



The New Wine Press

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

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February 2015



Authority: Fostering
Growth and Creativity
page 4

Walking With
page 6

Birth of a Province
page 8

Music
page 10

Our Miracle
page 12

A Ministry of Presence
page 13

Elena Segura Shares
Challenges of Immigrant
Journey in America
page 14

Dialogue on Confession
page 16



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Where Were We Then? Where Are We Now?

by Fr. Joe Uecker, C.P.P.S.

In this article, I'd like to share my view of where we have been with regard to the sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession), and next month, I'll share where I think we are today.

It was Saturday evening, April 30, 1949, and as we often did, our family celebrated life with popcorn. But something different happened that evening. Instead of washing the dishes used to make and serve the popcorn, they were left until the morning.

Already at age 7, I was a salt-a-holic. So early Sunday morning, May 1, I got up bright and early because it was my big day, my First Communion at Precious Blood Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. So, after washing up and all the things that seven-year-olds did in those days, I went out to the kitchen—but not for breakfast, because in those days a person neither ate nor drank anything from midnight on before receiving Holy Communion. But there it

continued on next page



"Chiesa dell'Inviolata - Riva del Garda - Confessional box" by H. Zell - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

was: the pan that held the popcorn. Without thinking, I put my finger into the pan, went around the pan to collect salt and put it in my mouth. Was that ever good! And almost immediately it hit me: You broke your fast! You can't make your First Communion!

Then the seven-year-old mind went to work. I had been taught that fast breaking was a mortal sin, but how could it be so wrong to eat a few grains of salt? So what to do? The punch line is that when I made my First Communion, I felt I was on the interstate highway leading straight to hell. The logic was impeccable. The law says no eating or drinking: you ate, you committed a mortal sin, case closed. It took many years for me to realize a seven-year-old was incapable of mortal sin, especially since the fasting had been reduced by that time to one hour.

That was the second bad experience I had within a couple weeks. The first was the day of my First Confession. At Precious Blood, the confessionals had

curtains on both sides and the priest sat in the middle. The curtains hid the penitent from anyone close by. I had seen David T. go into the confessional and, of course, we had been dutifully instructed to never break into anyone's confession: another mortal sin. Sister had not seen David go into the confessional. Since I was next in line, she told me to go in. I refused because David was already there. Sister insisted, so I pulled back the curtain and sure enough, there was David. My first mortal sin at age seven.

The very fact that I remember those two events sixty-five years later indicates the depth of the spiritual trauma I endured at age seven. The good side of all this is that as a confessor, I always do my best to be aware of the feelings of every penitent, so that nothing similar to my experience ever happens to anyone else.

Sometimes I wonder if much has changed in sixty-five years, if the burden of guilt continues to be laid on the backs of the people. People continue to confess having missed Mass while they were sick "because I feel better having confessed it," as if God is the old ogre just waiting to zap somebody and send them to hell.

One example I often use in preaching is taken from baseball. You're on first base. The pitcher keeps his eye on you lest you lead off too far. Every so often he tries to pick you off first. But then the batter after you gets a hit. You round second and head for third with your eye on the third-base coach. The signal he gives with his arm sends you on home to score. Now the question is: Do you look at God more as the pitcher whose aim is to pick you off first or do you look at God as the third-base coach whose greatest desire is for you to score?

I wonder how many people see God more as the opposing pitcher wanting to pick us off than the third-base coach who wants us to score.

As I write this, I'm supposed to go to Ft. Stockton this afternoon for confessions and Masses. It's icy, although it may melt a bit by afternoon. I haven't seen my car through the ice and snow since Tuesday. (Yes, I missed Mass on January 1, a holy day!) If I don't go today, how many people will confess that they missed Mass because Father didn't come?

Dear Precious Blood Community,

Volunteering is a way for people to see God working in their lives, the lives of the people they serve, and the community in which they live. A year of service as a Precious Blood Volunteer gives someone the opportunity to walk with people who are suffering and to discern their own personal call to holiness.

Our volunteers are individuals who desire to serve others in the fields of education, social services, and health care. We look for volunteers who add to the quality of service in our placement agencies. Precious Blood volunteers are also people who are open to living in community.

Referrals from members of the Precious Blood community are an important part of our recruitment because it reflects one of the best parts of our program: the support of this community! By inviting people to become volunteers, you open the door for people to live in greater awareness of God's love for both them and the world they serve.

