

The NEW WINE PRESS

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

May 2008

VOLUME 17 No. 10

ASSEMBLY 2008

At our electoral assembly last April, a central theme of conversation and discernment was “vision.” Since that gathering, the Province Leadership Team has tried to honor those results and take responsibility for helping the province identify its vision and share in its implementation.

To that end, a group of members and companions, including the Leadership Team, met in September to begin the process of articulating a common vision and identifying resources for implementation. The team then met with members and companions during their November meeting in Centerville, Iowa, and in January convened a gathering of members currently serving in parish ministry. Their May meeting will be in Warrensburg, Missouri, providing an opportunity to meet with members and companions in that area. The provincial assembly in June will continue this process as we attempt to frame all aspects of the gathering in the context of our vision.

The 31st Kansas City Province Assembly will meet at the Ramada Inn in St. Joseph, Missouri, June 9-12, 2008. The main presenter this year, who will be with us on Tuesday, is Richard P. Johnson, Ph.D. He will guide us through a process focused on change in religious life, in order to assist our efforts at implementing a vision.

Dr. Johnson is nationally recognized for his pioneering work in spiritual adult development and aging. He is invited into many churches, dioceses, and religious communities for consultation, workshops, retreats and other educational work and he has taught hundreds of lifelong adult ministry leaders, pastoral counselors, chaplains, and DREs. His fresh ideas and enthusiasm for the spiritual aspects of adult development and aging have inspired scores of maturing adults to follow their hearts and live more abundant lives in Christ.

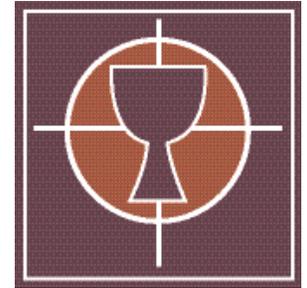
A dynamic, engaging, and compassionate teacher who delights in seeing his students grow personally and spiritually, he has written many articles and fifteen books—all focused upon God’s expansive grace in our maturing years. A fuller overview of his work can be found at www.senioradultministry.com.



Dr. Richard Johnson

Dr. Johnson has given us an overview of Tuesday’s topic as follows. Religious communities and their members are in the midst of a protracted process of change so profound that it has been called a fundamental transformation. Change of course is no

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

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

The New Wine Press seeks to remain faithful to the charism of our founder, St. Gaspar, and the spirituality of the Blood of Christ with its emphasis on reconciliation, renewal and refounding. We accept and encourage unsolicited manuscripts and letters to the editor. *The New Wine Press* is published monthly. The submission deadline is the 20th of the month.

Mailing Address
PO Box 339
Liberty, MO 64069-0339
(816) 781-4344
Fax: (816) 781-3639
sec@kcprov.org

Editor
RICHARD BAYUK, C.P.P.S.
rbayukcpps@mac.com
(773) 960-8447

Assistant Editor
LOU CAREY

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CLARE McCLAREN
luxedesign
Kansas City, MO

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Leadership Notes

Al Ebach, C.P.P.S.

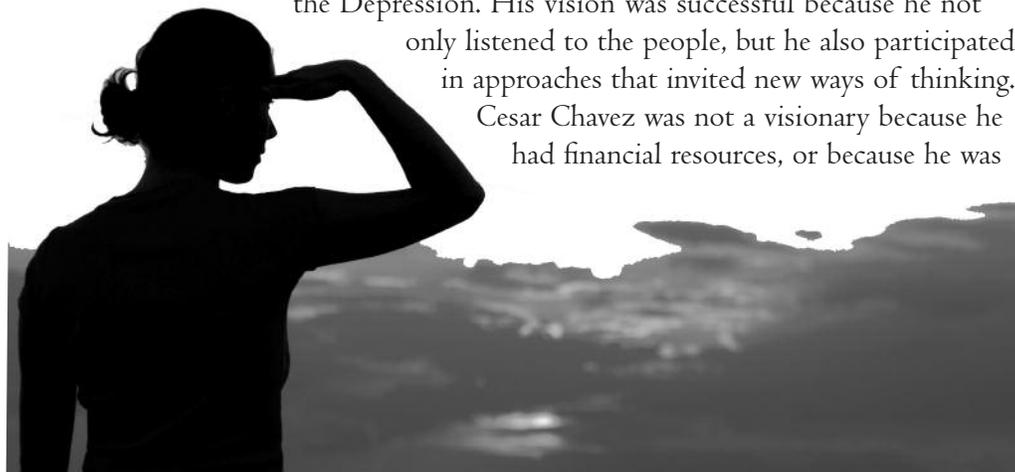
Throughout this year the province leadership team and others have been involved in discussions about vision for the province. Many people have written articles in *The New Wine Press* regarding their participation in specific visions in their ministries and places of employment. Following on a recent province mailing, there is further information in this issue about the new Director of Communications, who will be assisting in the realization of many of the possibilities for the province.

