



# The New Wine Press

*Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ*

---

Volume 23 No. 10  
June 2014



Immigration Reform  
*page 4*

Addicted to Incarceration  
*page 7*

People of the Spirit  
20 Years Later  
*page 8*

Breaking Bread on the Edge  
*page 9*

A Unique Position to Listen  
*page 10*

*Borderland—A Review*  
*page 12*



## *Asking the Right Questions*

*by Fr. Timothy Guthridge, C.P.P.S.*

*“Only when you get to the point of a broken heart  
do we ask the right questions.” (Rainer Maria Rilke)*

A long time ago, I learned that good questions are more likely to lead people to a better place, rather than to answers. During my first year as Director of Initial Formation, one of the more important questions at various workshops and conferences on religious formation I attended was, “What is the significance of religious life?” As our community becomes smaller and smaller, this question—at least for me—becomes more and more significant.

One of the basic answers to the question is that religious life, especially missionary life, is always rooted in Mission. Mission is the source of all Christian life; it is the very root of the Church. The Catholic Church around the globe is becoming more and more Mission-oriented; Pope Francis has put more of a missionary emphasis on the Church. Church is becoming less a place where people go and attend. We see this in the continual drop in church attendance and numbers of children attending Catholic schools. The Church is becoming more of a phenomenon where people are going out of the Church to spread the Good News. This is happening more and more in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The Church in the United State is very institution based, so it is taking a little longer here.

*continued on next page*

---

The question is, “What is the Mission?” Jesus defines the Mission in Mark 1:15: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.” Everything Jesus does in the Gospels gives witness to this reality, “The kingdom of God is at hand.” As Missionaries of the Precious Blood, everything we do must be evaluated according to this Mission. How do we as a religious community give witness to Jesus’ declaration that the kingdom of God is at hand?

It has to involve more than the work we do; it must include every aspect of our lives. This includes the way we live community, how we treat one another—and all of our actions, not just when we are professionally engaged. It includes every word that comes out our mouths, not just when we are behind a pulpit or in a classroom or assembly hall. Every moment in our lives, we are giving witness either to the kingdom or to what is not of God.

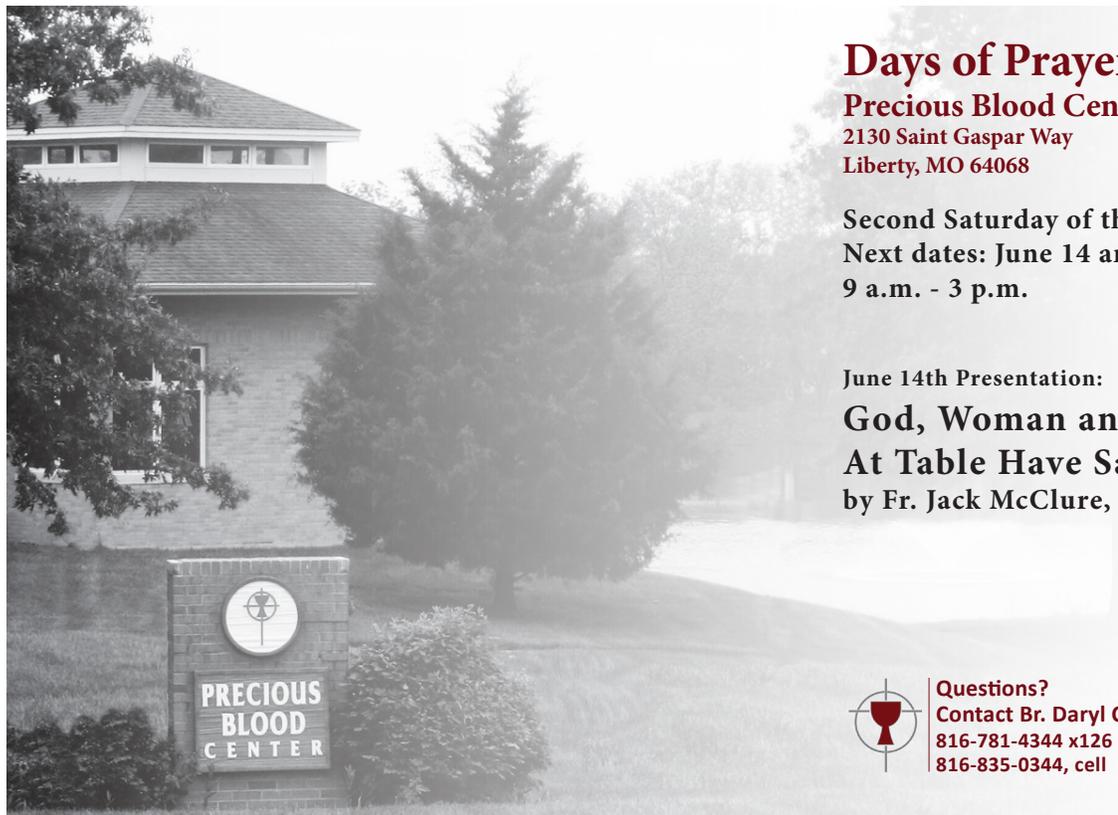
As we approach our two hundredth anniversary, we have to be mindful that we cannot live on the laurels of the past. We have to take St. Gaspar’s message and update it in today’s context. This is another question we must ponder, “How do we update Gaspar’s message?”