There are several ways in which you can help:

- First, share potential volunteers' contact information with me. This offers me the opportunity to contact the potential volunteers directly.
- Second, give the potential volunteer my contact information or invite them to visit our website at www.preciousbloodvolunteers.org.
- Third, like and follow us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter. Like and share any of our Facebook posts and retweet any of our tweets on Twitter. This is especially true when we post or tweet a link inviting people to apply to become a volunteer!

Thank you for your help. Your support is key to the growth of Precious Blood Volunteers.

Sincerely,

Tim Deveney

Director, Precious Blood Volunteers

volunteers@kcprovince.org

preciousbloodvolunteers.org

facebook.com/PreciousBloodVolunteers

twitter.com/PBVolunteers

The New Wine Press

Missionaries of the Precious Blood

Kansas City Province

www.kcprovince.org

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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Authority: Fostering Growth and Creativity

by Fr. Tom Welk, C.P.P.S., Leadership Council

Gerald Cyprien Lacroix, Archbishop of Quebec, was named a cardinal in February 2014. In an interview on CBS *60 Minutes*, December 28, 2014, he quoted from the letter he received from Pope Francis announcing his appointment: “You are being named a cardinal, Gerald. It is not a promotion, it is not an honor, and it is not a decoration. It is a call to widen your spirit; it is a call to serve.”

I believe Pope Francis was prompted to write these comments in Lacroix’s letter of appointment because for too long in the Catholic Church many individuals have fostered ambitions to climb the ecclesiastical ladder. The higher one was able to get on this ladder so much the more it was considered a promotion, decoration, or honor. Members of the hierarchy became accustomed to being called princes of the church. Princes generally do not consider themselves servants.

In an interview shortly after he was elected Pope (he prefers the title Bishop of Rome), Francis reflected on his previous experience as a provincial of the Jesuits. He commented that he was quite young then, and did not really know what it meant to be in a position of authority. He acknowledged that he had used an authoritarian approach, defining that as a command/submit scenario. This is comparable to the dictionary definition of authoritarianism, “...relating to, or favoring blind submission....”

Coming from the Latin *augere*, (to increase, to foster, to create), being a person of authentic authority means being true to the root meaning of the word. It means being open to the challenge Pope Francis gave Cardinal Lacroix “to widen his own spirit in order to carry out his call to serve.” Being a person of authority obviously includes the responsibility to foster growth and creativity in those under one’s care.

This is comparable to the admonition Jesus gave his disciples: “You know how those who exercise authority among the Gentiles lord it over them; their great ones make their importance felt. It cannot be like that with you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest” (Mt 20:25).

Both in the church and in the secular world we have ample evidence that being in a position of authority is not generally viewed as a call to servanthood. Rather,

through the office they occupy or the title they have, leaders see themselves being in a position of power, and not only “favoring blind submission,” but also demanding it.

In his business column entitled, “Toxic bosses often share some of the following traits,” (*The Wichita Eagle*, January 1, 2015) Paul White, Ph.D. outlined ten traits of leaders who destroy those who work for them. Among the toxic traits White lists are the tendencies of these leaders to engage in self-interest and self-promotion. According to White, toxic leaders demand deference and will quickly tear down those they feel do not appropriately respect them.

Pope Francis presented his own list of toxic traits, using the word “disease” to describe the traits that characterize poor leadership. In his pre-Christmas comments to the curial officials, he listed 15 of these diseases. He stated that human beings are prone to these diseases, causing malfunction and infirmity. They can easily lead to a pathology of power. Included among them is a sense of “narcissism that looks passionately at one’s own image and not see the face of God stamped on the face of others, especially the weakest and those most in need.”

It is only too obvious the harm these toxic traits and diseases have caused in the Church and in the wider world. A brief look at world history shows what tremendous destruction leaders only interested in furthering their own narrow self-interest have caused. Unfortunately, not only are there ample examples of self-interested leadership in our history: too much of it is on-going in our present world.

What a contrast Pope Francis provides. There appears to be little evidence of toxic leadership in him. The popularity and respect given Pope Francis is due to his authentic leadership style, which fosters growth and creativity. Nor has he shied away from criticizing those in the Catholic Church who use their positions/offices in ways that tear down rather than build up. His message to the curial officials is but one example of this.

