

THE New Wine PRESS

A night photograph of a field with silhouetted trees and a string of red lanterns. The sky is dark blue with a bright light source, possibly the moon, in the upper left. The trees are dark against the lighter sky. A string of red lanterns is visible in the lower left, curving across the field.

Volume 25 No 5 • January 2017

Refugees in Our Midst
Life in the Pod



Let us serve God with holy joy.

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

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Volume 25 No. 5 • January 2017

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Cover photo: Winter Solstice, Precious Blood Center, December 21, 2016. Photo by Companion Ruth Mather.

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

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

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

THE New Wine PRESS

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Kansas City Province

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Telling Our Story

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

This past August marked 25 years since the *New Wine Press* began publication. Previously, Fr. Ralph Bushell, Provincial Secretary, had provided a monthly province newsletter for many years. When Fr. Joe Nassal assumed the role of publications editor in 1991, the newsletter was given a new look and a new name. This being prior to the wide use of computers, email, social media, and websites, the newsletter was the primary means of communication within the province and to a wider audience beyond the members, Companions, and candidates.

The name *New Wine Press* was intended to be read in two ways, as it captured the charism, spirituality, and mission of the province. Fr. Nassal wrote the following in the first issue: “Being *new wine* is central to our identity as members and Companions of the Precious Blood. My hope is that the news, articles, and features...will strengthen our commitment to be new wine poured out in loving service...” So the title could be understood with emphasis on *New Wine*.

The second reading of the title focuses on *Wine Press*. Fr. Alan Hartway, who was instrumental in coming up with the new name, explains it in this way.

The name *New Wine Press* for our publication has three sources. The first is related to St. Gaspar who frequently quoted from the Song of Songs, where the divine Lover invites the Beloved into the vineyard, to the winepress in the wine cellar, where love is given. For us, the mission house is the winepress where the bond of charity is formed.

The second and earliest source was a homily by Fr. Leonard Goettemoeller at Del Bufalo Seminary, on Isaiah 63, where the Divine Warrior is portrayed coming out of the East to vindicate the poor. The exact phrase was: “I have trodden the winepress alone.” The thought here is that prophetic work is never easy and often lonely. Our publications would have a prophetic orientation.

Finally some time before the assignment of this name to the new publication, I had found a 12th century illumination of Christ in the wine press, showing Jesus reaching out to a lone person outside, and with his hand drawing him into the work, as if in reconciliation. (This illumination is in the last *United in Prayer* book.)

Despite now having a province website, a Facebook page, Twitter account, and email communication, the *New Wine Press* continues. The look and layout has evolved over time, and a number of people have served as editor (Frs. Joe Nassal, Alan Hartway, Timothy Armburster, Keith Branson). In my current role as publications editor, I work closely with Director of Communications Margaret Haik, but in addition we have an editorial board made up of Timothy Deveney, Vicki Otto, Gabino Zavala, Fr. Timothy Armbruster, myself and Margaret. We meet monthly to evaluate past issues and plan those upcoming.

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A New Normal

by Fr. Mark Miller, C.P.P.S., Leadership Team

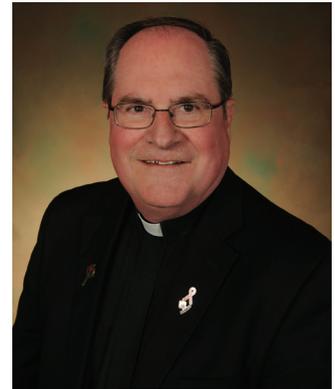
At our last meeting of the incorporated members, there was great energy over the concept of the “new normal” as described by Sr. Sandra Schneiders. Her reflections were first shared in Ireland where she spoke to the Religious Conference, expressing her ideas to this audience as a “trial balloon” to see if her observations could be validated by the listeners. From her article and our own reflections, it seems to me that our membership has validated much of what she expressed. She states that understanding our vocation as “religious” is not what we do but rather how we are. This is our struggle as we come to a new understanding of how we are to live community life and how we give witness to that within our ministries.