Religious missionary communities talk about ministering to people on the margins. One conference I attended

defined people on the margins as people with no power, people who are looked down upon, people who have no voice, and people who are seen more as issues to be dealt with rather than human beings. Are these really the people with which we minister?

I have heard it said that religious life was never meant to be in the center, but it was always to be an outpost of the institutional church. Jesus always lived on the margins of institutional religion. It is also said that religious communities historically have walked a tightrope in the institutional church. We can fall too far inside the Church or we can fall too far outside the Church. For missionary communities it is a challenge to maintain a healthy balance.

In the 1840s, when the first Precious Blood Missionaries arrived in this country, they worked in German mission outposts—beginning in Ohio, then spreading to missionary outposts throughout the United States. As our missions developed more into Catholic parish and school institutional structures, our community fell more to the center. Today, many places where we serve are no different than typical diocesan structures. There is nothing wrong with diocesan structures—they are the backbone of the Roman Catholic Church in American—but as we are in the process of forming



## Days of Prayer & Reflection

### Precious Blood Center

2130 Saint Gaspar Way  
Liberty, MO 64068

Second Saturday of the Month

Next dates: June 14 and July 12th

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

June 14th Presentation:

### God, Woman and Man At Table Have Sat Down

by Fr. Jack McClure, C.P.P.S.



Questions?

Contact Br. Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S.

816-781-4344 x126

816-835-0344, cell

missionaries and desire to be missionary in nature, I think we have to ask ourselves the question, “What are we doing and why are we doing it?”

In formation, there is always a tension in teaching people how to walk the tightrope. If we stay in the center too much there is danger of betraying our being. It is tempting to want to stay in the center where it is safe. As we get older, myself included, it is even more tempting to stay safe. I don't believe the crisis in religious life is about the lack of numbers. There is a crisis in the tension of understanding where we are in the church and what we would like to be doing.

One of the challenges for contemporary religious is how to be formed and reformed for a global reality that isn't all that comfortable. Missionaries are not to be too comfortable with belonging. I heard Fr. Barry Fisher say long ago, “wherever a missionary is, he or she should always be a stranger in a strange land.” We know that abstract altruism is not enough. Developing courage, bravery to live with not belonging, and living on the outposts of the church where traditionally missionaries have always resided is a challenge and a matter for discussion. I don't think we will ever get it perfectly, but I do think these are important questions to discuss.

## *Sent by the Blood*

The Leadership Team of the Kansas City Province of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood is pleased to announce the following assignments, effective July 1, 2014:

- Fr. Jim Betzen, CPPS: Pastor, St. Mary of the Visitation Parish, Ottumwa, IA.
- Fr. Matt Link, C.P.P.S.: Co-Pastor, Most Holy Redeemer Parish, San Francisco, CA.
- Fr. Jack McClure, C.P.P.S.: Co-Pastor, Most Holy Redeemer Parish, San Francisco, CA.
- Fr. Deusdedit Mulokozi, C.P.P.S.: Parochial Vicar, Pettis County Catholic Community, with residence at Sacred Heart Parish, Sedalia, MO.  
Fr. Deusdedit is a member of our Tanzanian Vicariate. We welcome him to the Kansas City Province!