According to the *National Catholic Reporter*, Pope Francis prefaced his comments to the curial officials by stating that, “He wanted to prepare them all—including himself—to make a real examination of conscience before Christmas.” Most of us find ourselves in a position

of leadership. Just as Pope Francis was careful to include himself in the observations he shared about potential diseases afflicting leadership, so we too must examine our consciences about our leadership style. Are you and I fostering growth and creativity through the offices/positions we have been called to occupy?

As a Community, we have begun the discernment process preceding the election of a leadership team during the April Assembly. It is my sense that incorporated members by and large easily echo the sentiment expressed by Pope Francis in his letter to Cardinal Lacroix: being elected is not a promotion, an honor or a decoration. There also appears to be a certain reluctance to serve on the Provincial Council. Maybe deep down we recognize the challenge leadership brings: a call to widen our spirits, a call to serve.

It is my wish and prayer that none of us will avoid or refuse the call to become a part of the Leadership Team for our Community. May the gift of the Holy Spirit guide us all in this process of engaging in being called to servanthood.

Call for Manuscripts

THE WINE CELLAR

Topic: **Mercy.**

Deadline for submissions: April 15, 2015.

Article length: 2500 words in Word format.

Poems, prayers and artwork are also welcome.

Please include a brief bio and four reflection questions with article submissions. Any member or lay associate of a Precious Blood community is invited to contribute.

Contact:

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F A I T H



WALKERS

PASSAGES
OF SUFFERING
AND HOPE

Joseph F. Nassal

Faithwalkers: Stations of the Cross

March 6, 2015

7:00 PM

Orscheln Chapel

Avila University

Kansas City, MO

March 8, 2015

7:30 pm

St. James Church

Liberty, MO

A musical ritualization of the Stations of the Cross based on the book *Faithwalkers: Passages of Suffering and Hope* by Fr. Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S. Music by Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S.

Presented by

Avila University Music Department

Dr. Amity Bryson, Director



Walking With

by Fr. Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S.

A wise teacher was making a pilgrimage to a holy city, accompanied by one of his students, a journey of many days. They came upon a crossroads where they saw a traveler obviously trying to decide which way to go. After inquiring, they learned he was also on his way to the holy city but did not know which path to take. The teacher told him the path to the right led to the holy city, and the man was welcome to join him and his student on the journey. But the man said, “You may be robbers leading me to a desolate place where you will steal what I have and leave me for dead. I will take the path to the left.” The teacher said, “Then we will accompany you so that you reach your destination safely.” So they set out together. It wasn’t long before the student pulled the teacher aside and said, “Teacher, we are getting farther away from the holy city. At this rate we will never get there.” The teacher said, “There are some things more important than

reaching one’s intended destination.” As the three walked along they began to share stories of their background, their families, and their home villages. Eventually the trio began discussing why it was important to each to make this pilgrimage, and what role it played in their faith life. They discovered they were very similar in their intent and desire to grow in holiness. The traveler suddenly stopped and said, “Let us turn back. Because of our journey together I now realize the truth of the directions you gave me at the crossroads.” The three turned around and continued their pilgrimage to the holy city.

Our Church is very good at giving directions as to how to live a holy life. Especially with the recent emphasis on apologetics as a teaching tool, the Church clearly states what people should and should not do to be faithful. If simply giving directions was sufficient, everyone

would follow and arrive safely at the destination. But a significant number of people have difficulty trusting the directions given are for their welfare and not for some other purpose, e.g., for cementing the hierarchy's authority, control, and continued existence as is. That is why many simply ignore Church teachings that do not make sense to them or are difficult to follow, and go their own way. The Church today seems satisfied with walking without them.

As a Precious Blood community, we know the value of walking with others. We have made a commitment to live with, deal with, put up with, come to consensus with, celebrate with, and walk with each other no matter what. Each one of us can tell stories of when keeping that commitment was difficult and we thought life would be easier without "those others." But we have chosen to continue to walk with each other, each in his or her own unique way, and that enables us to better trust each other's advice, criticism, compliments, care, and directions.

"Walking with" is probably the greatest gift we as the Precious Blood community can offer the Church (the people of God) right now. The institutional Church is providing people with plenty of directions, so that leaves us free to simply walk with people.

Our traditional charisms come under the heading of walking with people. Ministering to the marginalized describes how we reverently walk with people when others have abandoned and ostracized them. Our ministry of reconciliation is a way of standing with people in brokenness and walking with them through the difficult journey of healing. Preaching the Word for the renewal of the Church, when done well, is walking with people in their journey of coming to understand God's Word and God's Love, even when their understanding is different than ours.