This has a history within our Community, since so many of our younger priests in the past served as associates to diocesan pastors, and in addition bishops often demanded that our associates live in the rectories rather than in mission houses. But Schneiders speaks of the “new normal” within the context of culture. Have we maintained the posture of being a pioneer or that of a settler? Will we continue to maintain our way of life, even if it means going out of existence, or will we be open to creating something new that will respond to the realities that have come into being, both in culture and Church? Since then, I have thought about this “new normal” in terms of how it applies to parish life and especially to a parish that has a school. It has become clear that we cannot continue to do business as we have if we hope to pass on this tradition of Catholic education to the next generations.

So what has changed from the past? Let us go back 50 years to see how people understood what it meant to be a Catholic. During that time, people by and large all understood that their lives were guided by the Six Precepts of the Church. The two most embraced were attendance at Mass on Sundays and holy days and giving of their time, talent, and treasure to support the parish. During those years, many Catholic schools also had religious sisters and brothers teaching which kept the financial costs of the faculty much lower than today. There was no need for tuition, since parents were very supportive, especially by living the kind of life that was being taught to their children in the classroom. What children were taught in the classroom was also being lived out within the home. That was the “normal” in those days. So, what is the “new normal”?

The “new normal” is the change in the makeup of the faculty in a Catholic school, which has increased the total financial cost of running an educational institution. But the biggest change is how parents today experience the Six Precepts of the Church. No longer can we depend on parents to bring their children to Church on Sundays and holy days. No longer can we depend on parents who send their children to Catholic Schools to support the parish

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Our Hopes for the New Year

Companion Movement

Vicky Otto, Companion Co-director

During our Companion Retreats this year Fr. Ben Berinti spoke about the four irritatingly beautiful questions for disciples and the Companions of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. As I reflect about hopes for the New Year for Companions, the last question comes to mind, “Whom Shall I Send?” As we begin 2017, my hope is that each Companion when asked, “Whom Shall I Send?” will answer courageously and in faith, “Send Me.” *Gather, Send* encourages Companions to “share the gifts we have been given with the rest of the world.” When I visit Companions across the country I am continually in awe of the amazing talents and gifts that Companions offer our church, our community and our world. When we freely share those gifts, we become those ministers of reconciliation and renewal that Saint Gaspar longed for. The composer Robert Schuman wrote once, “To send light into the darkness of men’s hearts—such is the duty of the artist.” As we begin this new year, I would change his comment to include the Companions of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. As we step out, stand up and speak clearly about the Precious Blood of Jesus through the sharing of our gifts, we bring light to hearts that are in need. May we answer each day of 2017, “Lord, send me.”

Justice & Peace

Gabino Zavala, Justice and Peace Coordinator

Throughout our lives we are asked or we ask ourselves, “How can we live out our Precious Blood spirituality in our daily lives?” “How do we put into practice what we believe?”

My hope is that as daughters and sons of St. Gaspar we can come to passionately believe that just as essential and nonnegotiable within our spiritual life as disciples of Jesus as prayer, fasting, almsgiving and keeping our personal lives in order is being involved in creating justice for the poor and the marginalized in our midst. Jesus’ teaching on this is very strong in the Gospels. He tells us that ultimately we will be judged on how we treat the poor.

My hope is that as Precious Blood members and Companions we will continue to grow in our understanding of the charism of our founder, using his words, our corporate stances, our personal gifts and other tools at our disposal to be passionate witnesses of love for God and all our sisters and brothers. We are called to be courageous disciples in our prayer, our

diverse ministries, and are life in community. We must be bold in imagining our future as the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in service to those on the margins.

My hope is that we live the one thing God asks of us, that we “act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8).

Precious Blood Volunteers

Tim Deveney, Director

To say that 2016 has been a disappointment would be an understatement for the volunteer program. I am looking forward with hope towards a stronger 2017. We retooled some of our recruiting efforts to do a better job of encouraging graduating seniors to join with us in service. This recruiting season has fed this hope with an excellent list of candidates from several different schools. These changes to our recruiting included better discernment on which colleges to visit, varied follow up tactics and using Google AdWords to get our message out.

As part of our campus recruitment efforts I have spent more time cultivating relationships at colleges where we have had success in the past. These colleges include Notre Dame and the University of Dayton. At the same time I dropped a few colleges from my visit list because of a lack of interest from their students, while adding more visits to colleges like St. Joseph in Rensselaer, Indiana.

Changing our follow up tactics is also a big part of what I am doing now. After college fairs I am now texting students within a day of meeting them. This has increased our response rate from students I meet at volunteer fairs and provides an extra personal “touch” to potential recruits.