We are grateful to these members for accepting the call to be sent by the Blood of Christ in the spirit of St. Gaspar to be a reconciling and renewing presence in the Church and our world.

*Joseph F. Nassal cpps*

Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S.  
Provincial Director  
Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.  
Ronald Will, C.P.P.S.  
James Betzen, C.P.P.S.  
Thomas Welk, C.P.P.S.

## *The New Wine Press*

*Missionaries of the Precious Blood*  
Kansas City Province  
[www.kcprovince.org](http://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.

Precious Blood Center  
P.O. Box 339  
Liberty, MO 64069-0339  
816-781-4344

Editor  
Keith Branson, C.P.P.S.  
[kbcpps@gmail.com](mailto:kbcpps@gmail.com)

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

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



## *Immigration Reform*

*by Fr. Jim Betzen, C.P.P.S., Leadership Team Member*

Last year, millions of people watched as attempts were made to reform our immigration system. Unfortunately, it did not happen. I would like to address the misunderstandings of immigration reform and why it is vital for our country to address this issue.

I have worked with Mexican and El Salvadorian families in Sedalia, Missouri for the past 9½ years. During this time, I have celebrated weddings and baptisms of adults who asked me to not use their real names, but rather their aliases. I have known families where the head and wage earner of the family has been deported, leaving the spouse and children to struggle economically. Hispanics have been arrested for driving without a driver's license. I have known Hispanics who are victims of auto accidents and fear being deported. Taxes are deducted from their paychecks but they are not allowed benefits.

Immigrant families have been in our community for over 15 years; many came to work in the Tyson chicken

plant. Many work in construction, janitorial jobs, lawn care, and restaurants. Some have small businesses—mostly restaurants and small stores. Their U.S. born children go to public schools as well as our Catholic school. The number of Hispanic children and youth has increased significantly in Sacred Heart School in the last three years. The immigrant populations of Sedalia and La Monte have improved the economy of Pettis County. Simply put, immigrant families are an integral part of our community of Sedalia. Some of these families are part of the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in our country.

The problem is not with the families. The problem is with our immigration system. Other than Native Americans, the United States is a country of immigrants, and immigration has always been a vital part of our economy. Immigrants have worked and continue working in low skill jobs. However, the number of visas available for workers and their families is too low for

those arriving. Roughly one million immigrants enter the country as lawful permanent residents, most based on family or employment relationships, but 4.6 million more have applications pending. Without permanent or temporary visas available, and the path to citizenship taking up to 15-20 years, many immigrants take the risk of coming undocumented. They do this to find jobs, feed their families and better their lives.

Instead of asking if immigrants are legal, we should ask if our immigration laws are moral. When a country of immigrants denies access to immigrants who are refugees from violence and poverty, we must ask if this is moral.

To reform our immigration system, I think we need to overcome our fear of immigrants first. After 9/11, there is a greater fear of foreigners in our country. Hate groups have directed their attention away from our minorities and toward immigrants. Immigrants come from all over the world; less than one-third are from Mexico. Today they come from Europe, Asia and Africa. Most immigrants are neither terrorists, nor members of drug cartels, nor cheap labor that takes away our jobs. They are families like our families who immigrated to the U.S. for a better life, freedom and stability. Their presence among us improves our economy as they work in low skill jobs in our society. Immigrants are also younger than our general population.

With immigration reform, I see three issues. One issue is securing our border with Mexico. Another is reforming the process which future immigrants become naturalized citizens. The third issue is creating a process where 11 million immigrants presently living and working in our country can become citizens. I would like to address this third issue of immigration.

Much has been done in our country in the name of homeland security, such as increasing border patrol, airline security and improving identification of citizens. I think the next step is documenting all the undocumented immigrants living here. The sooner these 11 million undocumented immigrants become citizens, the safer our country will be. The path to citizenship will encourage immigrants to learn English and allow them to live within the law, which they cannot do without documents. This path to citizenship may seem a challenge to our society, but I see it as an opportunity that we should take. It will better our country and all our lives.