It all boils down to a crucial question of faith: do we trust that walking with each other in love with no other goal in mind will get us where we need to go? Or, like the student in the story above, do we think doing something else will work better?

The concept of "walking with" really is the point. If we walk with each other with respect, care, and love, we don't have to worry about the destination. We have already arrived.

Dialogue, continued from page 16

This conversation could help in many ways: to claim an important part of our spirituality, to help focus the meaning of the sacrament in our lives, and to give the Church a chance for dialogue and insight. Confession as we know it today evolved over centuries to fill an important need. Its decline now makes me wonder if we've lost track of that need, and how it might be rediscovered.

Sacramental Confession is an important part of Reconciliation: Gaspar considered it an integral part of his ministry. Perhaps it's time for us to talk about it together, so we can draw strength from each other and deepen our encounter with the loving God whose mercy and forgiveness are never in doubt.

Important Dates to Save

Provincial Electoral Assembly

April 13-16, 2015

Church of the Annunciation

701 North Jefferson Street, Kearney, MO 64060

Provincial Banquet

Celebrating the Installation of the Provincial Council (to be elected April 2015)

June 1, 2015

Savior of the World Pastoral Center

12601 Parallel Parkway, Kansas City, KS 66109

All Members and Companions Welcome

Members Retreat

June 1-5, 2015

Savior of the World Pastoral Center

More information on these events will be sent to members and companions via email in mid-February.



The first Kansas City Province Leadership Council, 1965: Frs. Robert Stukenborg, Joseph Sheeran, Daniel Schaefer (Provincial Director), Lawrence Growney, and Lawrence Cyr

The Birth of a Province

by Fr. Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S., Provincial Director

The Kansas City Province was born on April 20, 1965, at St. Joseph College in Rensselaer, IN. More than 300 members of the American Province gathered in Halleck Center on campus, causing the provincial, Father John Byrne, to say during his welcome, “The magnificent turnout is proof positive that the breaking up of our family into three jurisdictions will only increase the fruitfulness of our Society and its future efforts in the United States.”

Father Byrne introduced the Moderator General, Father Herbert Linenberger, a member of the American Province, who was making his first official visit home since his election. The irony did not escape Father Linenberger as he began his remarks: “It is one of the singular twists of fortune that the very first opportunity I have to address all members of the American

Province in an official capacity should also be my last.” The bittersweet moment was not missed on Father Linenberger or anyone else attending the chapter that would create a trinity of provinces from the one. As Father Linenberger noticed “a feeling of joy” as “we grasped each other’s hands in fraternal greetings,” he also was aware of “a catch in our voices, for we realized that fully a fourth of the members will have their paths routed to courses that are still uncharted.”

At 1:30 PM on April 20, 1965, the electors of both the Cincinnati and Kansas City provinces assembled in Halleck Center to hear Father Linenberger remind them, “Your decisions in these assemblies will have an effect that will reach into eternity.” After Father Linenberger’s remarks, the division became a reality “as the assembly arose in a body and the members of the newly-created

Kansas City Province left the hall to reconvene in their own hall of elections.” Father Linenberger remained with the Cincinnati Chapter and appointed the former Moderator General and a member of the new Kansas City Province, Father Herbert Kramer, the chairman of the Chapter for the new province. Father Kramer appointed Father Lawrence Cyr to serve as secretary “pro-tem” of the Chapter. Of the possible 106 members of the province, the roll call revealed that 91 were present to vote. After prayers for guidance of the Holy Spirit, the first vote was cast for Provincial Director. Father Daniel Schaefer received 25 votes, Father Frank Laudick 11 votes, and Father Joseph Sheeran 9 votes. The remaining votes of seven or less were scattered among several of the members. After a second ballot, which saw Father Schaefer’s total reach 43, he was elected on the third ballot with 59 votes. Father Daniel Schaefer became the first provincial of the Kansas City Province.

The balloting for members of the Provincial Council followed immediately. Father Joseph Sheeran was elected vice-provincial and first councilor; Father Lawrence Growney, second councilor; Father Lawrence Cyr, third councilor and provincial secretary; and Father Robert Stukenborg, fourth councilor and provincial treasurer.

In his first address to the members of the Kansas City Province after his election, Father Schaefer acknowledged “the tremendous task which we face” but said “we have much to go on, since we have such well-qualified men in all areas of work of the Society: parish priests, chaplains, educators, missionaries, among whom we have some of the best.” He added, “We must all work together and be patient if things do not run smoothly for a while. We are all new on the job; we shall make mistakes and we will know that your charity will prompt you to be tolerant of those mistakes.”