During 2017 we are looking to have a few short-term opportunities to expose young people to Precious Blood spirituality and what it has to offer them and the world.

I am hopeful for 2017 that we will have enough volunteers to fill our placements here in Kansas City as well as have additional volunteers to re-open our placement at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago.

Vocations

Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S.

What a thrill it would be to have more candidates than we have rooms for at the Formation House! It’s entirely possible but will take work to accomplish. It

takes being in the right place at the right time to speak just the right words to the right person. It takes having those opportunities to interact with those who are discerning a call to religious life.

In looking ahead to the New Year, my hopes and wishes are focused on creating opportunities to engage others in a conversation about religious life and Precious Blood spirituality, to continue the parish visits and to schedule Days of Reflection, and also to host a Mission Trip to PBMR in Chicago. It would be a weeklong opportunity to engage in ministry, reflect upon what we have done, and share our C.P.P.S. story. Another hope and wish would be to find some new and challenging ways to interact with possible inquirers other than the traditional vocation booth. I much prefer to interact and have a conversation with someone else while engaged in a project. I'm not one to just sit and visit over a cup of coffee. I wish to explore some different service type projects that could be inviting to potential inquirers, and while doing the work have an opportunity to share our story and invite another to consider religious life.

I don't do this ministry alone and so another wish is to receive names from other members of men interested and worth a conversation to see where the journey might lead. Here's still hoping and wishing it will be a journey with us. ✠

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The board is especially helpful, in that each member shares responsibility for soliciting articles and working with writers to further develop articles as needed. Unsolicited articles continue to be encouraged and welcomed. Our goal is to invite members, Companions, candidates and volunteers (and others) to tell the Precious Blood story and share how Precious Blood spirituality and charism is expressed in our lives and ministries.

The new year begins in the cold and dark of winter for many of us. We look back with gratitude and forward with hope. So I will end this with a favorite poem of mine, *Gratitude to Old Teachers* by Robert Bly.

*When we stride or stroll across the frozen lake,
We place our feet where they have never been.
We walk upon the unwalked. But we are uneasy.
Who is down there but our old teachers?*

*Water that once could take no human weight—
We were students then—holds up our feet,
And goes on ahead of us for a mile. Beneath us
the teachers, and around us the stillness.* ✠

Leadership, continued from page 3

financially. We have children who no longer receive Communion at our School Masses because their parents don't come to Church on Sundays—and the children know this is what is required and so they don't go to Communion during the week either. There are others who believe that going to the school Mass during the week satisfies their being there on Sundays.

The "new normal" has created a whole new way of how we continue to support and enhance Catholic education at the local level. The former assumptions that we used to depend on are no longer valid; to continue to insist on those past assumptions only leads to frustration and possibly despair. What is needed is a new understanding of how we pass on the faith to future generations in a way that is both affordable and effective. This has become the mission of the Pastoral Council and the School Advisory Council for parishes who have schools.

But just as the assumptions of the past are no longer valid in today's world for Catholic schools, I wonder what assumptions of the past are no longer valid as we look at our own future as a Society of Apostolic Life. In the past, most of our future members came from our parishes or from those who participated in parish missions led by our Mission Band; this is no longer true. In the past, families had 4-6 children; this is no longer true. In the past, parents felt blessed to have a son or daughter in religious life; this is no longer true for many parents.

I suspect there are other assumptions that are no longer valid as we look to the future and plan on remaining a province of hope and sustainability. A new approach needs to be discovered, and that seems to be our mission today. Is it possible to let go of past assumptions and trust in new approaches that will produce a new hope and future for us? What kind of future can we imagine that will project us into a future of hope and promise? Will it be a change in our ministries, will it be a change in how we live community life, will it be a change in how we name our relationship between incorporated members and covenanted companions, or will it be a new awareness of how our spirituality can speak to our world of today? ✠



Refugees in Our Midst

by Denise Simeone

Permission to reprint this article comes from Celebrations Publications (CelebrationPublications.org), originally published in December 2016. Art by Julie Lonneman (Julie Lonneman Studio)

Tag, you're it!

When I was growing up in Ohio I played a variety of games with neighborhood kids and cousins. A common one was hide and seek tag. One person was the chaser or it and tried to tag someone else. There was a place, usually a tree trunk or a pole called safe or home. It was a place where you could run to, touch it, and catch your breath before you went out running again.