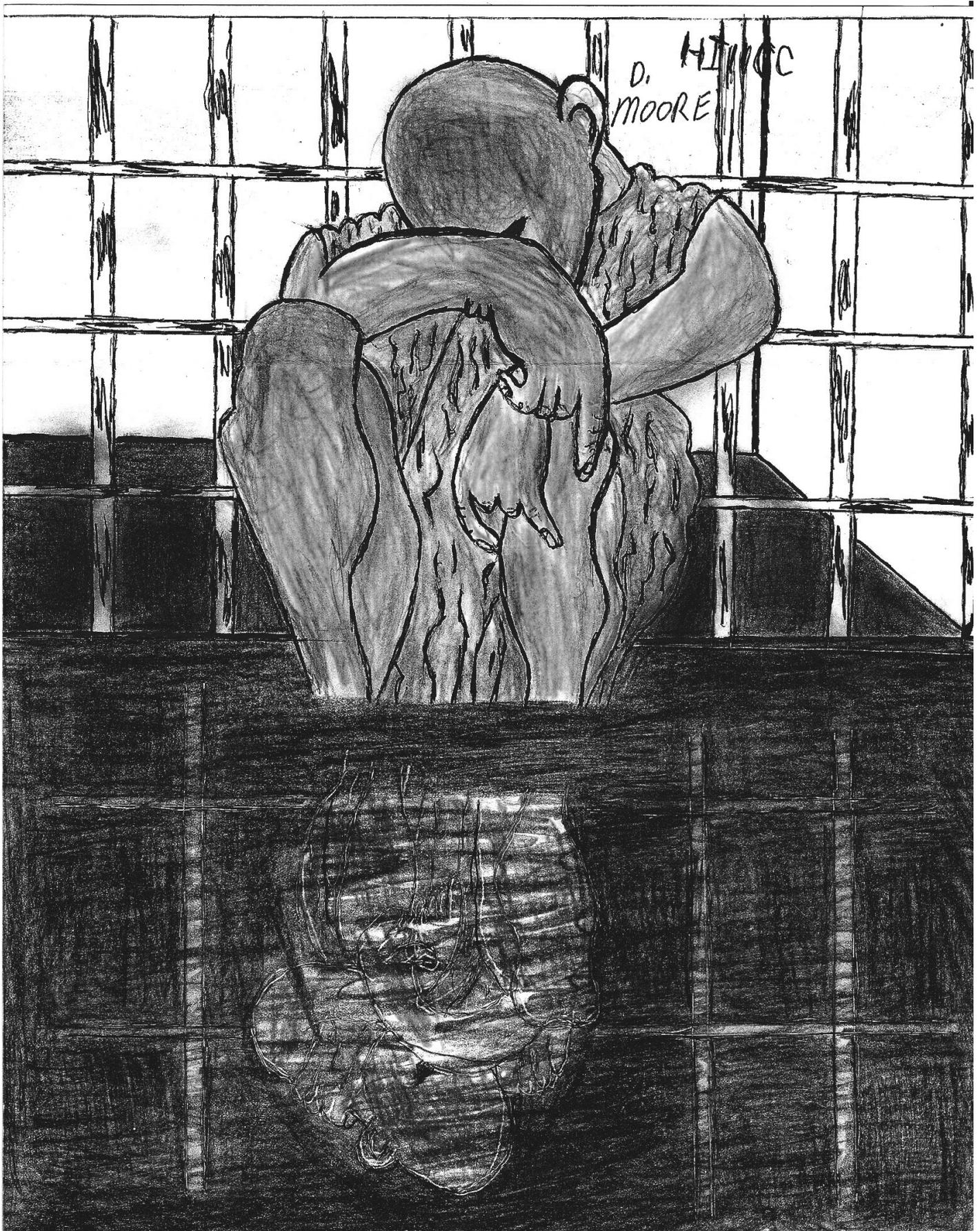


Fr. Ilija Grgić, C.P.P.S. of the Croatia Mission reports progress building the new Reconciliation Center in Zagreb. The roof is done and by the end of June the windows and exterior doors will be installed, then they will proceed to the interior. They hope to bless the chapel and partially open the center for the Jubilee celebration next year. The Kansas City Province gave the Croatia Mission a grant at last year's Assembly to help build the Reconciliation Center.