Someone once said, “We get the leaders we deserve.” If that is the case, the Kansas City Province must have been very deserving because the humility, honesty, and servant leadership of its first provincial, Father Daniel Schaefer, helped to shape the spirit of the province in its early years which, given the geography of the province, many came to embrace as a “pioneer spirit.” In the early years of the province, the image of the pioneer came to symbolize how the members sought to implement the renewal of the Second Vatican Council. Later this pioneer spirit was captured in a willingness to take risks especially in areas of social justice and peace.

Some have interpreted this pioneer spirit as an independent streak. However one interprets the image

of pioneer, Father Schaefer’s persona—a gruff, outward manner but a gentle, tender spirit of service—influenced and informed the province for many years. When one of his classmates was asked several years later to describe Father Danny, Father Frank Sullivan offered a single word: “Integrity.”

Father Schaefer’s integrity, openness and humility were on display at that initial meeting after his election. He opened the floor and welcomed any suggestions members might have regarding the new province. The first to speak was Father Herbert Kramer who, because he had been Moderator General, some assumed would be the first provincial of the Kansas City Province. But

continued on page 11



Fr. Daniel Schaefer at the dedication of Del Bufalo Seminary, April 27, 1965



Music

by Cayetana Maristela, Saint Joseph, Missouri Companion

Cayetana Maristela is originally from the Philippines, and has returned for a sabbatical. This is the second article detailing her experiences.

It had been about six weeks since I returned to the Philippines, specifically Pililla, for this sabbatical year. The last time I was here was when I stayed for three weeks in October 2011.

Life is tough in Pililla. We are prone to typhoons and are at their mercy. One week after I arrived, Typhoon Glenda made landfall. Here in Pililla we were spared much destruction, as compared with other places. Still, one of the chicken houses at an uncle's farm collapsed, killing hundreds of chickens. Chickens in the undamaged houses were traumatized, which stunted their growth, and they were sold for less money. Because of flooding, merchants sold their fish at much lower prices.

The exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and the Philippine peso hovers around one dollar equaling 43 or 44 pesos. I have encountered beggars as I've left church. An aunt tells me she was at the market and encountered a beggar who asked her for food. My aunt told me she felt the woman truly needed help since she hadn't asked for money. My aunt led her to one of the food stalls at the market and paid for a meal.

A kilo of string beans is 20 pesos. If one adds just a kilo of tilapia at 50 pesos, one can already make fish soup to feed a family of six. The cheapest variety of rice can be bought for about 38 pesos per kilo.

Tricycle fare for adults is ten pesos, eight for students. Despite this low price, I see many walking. People carry umbrellas or wear hats to shield themselves from the tropical sun.

Pililla is overcrowded. Married children with their children live with their parents or at least on their parents' properties. Schools are overcrowded, with sixty students in some classrooms. At the public high school one of my cousin's sons attends, his school day begins at 5:45 a.m. and ends at 11:45 a.m.; another group of students come at noon and go home about 6:00 p.m. It is an alternative use of building space to accommodate the huge number of students. For those who can afford it, private schools abound where the number of students per class ranges from fifteen to twenty.

Then there's faith. People continue to have fiesta—including the barrio (village) fiesta—honoring respective patron saints. The town of Wawa recently celebrated the feast of San Roque, a French saint, on August 17. Much like St. Francis of Assisi, San Roque gave up his riches to

serve God, and was known to have the gift of healing. He took himself away from the crowd to be able to pray, and each day a dog brought him bread.

Homes prepared dishes for family and friends who came to visit all afternoon and evening—from lunch time all the way to dinner. Hugs freely given—all were made welcome. There were games for children and adults sponsored by the youth group.

And there's music. Karaoke is heard from late afternoon to evening. English or Tagalog, people sing to wash away their weariness from the long day. Twice a week my aunt participates in aerobics at the town center. Music is blaring. I join lots of people, young and old, to walk the track. As I walk, I see people sitting along a low fence clapping or dancing to the music.

Life is tough, but with God's love, Pilillians are tougher still.