I was reminded of this game and its focus on the role of a safe place when I read the first chapters of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew begins his infancy narrative differently than Luke; in fact, this is the only Gospel where we hear about the dreams of Joseph.

In Matthew, Joseph plays a pivotal role by showing fidelity to God's call as he protects Mary and her newborn child.

Perhaps as we delve into these initial chapters of Matthew, we catch a glimpse of our role and responsibility in the world. As we anticipate or begin this liturgical new year, let us explore three related passages.

Joseph's Dreams

On the Fourth Sunday of Advent and during the Christmas Vigil Mass, the church proclaims the story of Joseph's troubling discernment. In the first of four dreams, Joseph receives a message by an angel that

Mary, his betrothed, is with child. A righteous man who wanted to avoid exposing her and himself to shame, he sought to divorce this young and pregnant woman. But, as God would have it, the angel told him that this unborn child to be named Emmanuel, God is with us, was destined for greatness. As the passage reveals, Joseph awoke and took Mary into his home, thereby offering the mother and child security and protection (cf. Matthew 1:18-25).

On the feast of the Holy Family, observed this year on Friday, December 30, we hear another dream encouraging Joseph to escape with his family to Egypt, thereby avoiding King Herod's ominous plan.

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. So Joseph, Mary and Jesus departed by night to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15).

Through yet another dream, God endows Joseph with the knowledge that the cruel Herod was dead. With this message, an angel ensures him that he may return to Israel, but should resettle in another area, a place of sanctuary where they can avoid Archelaus' (Herod's son) evil reign:

"Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel ... And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee (cf. Matthew 2:19-23)...

In Matthew's Gospel, Joseph arranged a series of journeys and stopping places that would be home for Jesus, Mary and himself. With each new place, he created a safe haven: a home where they could be spared the upheaval and fear that existed in the world around them. Through his courageous efforts, he protected them from the elements, from danger, from tyrants and most importantly, from death. Under his care, they were safe.

To be sure, Joseph chose not to abandon those entrusted to his care. Instead, he put himself in the role of a protector and shield. He embraced Mary, the child Jesus, and brought them to safety. His family became strangers in a foreign land, refugees in need of shelter and protection. As this story has been told throughout the centuries, it is often called "The Flight to Egypt." Although we may be left wondering who

welcomed them into their new surroundings, a more important question might be: How and where is this ancient story being played out today?

During the octave of Christmas, we proclaim yet another story with Herod. In this account, his reign of terror brings many vulnerable children to their gruesome end:

When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi. Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet: "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more" (Matthew 2:16-18).

This passage is proclaimed on a day called The Feast of the Holy Innocents. Christian churches throughout the world remember these innocent victims of senseless violence. These slaughtered children are called martyrs, a term reserved for those who have died for their faith. In fact, they are considered the first Christian martyrs.

No Escaping Faces of the Lost

We have all seen images and heard stories of refugees who are fleeing their homeland. Just as Joseph heard the message to "get up, take the child and flee," hundreds of thousands of parents across the globe have realized that the only way to protect their family is to leave their country of origin. As they travel to far-off lands escaping danger and destruction, they seek a better life for their helpless families. Sad is the fate of countless children wrenched from their homeland or from their mother's arms, who vanish on the way to safe passage or are lost from their father's grip. Haunting images of modern-day "holy innocents" leave us paralyzed and without words: the blood-soaked five-year-old injured child, Omran Daqneesh, from the Syrian city of Aleppo; the body of three-year-old, Aylan Kurdi, washed up on a Turkish beach; the nameless, drowned infant cradled in the arms of a German rescuer. That rescuer, himself a father of three and a music therapist by profession, is quoted as saying: "I began to sing to comfort myself and to give some kind of expression to this incomprehensible, heart-rending moment. Just six hours ago this child was alive." The German humanitarian organization, SeaWatch, which supports the safe and legal passage of migrants offered this statement: "If we do not want to see such pictures we have to

stop producing them” (www.humanrightsatsea-news.org/2016/05/).

Should we turn away our faces from this horror? Even if we did, could we deny that the ground beneath tens of thousands of displaced persons runs bloody red throughout the world? Are there not “innocents” being martyred today? Though God is surely walking with them in their suffering and death, what is our humanitarian response to this tragic situation?