### *A Thank You Note*

Thanks to everybody for their prayers, Masses, phone calls, cards, and visits during John's last illness and passing. I appreciate the prayers and contact from my fellow Companions near and far, especially those I haven't met yet. I pray for all of you every day and night. May God bless and keep you.

Mary Bockelman



---

# Addicted to Incarceration

by Fr. Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S., Director of PBMR

He was alone in his cell; a sixteen-year old charged as an adult. The thought of spending years behind bars with no end in sight simply overwhelmed him, and so in that isolation and loneliness he spoke of harming himself. Those words set into motion being transferred to “segregation”: a place where you are stripped of all your belongings—clothes, bible, bed—everything. As I passed by his cell, he lay motionless on his mattress-less plastic bed frame staring at the ceiling. Since they had taken his clothes, he wore a special smock-like cover that is designed for self-protection.

I know Larry from the neighborhood and from a previous stint in the detention center. When he glanced over and saw me at his door, tears began to roll down his face. Both embarrassed at his appearance—locked down with nothing but a smock that barely covered his body, but with relief at seeing a familiar face—he came over to his cell door. Since he was in segregation, they would not allow him to come out of his cell to speak to me. Isolation only adds to the desperation; a kid who is hurting and feeling alone needs a supportive environment.

Cook County, Illinois is the birthplace of the Juvenile Justice System in the United States. The idea over a hundred years ago was that young people are different from adults and need to be treated differently. Today the U.S. still stands alone in the rate of incarcerating our youth as adults. No longer only for the most severe cases, youth are regularly and automatically transferred to the adult courts. That means no judge decides on whether it is appropriate, given the age, background and circumstances, to place him in the adult courts. Legislators create laws—many politically motivated—that have devastating effects on our youth.

Automatically transferring youth to adult courts along with the rate at which youth are being incarcerated, puts the U.S. outside the norm for treating children according to the United Nations Human Rights Committee. While crime statistics report crime is going down, more and more youth are being incarcerated. Automatic transfers affect the minority youth most; a three-year study in Cook County found that out of the 257 automatic transfers to adult court, there was only one white child.

In Cook County Juvenile Detention Center, 85% of the youth are African American, 14%-Latino, and 1%-Other.

Youth of color are being arrested, charged (many as adults), and incarcerated at alarming rates; white children in more affluent communities are not, even though research shows drug use and crime is as much a problem for those communities as poorer communities. Do we ask, “Why?”

Communities and systems (schools, courts, detention centers, etc.) using a restorative justice process find the incidents of crime, disruption, and violence decreases. In two middle schools using this process, suspensions were dramatically cut from previous years—from upward of 25% at the two middle schools in 2012-2013 to a current rate of less than 6%. In addition, restorative justice enables us to consider alternatives to incarceration and “one-size-fits-all” response to crime and conflict. Restorative Justice seeks to consider not merely the crime, but the persons involved and how we can begin to heal the hurt caused by violence.

No one denies the impact of violence and crime on the individual, family and community. Recently, less than a few blocks from the Precious Blood Center, a 14 year-old girl shot and killed another 14 year-old girl—apparently over an argument about a boy and incited by postings on Facebook. All—from the neighbors to professionals—know we need to respond, but there is a choice of how we respond. We can continue seeing this as a criminal justice problem and transfer the 14-year old girl to adult court, seeking the harshest of penalties, or we can look at this as public health issue and wrestle with the underlying causes of youth violence.

Twenty years ago the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote a Pastoral Message entitled, “Confronting a Culture of Violence.” In that document, the bishops recognized the impact of violence on families and communities. They went on to say that “we have an obligation to respond.”

As we seek to live out the spirituality of the Precious Blood, restorative justice can offer a means of responding to this punitive, unjust system and confronting harm done, with reconciliation and restoration of relationships. Do we choose to ask questions and respond or do we choose to remain addicted to incarceration and the punitive practices of the system?

## People of the Spirit—20 Years Later

by Br. Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S., Director of Justice & Peace Ministry

In June 1994, the Commission on Membership compiled *People of the Spirit*, a workbook our congregation would use in the process of revitalization. A couple of months ago, the Kansas City Companions decided to revisit this twenty years old document. I was surprised to find how prophetic this document is two decades later.