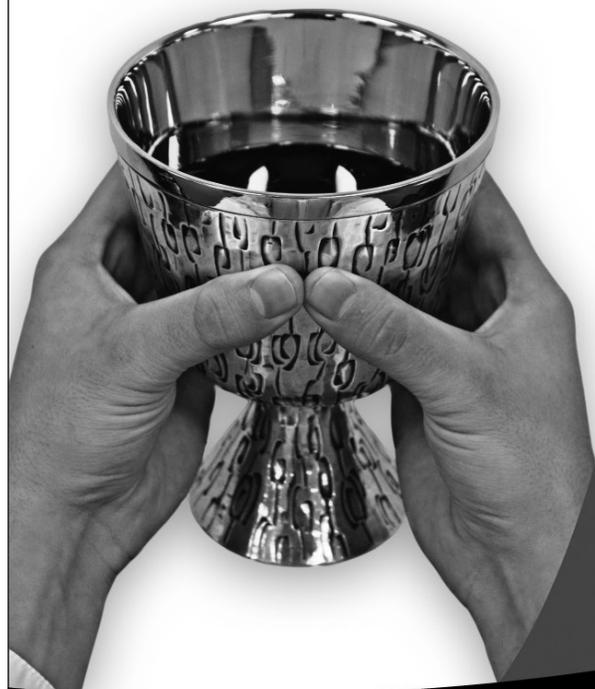
Birth of a Province, continued from page 9

in the voting, Father Kramer received very little support for a leadership position. Still, his voice carried weight as he suggested the name of the province “might be too narrow and restrictive, and perhaps, hamper any moves that might be desirable in the future.” Father Kramer suggested changing the name “Kansas City Province” to “Central Province.” After much discussion in which other possible names for the newly formed province were offered, the members voted to ask permission that the official name of the province be changed to Central Province.

What became of this name change is not clear except to say permission to change the name must have been denied because since that day, April 20, 1965, the province has been known as the Kansas City Province.

Next month: State of Turmoil

Missionaries of the Precious Blood



Discernment Weekend

Inviting men, ages 18-45, to learn about living in community and religious life.

March 20-22, 2015

St. Charles Center
Carthagena, Ohio

To register, contact Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S.
vocations@kcprovince.org
or Fr. Vince Wirtner, C.P.P.S.
vocation@cpps-preciousblood.org



Our Miracle

by Louise Warren

Louise Warren was one of the first convenanted of the Park Falls Precious Blood Companions in 1993, and at 103 years old, the oldest Companion in the country when she died. She was a great influence on her group and kept reading everything about the Companion groups and other community mailings she received. Preceded in death by her 12 siblings, husband and son, she is survived by her daughter Virginia (mentioned in this article), 9 grandchildren, and 59 great and great-great grandchildren. She will be greatly missed.

*This article originally appeared in **Celebrate Life**, September/October 2000.*

In 1940, at age 32, I was told by my doctor that I had tuberculosis. It came as a terrible shock. I was married and had an 8-year-old son whom I had to leave with my husband and mother. Five days later, I was a patient in a TB sanatorium in Bayfield, Wisconsin, a town about 75 miles north of my home. I did not waste any time in going, as I was so afraid that I might have passed this germ on to others. My family, thank God, was safe.

About a year later, the upper part of my lung had healed, and, as long as I was of no danger to others, I could go home for a long-awaited visit. I was home for two weeks and very happy. This was in November. By January, I knew that God had at last answered my prayers for another child.

However, as soon as I told the doctor about my pregnancy, he told me that I still had TB in the lower lobe of my lung and that it was not healing. The doctor said that he had planned some sort of surgery for my TB, which now I could not have.

One day, the doctor said that he would take me to see a doctor in Ashland, Wisconsin. I figured it was for a checkup. Unbeknown to me, they had planned for me to have an abortion. Believe me, I spoiled those plans in a hurry. I asked, "Is this why you brought me here? Well, no way, only God can take this baby from me."

Both doctors were angry with me, and they said it could mean my death. I said, "I will pray to live long enough to give life to my baby." Although I walked out of the office very scared, I did not change my mind for one moment.

A couple of months later, the doctor ordered a checkup. When he came back to my room, he had a big smile on his face. To this day I get chills at the good news he told me. He said, "Louise, I have good news for you. This baby is doing for you what no doctor could do. The baby's head is holding up this part of your lung,

and it has started to heal." Every month, the doctor fluoroscoped me, and the baby continued to do her job.

Six months later, I was taken to the hospital and gave birth to a beautiful 6-and-a-half-pound baby girl. As my good sister offered to live with us until I could get back on my feet, I was allowed to stay at home and only returned to the sanatorium for the X-ray that told me I was completely healed. There was no sign of TB. This is what my baby and I still call "Our Miracle." God knew the exact year and month when I would need this baby. I am forever grateful.