We must turn our eyes to these refugees, hear their stories and cry with their anguished families. The children in our very midst are being slaughtered, yes, by tyrannical regimes, but also by the apathy, ignorance and even absolute bigotry and intolerance that pervades predominantly Western nations and their people.

By records kept by the United Nations, 65.3 million people were displaced in 2015. One in every 113 persons of the world’s 7 billion people are refugees – displaced and fleeing to find safety.

As we listen to the proclamation of Matthew’s familiar Christmas story this year, what will resonate in our hearts? Will we hear the passage as just a story? Or, will we see this as part of our shared story, one where we have a pivotal role in caring for those in danger and without homes?

Aliens in a Strange Land

Recently while taking a cab in Chicago I spoke with a driver who was born in Palestine. In the context of our fascinating conversation, he told me about the hospitality offered to the pilgrims who had gathered in Bethlehem when Pope John Paul II visited in 2000. The sheer number overwhelmed the hotels. He said that the people living in Bethlehem opened their homes to travelers out of pure hospitality, mostly free of charge, because the townspeople believed it was the right thing to do. He said that the concept of Bethlehem being a sacred place “is still running in the veins of the people there.”

He also recounted the story of his father, a Palestinian refugee, who was received into Brazil in 1948. He expressed deep gratitude for the Brazilians and the countries at that time who were willing to welcome persons displaced by the war with Israel. He said his family is eternally indebted, and even as he has found a home in the United States with his own family, that gratitude runs deep in his approach to all refugees today.

His story confirmed that having a first-hand experience of being displaced – as difficult and desperate

as that ordeal might be – can lead to heart-filled gratefulness. But his gratitude to Brazil and her people made me wonder. What countries will be remembered with gratitude in twenty years by the desperate refugees uprooted by the war in Syria, or by those caught in inescapable violence in Central America, or by those trapped by vicious gangs in some Mexican cities, or even by those from today’s Palestine, still torn by conflict and genocide?

When further exploring this topic, I turned to the dictionary to look up the words migrant and refugee. It led me further to the word alien and its definition. This exploration brought to mind a mandate that informs our Judeo-Christian tradition and code of conduct:

You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God (Leviticus 19:34).

Were not Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus foreigners, strangers, migrants, refugees, aliens? As we acknowledge the plight of the Holy Family during this Christmas season, can we also see the face of God in the undocumented, the refugee, the stranger in our midst?

Compassionate Response

During a visit in 2016 to the Greek island of Lesbos, Pope Francis knew it was a place of great pain for refugees. On his flight from Rome to Greece, he told reporters that “This is a trip marked by sadness and that’s important. It’s a sad trip. We are going to meet so many people who suffer, who don’t know where to go, who were forced to flee, and we are also going to a cemetery – the sea, where so many have drowned.”

While in Greece, Francis, along with the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and Archbishop Ieronymos II of Athens, reportedly spent more time greeting refugees individually than they did giving speeches. Through their compassionate example, they demonstrated to the citizens of world that actions speak louder than words.

Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of the world’s Orthodox Christians, told the refugees, “We have wept as we watched the Mediterranean Sea becoming a burial ground for your loved ones. We have wept as we witnessed the sympathy and sensitivity of the people of Lesbos and other islands. But we have also wept as we saw the hard-heartedness of our fellow brothers and sisters – your fellow brothers and sisters

– close borders and turn away ... The world will be judged by the way it has treated you.”

Similarly, Francis told those interned at the Moria refugee camp that he wanted to be with them and to hear their stories. As he departed Greece, Francis accompanied three families of refugees from the camp back to Rome for their resettlement. Two months later, nine more arrived. In these acts of hospitality, Francis revealed the embodiment of mercy by welcoming the stranger to their new home, a place of safety and refuge.

In the month that followed, he did even more to challenge us in his role as a compassionate spiritual leader. On May 26, 2016, Pope Francis was given the life jacket of a young girl who had drowned. Oscar Camps, founder of a non-profit Spanish organization that attempts to rescue migrants caught at sea, said the following when offering the life jacket to the Pope: “Each boat-load of people has a dramatic tale to tell ... families are separated, orphaned children who lost their parents along the way now find themselves in a strange country, a continent that is not their own, and no one to help them.”