At the outset, it said: “We are not about the work of change; our task is far greater, deeper, wider. We are about the work of revitalization. There is a profound difference. Change implies our adapting or reacting to forces that are beyond our control that tend to overwhelm us, frustrate us, bruise us. Revitalization is quite a different matter. It implies not adaptation but adventure; not reaction but action. Revitalization means we make our religious life vital again by tapping that energy force, that passion, that creativity that is within each one of us and bringing this to the surface in our relationships, our work, our prayer, our play, our listening and our loving. Revitalization implies transformation as we become new people in Christ.” This message of hope was especially inspiring to our group during the Easter season.

The candidates in formation at the time (including me) envisioned living in common, respecting and supporting diverse apostolates, and sharing prayer and encouragement. We talked about Mission Houses with Incorporated Members as well as Companions, men and women, married and single, living, praying, and working together. These houses would be in parishes and other places, and coordinate the talents of all living there. We thought we should continue living our way into a new way of being.

One of our priests envisioned a model of community that dispensed with an order of precedence by role or responsibility. Everyone would be equally important; every role and responsibility would be equally important in building up the community. Reasons for staying with the Community also surfaced: being on the cutting edge of issues in the Church. We were not satisfied with the status quo, and actively sought to make the Gospel message alive and vibrant in our world. It was said Gaspar envisioned a new model of collaboration of laity and clergy in the Bond of Charity and the charism of the Precious Blood.

Throughout the document, struggles with the issues of power and intimacy emerged. Twenty years later, we can ask some of the same questions. What issues of power and intimacy need to be addressed within the Community? Maybe it would be helpful to describe the kind of intimacy we are seeking in community life and tap into the primary sources of that intimacy.

People of the Spirit emphasized the equality of women in the Church. This especially grabbed my attention and reminded me of the Human Rights Initiative of the late 1990s from the Precious Blood Leadership Conference. I was on the HRI Committee during a three-year initiative focusing on women’s equality in the Church. Companions said twenty years ago, “To me there is no question regarding women’s role in the Church. We are all equals in the Church with each one having their own role or function, “Women’s rights need to be addressed. Limits should be looked at with an ongoing openness,” “I would expect women to be woven into the fabric of community as strengthening and permanent threads,” and “I believe the blood of Christ does not differentiate between women and men but rather affirms the gift of life for all humans.”

I appreciated one of our priests saying, “There is injustice in the Church as long as women are not able to assume equal roles. The qualifications for ministry are gifts, talents, and education, not sex. We as a community can continue to promote the active role of women in the Church as a vehicle to bring about fairness and change. Very simply, we as a Church need the fullness of gifts from all people in order to truly be Church to one another.” I found this quote to be extremely insightful and prophetic. We need to continue to strive for this ideal today. It is a matter of justice and the Cry of the Blood calls for it. It is crucial to the revitalization of our Precious Blood Community and the greater Church.

The Kansas City Companion group found *People of the Spirit* still to be an inspiring and challenging document. As we discern the future direction of our Province and Community, we should use this prophetic book to help us focus on the needs of the Church and Cry of the Blood.

# Breaking Bread on the Edge

by Fr. David Matz, C.P.P.S., Interim Director of Companions



Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S. with members of the Linton, North Dakota Companion group.

It was warm and muggy when Fr. Ron Will and I left for the Dakotas to visit the Precious Blood Companions there. It didn't matter the weather changed back to cold and rainy on the journey as we reached South Dakota; as soon as Claire Ann Wheeler and Doris Weber opened the door, Ron and I were warmly welcomed as long-lost brothers reunited with our family. This was a foretaste of many doors opened to us as we wandered the edges of our old missionary territory.

Eleven years had passed since I was on the edge of the Dakota plains. Jeanette Kolberg pulled out a copy of *The New Wine Press* from May 2003, with a picture and an article of the North Dakota Companions who made covenant. She said, "This was the last time we gathered as a community and with community members in North Dakota." I took a gulp and gasped ashamedly, "It has been that long?" In the photo, Fr. Al Ebach and I were with the companions from Linton and Bismarck. Jeanette wasn't chastising us for our long absence; there was excitement to see us, and a fondness for the times when we told stories and ate together at a common table. Our souls and our relationships were nurtured.

