death from pancreatic cancer. His lecture (which has had over six million views on YouTube) is about living, a summation of what he had come to believe through his experience. It is his story, and he wanted to tell it most of all for his children. It is one part of his library that did not burn when he died this past July.

There are just two things that I want to share from this book. The first is when he received his diagnosis. He asked the doctor, “How long before I die?” The doctor responded, “You probably have three to six months of good health.” He comments that this answer reminded him of his time working at Disney World, where they were told when someone asks, “What time does the park close?” to respond, “The park is *open* until 8 p.m.” Perhaps that can speak to our outlook on our future as a religious community, as well as our own lives.

The second is his quote of a line from the movie *Mr. Magorium’s Wonder Emporium*, about a toymaker. In one particular scene, the apprentice is telling the elderly toymaker that he can’t die; he has to live. And the toymaker responds: “I already did that.” 🐛



The
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