Within days after his meeting with Camps, Francis spoke to a group of Italian youth while holding the girl’s life jacket. Ann Schneible of the Catholic New Agency documented this gathering:

“Let us think of this little girl: what was her name? I do not know: a little girl with no name,” the pontiff said, according to Vatican Radio’s translation. “Each of you give her the name you would like, each in his heart. She is in heaven; she is looking on us.”

As he explained the encounter with Oscar Camps, Schneible recounts:

“He brought me this jacket,” the pontiff said ... “and with tears in his eyes he said to me, ‘Father, I couldn’t do it – there was a little girl on the waves, and I did all I could, but I couldn’t save her: only her life vest was left.’”

“I do not (tell you this because I) want you to be sad, but (because) you are brave and you (should) know the truth: they are in danger – many boys and girls, small children, men, women – they are in danger,” he said.

At that same event, money for the children of Lesbos was presented to Francis from the children of a school in Vibo Marina. They signed a letter stating:

“We children promise that we will welcome anyone who arrives in our country ... we shall never consider

anyone who has a different skin color, or who speaks a different language, or who professes a different religion from ours, a dangerous enemy.”

A simple yet radical act of solidarity by children. Could we sign such a letter? Would we make such a promise?

The Work of Our Hearts

Throughout the centuries, humanity has been in search for places of safety, places where human dignity is extended equally to all, regardless of language, skin color, religion and country of origin. The infancy narrative, as documented in the Gospel of Matthew, shows that the first years of the Holy Family were spent as refugees, strangers seeking sanctuary. The scriptural tale of the holy innocents is a grim reminder of how the young and vulnerable suffered and continue to live in grave danger.

Unlike the childhood game of tag where home base is easily within reach, the plight of refugees involves fleeing persecution, often moving across long expanses of rough waters and treacherous terrain. Aliens in a strange land seek places where their families can flourish, not perish. Our God tells us what we must do to love.

It is grave yet sacred work to create safety – a place where we allow others to catch their breath, find their footing, and make their own bold move away from a place of safety outward into our world. If we are to create sanctuary for others – whether it is for a new co-worker, a new next-door neighbor, or literally, those seeking asylum because of the terror they face in their homeland, we must do the work of love. And the first place must be in our own hearts.

Mindful of the words of Leviticus, we must love and show care for those who are displaced for we, too, have walked as strangers – aliens – in foreign lands. Create a safe place.

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Goals for a New Year

by Vicky Otto, Companions Co-director

January and the New Year often get a bad rap. We hear often about New Year's resolutions and how unsuccessful people are regarding keeping those resolutions. As I reflect upon goals and resolutions for the New Year I prefer what journalist Ellen Goodman wrote about resolutions and goals for the New Year: "We spend January first walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives... not looking for flaws, but for potential."

Each year the Companions Council establishes new goals for the upcoming year. The Council would concur with Goodman's suggestion when they look at goals. They don't just reflect on what hasn't happened. They also pray and discern where the Holy Spirit is leading the Companion Movement as they look to the future and how best to serve Companions. In order to

bring to life *Gather, Send* the Council has established five major goals:

- Improve communications within the Companions Movement as well as the Precious Blood community.
- Explore and determine the best ways to reach out to younger people and to those of different cultural traditions.
- Explore the best ways for Companions to share their spirituality with the world.
- Foster and strengthen relationships between Companions and the Community.
- Develop administrative policies and procedures to meet the future needs of the Companions Movement.

The Companions Council concurs with Fr. John Wolf and myself that visiting all the groups in the provinces is extremely beneficial. We look forward to seeing everyone again over the next year. Another goal for the next year will be to develop new materials for Companions to use when they want to share

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painting by Adolfo Davis who serves life without parole in Stateville Correctional Center for a crime when he was 14 years of age

Life in the Pod

by Fr. Denny Kinderman, C.P.P.S., PBMR

He stood there to hear the judge say that his trial will be held in February. He knew that meant another 64 days of incarceration, after he had already been in the juvenile detention center for six months. The state is accusing Nigel of habitual crimes which—if he is found guilty—will result in his incarceration in prison until he is 21, three years from now.