One afternoon, Ron and I were walking the main street of Linton, stopping in stores to look for people Ron recognized from his tenure as pastor. When we entered the bakery, out walked Mary, who recognized Ron immediately. For next few minutes she shared with us about her family and bakery over the past twenty years since Ron left. The sweet aroma of freshly baked bread gave way to harsh reality as Mary recounted the struggles with her daughter-in-law's sudden death while giving birth to a child that died fifteen days later, and her son's resulting dark depression. She shared that a picture of Mary,

the mother of Jesus, at the foot of the Cross became her saving grace; now she understood the pain and surrender Mary experienced at there. Ron and I looked at each other and immediately thought the same thing, "This woman knows and lives Precious Blood Spirituality."

After a tour of the bakery, Mary offered us some pastries and we thanked her for sharing her story and her bakery with us. Outside, Ron and I paused for a moment to give thanks for a woman who broke bread with us and left us with the aroma of hope in the precious blood of Christ.

We shared this moment with the Linton companions at our gathering with them. They hadn't met as a group in eleven years, yet they chose to renew their covenants. We challenged them to invite people like Mary who showed us such a profound faith in God. We challenged our Bismarck and Aberdeen companions as well to look for people who would welcome an invitation to reflect on Precious Blood Spirituality. A gift is given and meant to be shared; Ron and I felt Mary had given us the gift of faith, not only with sweet rolls but also with the brokenness of her life.

Over the last year, I have been asked how our companions in Wisconsin and North and South Dakota are doing. I answer they are all living their busy lives like the rest of us. Yes, they miss the presence of the Precious Blood Missionaries, brothers and priests; it inspired hope and a love of community in them. One companion said she thought about not renewing her covenant because her group hadn't gathered in 11 years. But within the few short days of our visit, spirits were renewed and inspired with a hope that nourished our relationships with each other. Will this companion group begin to gather regularly again? Will the sharing of our chance encounter with Mary bring about new growth? Only time will tell.

People of Precious Blood Spirituality are everywhere, especially in a bakery on Main Street in Linton, North Dakota where even sweet bread broken gives life. A visit to the northern edge of our province challenges all of us to be more intentional about gathering together, even for a short while. As Joe Nassal wrote in the *Psalm of the Edge*, "St. Gaspar take us to the edge.... Give us courage to find our home on the edge where heaven meets earth and hope is born."



### *A Unique Position to Listen*

*by Nate Baumert, Precious Blood Volunteer*

“I appreciate your listening to my story,” a patient said Thursday morning. With these words, she summarized succinctly my volunteer experience. On one level, I have listened to people’s stories and it is rewarding to know I am appreciated. Not only listening to plenty of storytelling, but seeing and talking with people, as well as understanding people’s lives and the obstacles they face. On another level, I have appreciated the act of listening, too.

Being a volunteer, I am in a unique position to listen, especially in comparison to hospital staff. Ever since I started, I made a point to focus on what I knew: the tangible physical and emotional support I could provide patients and hospital staff. I attended patients who are losing their medical capacities, who speak a foreign language, and who call out for help frequently. Nurses have 3-5 patients to help on any particular day, and must manage their time accordingly. As a volunteer, I was responsible for any and all of the patients on the floor.

I had the luxury to worry about everything. I could listen to patient’s stories—I might even call it a privilege. This isn’t to say nurses or doctors are not able to listen. But I was able to focus on this task.

I was impressed by the connection the nurses had for one particular patient who suffered from a stroke. He improved markedly during his time at Truman and it was amazing to see him stand up and hug us goodbye as he left. He and the nurses cried as the next chapter in his recovery began. The nurses planned to visit him at the new facility; one even came in on his off day to see this patient leave. I had not imagined such emotion and personal connection, especially when so many patients need extra help. I can safely say I will remember this experience forever.

I am also impressed by the patient’s perspective and resilience. It reminds me of a verse from Philippians that



Nate Balmert with a fellow volunteer and therapy dog at Truman Medical Center.

a friend sent me. Paul writes about how they must make the Gospel their own and no earthly status is as valuable as knowing Christ (Phil 3:7-11).