Louise Warren, July 21, 1911 - December 25, 2014

A Ministry of Presence

by Michael Donovan, PBMR, Volunteer Jail Chaplain, Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation

“On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route” (Matthew 2:1-12).

Following the star in the east until it stopped over the place where the baby Jesus was, the Wise Men presented their gifts and worshipped the child. Following the Interstate Highway system and using GPS, I began my annual Christmas week visits to 9 inmates at 7 prisons throughout Illinois. How I wish I could have brought these young men Christmas presents like Santa Claus on his route, but other than springing for plenty of junk food from the vending machines in the visiting rooms, my pockets were empty. Jail chaplaincy is a ministry of presence, not a ministry of presents.

I am passionate about being there for them, meeting these young men where they are—in this case, prison—and it’s especially profound during the holidays, when they are separated from those they love. I have the privilege of listening to them tell not only their stories of brokenness, loneliness, and regret, but also the stories of their hopes and dreams. While many of the young men are unmarked by a specific religious identity, I am constantly amazed at the importance of spirituality in their lives behind bars. I always leave inspired by their great strength and courage.

This ministry is not dissimilar to hospice ministry. I’m there for the journey, usually from jail to prison to home, and sometimes back to prison again. This ministry does not have a lot of happy endings or success stories as measured by traditional standards.

At the end of these visits, I pray that Arturo would forgive himself; that Allen would finally see that revenge is not the answer; that Derrion would be relieved of his loneliness; that Ali would continue to grow in his Islamic faith, and that he would get the second chance he so desperately wants; that Jerry would adjust to his new surroundings, having just been transferred to this facility; that Alejuandro would be relieved of his worries and anxieties of returning home as a registered sex offender for life; that Deante would somehow get in touch with his

young son, whose mother moved with him to another state and left no forwarding address; and that Victor would finally get into GED classes, after being on the waiting list since his incarceration.

One of my planned visits was denied. I got to this prison when the doors opened at 8:30 A.M. The young man had called me two days prior to Christmas to tell me that he received written confirmation that I was on his approved visitor’s list. He had recently transferred to this facility from Western Illinois Correctional Center where I had visited him at least twelve times over a four year period, with no problems. After presenting two forms of identification, I filled out a form required of new visitors. For the line, **Relationship to Inmate**, I wrote, “Friend,” giving very little thought to the importance of this. Jaimie identified me as his Uncle, not thinking of me, a 61 year old man, as a friend. In fact, in his last letter to me he wrote, “Hope you know that you’re family to me, and I try not to ask you for anything unless I absolutely need it because I know you don’t have to do anything for me. You just do it out of the kindness of your heart.”

This inconsistency between friend and uncle made him a *liar* in the eyes of the officials of this prison, and despite my protests and appeal to the lieutenant in charge, my visit was denied.

So much for the Christmas spirit.

That setback aside, I was blessed to be an instrument of God’s peace to these young people of goodwill during this Christmas season. Joy to the world!



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Elena Segura, from the Archdiocese of Chicago, January 17, 2015 in Sedalia, Missouri.

Elena Segura Shares Challenges of Immigrant Journey in America

by Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S., Publications Editor

It was 5:00 A.M. at a remote location, a converted warehouse. Five vans with high windows pulled up, full of undocumented immigrants on the verge of deportation. Their families and friends were there, as well as Elena Segura, Director of the Office of Immigrant Affairs and Immigrant Education for the Archdiocese of Chicago. As they stood by the van, Elena and the mother of one of the detainees heard a tapping from one of the vans. The woman's son had managed to look through the high windows and saw her, tapping on the side of the van to let her know he knew she was there.

Almost everyone brought there was fluent in English, and all were working at some kind of job. Most had been living in the United States for several years: working, paying taxes, having wages set aside for benefits they could never claim, making positive contributions to society. The deportation center is one of five in the United States. Over 5 years, 150,000 have been deported from the Chicago area installation. Every one brought there is given literally one minute with an official when their name is called. If deported, they returned to the poverty and violence they had fled.

January 17, 2015: the gymnasium of Sacred Heart High School in Sedalia provided a large welcoming space for participants who came from as far as St. Joseph, Missouri to attend this year's first presentation in our Bicentennial Peace and Justice Lecture series on January 17, 2015. The excellent turnout was divided almost evenly between Spanish and English speakers, and while

Ms. Segura presented in one language, the other group experienced a break out session that provided more information and a chance for deeper interaction.