“Come in here and talk with us” was the greeting as I was walking into the pod in the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center. (A pod is one section, of about 30, in which 15 to 18 youth spend their day in individual cells or two common areas). They were in the TV area. Turning off the TV and circling their chairs, six kids felt like sharing their thoughts. The first kid began a heart-to-heart discourse confessing his determination to change—again! He’s “gonna do what my momma says, get back in school, stop smoking weed, go to church and not do stuff that will get me locked up.” He’s determined now, but when

he gets out he’s back doing what he can’t seem to stop doing. His story is a sad saga of recidivism. It isn’t his first stint being locked up, but he hopes that he’ll be able to make it his last.

Immediately the others chimed in saying that that’s their story as well, admitting the same challenges and the same results. What happens to dreams and hopes and prayers to change lives? Does God not care? It raised doubts about God’s attention to their prayers, and questions about their own sincerity. “Am I a phony for praying only when I’m locked up and forgetting about God when I’m free?”

Nigel came into the pod, returning from playing chess elsewhere in the detention center. He and Antonio slid chairs into the circle joining in. “Father Denny, let’s do circle like we do at the center. Here’s the talking piece.” He places a small golf pencil in the

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center and explained to the others how it works. So what's the question? "What's your struggle these days?"

Tired of being locked up, worrying about court appearances and trials. Tired of staff telling you what to do, like going to bed early: "I can't sleep at 7 p.m.!" Tired of limited phone calls, worrying about mom and siblings.

It's heartbreaking to feel the pain of youthful hope and sincerity tangled in the web of street life. The streets are an addiction for youth who have such limited opportunities. They don't even know what change looks like or where to begin to get out of the vortex of poverty-stricken neighborhoods.

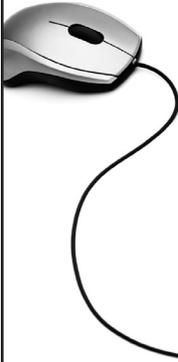
An escape from the harsh reality of incarceration—separation from family and friends mostly—is joking around and laughing at what deep down hurts. This is where Tyshawn can shine when the talking piece comes to him. He is last to share, so we abandon the circle guidelines allowing the others to question every bit of his captivating story. The questioning seemed essential to clarifying his account of events. The barrage of questions seeking detailed clarification—obvious evidence that these youth are used to court appearances—had everyone, even Tyshawn, in stitches. He later told me how tangled up he was trying to make his story sound more real than it really was. This he told me the night before he was about to be shipped out to yet another group home to see if or how long he might stay at his new placement.

I had previously spent many visits with Tyshawn in that pod, often while he was locked up in his cell for "acting out." He is a DCFS kid—a ward of the state in the Department of Children and Family Services. He has no one in his life except group homes to care for him—and he's not the only one in this situation in the juvenile detention center. The DCFS kids are like the throwaways of the throwaways. As I listened to his telling of an outlandish adventure that had the other kids' full attention, I was mindful of Mother St. Teresa of Calcutta who said that not being wanted is the greatest disease.

It's not easy to walk out of the detention center at the end of the evening and breathe the fresh outside air, mindful of the young ones you leave behind who can only leave their pod to stand before a judge. Then I remember what Tyshawn told me, "The circle helps us see that time in here is for all of us, who are in the same boat, to think about what we don't think about out there." †

information about the Companions Movement with the larger community. During our visits over the last year we heard over and over again from Companions that they valued the service opportunities that their Companions group had throughout the year. Another goal we have is to continue to support and encourage these service opportunities for Companions throughout the country. We also hope to establish and utilize evaluation processes for materials and programs for Companions. Evaluations provide valuable feedback that will help us continually improve the materials and processes we offer. Our last goal was given to us by Companions last year. They asked for a pilgrimage to Rome for Companions, since many were not able to attend the bicentennial celebrations. I am happy to announce that in October 2017 we will be hosting a pilgrimage to Italy for Companions. We will be spending time in Rome, Giano, and Sonnino and conclude our pilgrimage celebrating the feast of St. Gaspar in Albano. Fr. Emanuele Lupi, C.P.P.S., who currently serves as Vice Moderator General, will serve as our pilgrimage leader.

As one can see, the Companions Council embraces the ideal that the future and a new year are full of potential. I am grateful for their fidelity to staying true to *Gather, Send* and seeing a world of possibility. As we move forward in this new year, may we embrace the words of one of my heroes, Saint John XXIII. He wrote, "Consult not your fears but your hopes and dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do." I pray that 2017 will be a year of peace, possibilities and potential for each of us in the Precious Blood community. †



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with holy joy.**

- St. Gaspar del Bufalo



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