It is not often at Truman I hear someone complain about their misfortune or how many hours they work. Patients came after losing everything or after a traumatic experience. One co-worker corrected me when I wished her good luck at the end of the day, and said, “I don’t need luck. I have God.” Her optimism struck me, and she was not the only one. On the elevator and in the hallways, people responded to, “How are you?” with, “I am blessed.” As Paul says, becoming like Christ means identifying His suffering in our misfortune. It also means realizing our happiness need not depend on our earthly condition.

Based on their strong faith and my comparative good fortune, I have felt blessed as a result of my volunteer experience. Patients who sustain injury invariably regain their spirits. At first, I would be distracted by injury and illness, but now I focus on the health or sadness visible in their face. In my reading, I’ve seen it said people often

misjudge how pain or injury would affect their happiness. They find afterward it is not as bad as they thought it would be.

The nurses wished me goodbye at the end of the day with the same refrain (after, “It’s already time for you to go?”), “Thanks for your help today.” I will remember when the patients said: “I appreciate you.” One repeat patient would add, “Don’t think I don’t because I do.” If I see him again, I will say, “I relish being able to help you.”

---

### *Borderland, continued from page 12*

ride on the roof of a boxcar, they were amazed at how little the passengers focused on their immediate danger and instead celebrated the hope of reaching their destination.

After a short train ride, they visited the state on the western coast of Mexico where most of the illegal drugs arriving in the United States originate. They accompanied Mexican soldiers on a raid of marijuana plantations, marveling at the technology being used to grow the crops, and the danger they faced if their adversaries decided to resist the raid. The sad story is that all of the routes used by undocumented immigrants into the United States are controlled by drug lords who extort money from them as they pass through and who demand they carry product with them across the border.

The last leg was the worst: a brutal walk through the Sonoran Desert in southern Arizona. Here the migrants face daily temperature differences of 50° between day and night, as well as shortages of food and water. If a migrant falls behind, his *coyote* (guide) will leave him or her behind, because they deem that person’s life is expendable. Many die of exhaustion, starvation, hypothermia (too cold), and hyperthermia (too hot). The group of six only lasted two short days in the desert before rescue, and covered only 10 miles. Many die on the third day after their departure from the last town in Mexico on the 70-mile hike to the Tucson area.

The six people were changed by their journey, but they did not end up in agreement. At least they were able to form their opinions from fact and experience rather than prejudice and assumption. The journey helped humanize the plight of undocumented immigrants for the six. Perhaps that is a lesson for all of us: to always seek the truth without presumption, and to always see the human dignity of everyone.

---

## The New Wine Press

Precious Blood Center  
P.O. Box 339  
Liberty MO 64069-0339

*Change Service Requested*

*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

## *Borderland—A Review*

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

A new documentary series, *Borderland*, premiered on Al Jazeera America this past month. This four-part series showed the journey of six people, three men and three women, who traced the footsteps of three people who died trying to enter our country. The six were from different age groups and political backgrounds: liberals and conservatives, old and young, affluent and working-class. They had strong opinions about illegal immigration, ranging from forbidding immigration to completely open borders. First, they saw the situation at the border itself, went with the Border Patrol, looked through the fence at the border, and saw the special morgue where the bodies of those found in the desert are kept. The six then split into teams of two that took the case of a person found dead in the Arizona desert.

The next part of their journey took them to the countries of origin of the case handed them. One pair went to El Salvador to find the family of a 13-year-old boy named Oscar. Another went to Guatemala to find the family of a young woman who died in the desert. A third went to southern Mexico to find the family of another young woman who did not survive the trip. These encounters

brought the pairs in contact with the culture and society of origin as well as the family of the deceased. In each place, an overwhelming sense of despair and hopelessness about the future lead these people and thousands more to make the hazardous journey. One pair visited a classroom of elementary school students, all of whom knew someone who is in the United States now, and knew the hazards and possible death that awaited them on the journey. Each one of them held up his or her hand when asked if they would want to make the trip themselves someday.

Then, the participants started back home, joining other immigrants using the same route. It involved border crossings in southern Mexico that were hazardous in themselves, and the constant threat of ambush shadowed their every step north. Remarkably, a number of women were making this journey with small children. The participants were astounded that these vulnerable people would take such horrible risks to find a better life for themselves, in spite of experiencing what the people were leaving. As they got aboard a cargo train for a precarious

*continued on page 11*