The morning session focused on Segura's faith journey, as she started as unchurched in her native Peru and moving to Catholicism as she discovered the Church's Social Justice teaching and its stance on migrants. With the audience, she unpacked the Church documents on immigration from the past 15 years, from Saint John Paul II's Message for the 89th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2003 and the documents from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Also reviewed were the failed attempts to reform U.S. immigration policies in 2007 and 2013. The afternoon session covered the nature of deportations, and the injustice perpetrated in their implementation.

Ms. Segura referred to Chicago's Archbishop Blaise Cupich's Epiphany homily at a special mass for immigrants, which reflected on the story of the Magi, particularly the dream that warned them not to return to Herod, and return home a different way. The Archbishop suggested to his audience that in seeking justice they may have to find different ways, seek new ways of changing how they live here as well as calling the nation to reform their policies.

It was an excellent start for our four-part lecture series, which continues with Sr. Helen Prejean, C.S.J., presenting in St. Joseph on March 7.



DEAD MAN WALKING: The Journey Continues...

March 7, 2015

**St. Francis Xavier Church
2618 Seneca Street
Saint Joseph, MO 64507**

9am to 3pm

Luncheon included

Contact: Br. Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S.,
daryl.charron@yahoo.com or 816-835-0344

Sr. Helen is a southern storyteller. She brings you on a journey during her talk about how she got involved with the Ministry Against the Death Penalty. Her stories are about many special people she has met along the way. She is passionate about the mission of getting rid of the Death Penalty because she has witnessed and accompanied 6 men to their execution. There is no dignity or justice in this punishment

Sister Helen is a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph. She spent her first years with the Sisters teaching religion to junior high school students. Realizing that being on the side of poor people is an essential part of the Gospel she moved into the St. Thomas Housing Project in New Orleans and began working at Hope House from 1981 – 1984.

She is the author of **Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States**. It became a movie, an opera and a play for high schools and colleges.

Since 1984, Sister Helen has divided her time between educating citizens about the death penalty and counseling individual death row prisoners. She has accompanied six men to their deaths. In doing so, she began to suspect that some of those executed were not guilty. This realization inspired her second book, *The Death of Innocents: An Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions*, which was released by Random House in December of 2004.

Sr. Helen is presently at work on another book - **River of Fire: My Spiritual Journey**



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The New Wine Press is committed to dialogue within the Church and charity toward all. Readers who wish to respond to the ideas shared in any issue is welcome to respond and continue the dialogue via an article or a Letter to the Editor.



Editor's Notes

Dialogue on Confession

by Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S., Publications Editor

I received a letter after the last *The Wine Cellar* issue on Reconciliation that was challenging. It talked about the sacrament of Reconciliation: the author was struggling between several unhelpful approaches to Confession ranging from the laundry list model to an ethereal view that was too big. The writer felt better after her annual visit to the doctor than after confession, and was searching for a motivation, a reconnection with wonder, even an excitement to approach this sacrament again.

Going to Confession stimulates strong feelings, a fair amount of fear and confusion, and mixed memories. I've heard the above concern often over the years, as well as a lot of misinformation. Some I've approached on this subject have declined the invitation to share, conflicted enough that they can't talk about it. I've found many opinions about how often to approach the sacrament, from the recommendation of recent Popes to go twice a month to the church regulation of once a year.

Confession is an appropriate topic for us to dialogue as Precious Blood people in our Bicentennial year: Gaspar devoted a lot of time and attention to Confession, was

concerned his priests would be good confessors—and it's a natural part of any process of reconciliation. My own hope is that we can develop some middle view between obsessive negative scrutiny and the "once-a-year whether I have to or not" approach. We also need to locate an adult approach that draws from any positive experience of our childhood catechesis without locking us into a "crime and punishment" mindset. Confession is a sacrament of healing, as the absolution formula says: "Through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace...."

I'd like to start a dialogue on Confession in *The New Wine Press* this year. I'm particularly interested in how we discern the need to seek the sacrament, how we approach it, and what expectations we have of it. Over the years, Confession has been connected to spiritual direction although it's not exactly the same thing, however exploring the overlap would be useful as well. I already have some contributions to follow up Joe Uecker's article in this issue, and since it's part of our spiritual lives, everyone's viewpoint is worth listening to.

continued on page 7