Most people define a vision as something that is yet to happen or yet to be discovered. Visioning definitely includes future possibilities; however, it is important to realize that what the province and community are presently experiencing is very much part of our identity, and should be an indication of that which the members and companions hope to become.

In order for people to share one another's visions, there has to be trust, support and encouragement. People have to be willing to listen to possibilities, trusting that others may also have some creative insights. Many people get so caught up in their own dreams that opportunities pass them by. When visions revolve only around one's own experiences or ideas, much tends to be missed or misunderstood. I recall a cartoon showing a happy dog hanging out of the window of the family car as they drive past the neighbor's dog. The dog in the car is speaking to the neighbor dog: "Ha, ha, ha, Biff, guess what? After we go to the drugstore and the post office, I'm going to the vet to be tutored." When people are excited only about their own journeys it can lead to a painful experience. Like Fr. Paul Sattler used to say, "He is a good boy but he just doesn't listen."

When we listen to possibilities, relationships begin to build and people begin identifying with each other. And when that happens, then community becomes life giving. In true community people encourage dreams and possibilities and support ideas, willing to participate in proposed activities.

On April 9th, people of the West Side, Kansas City, MO gathered and marched in honor of the fourteenth anniversary of the death of Cesar E. Chavez, who built relationships by listening to the farm workers in California. In the '60s this man worked in the name of the community to unite the farm workers in order to change an unjust system. He is an excellent example of someone who had a vision. He worked to make systemic changes because he could identify with the farm workers when he and his family were forced to labor in the fields during the Depression. His vision was successful because he not only listened to the people, but he also participated in approaches that invited new ways of thinking. Cesar Chavez was not a visionary because he had financial resources, or because he was



a gifted orator, or because of his educational degrees. His success came through his experience with the people, which opened the way to unite them through mutual respect and support.

Cesar Chavez was as successful as people invited him to be. His name became synonymous with uniting farm workers, but it was more than just his vision or his approach that invited change. It did not happen immediately, but rather took years for the process to develop.

His vision became a reality. Not all visions come to fruition, however. Recognition is not necessarily a measure of success. It can be fulfilling simply to be invited to share one's dreams and visions, and to be encouraged to put those dreams and visions into action.

There is no one in particular who has the corner on the vision market, but I have hope that some of the approaches suggested by members and companions at various meetings this past year will open up more possibilities and opportunities for everyone.

Visions become realities when everyone feels heard and invited to participate. Communication is vital! Remember, if one is only excited about one's own journey, the visit to the vet could leave one rather empty. 🐾

Assembly, continued from page 1...

stranger to religious life. Since Vatican II, it has swept through religious communities so consistently, that it has become the norm. Yet today's change is of another sort entirely! Forces such as ministry construction, shifting priorities, demands of an increasing aging membership, alternate residential styles, closing communities, as well as community and provincial amalgamation have all exerted pressure on community leadership and membership alike that push and press for changes in relentless succession.

In this new change paradigm, religious are called upon to shoulder greater responsibilities for personal adaptation in an atmosphere of fluidity and consistent ambiguity. For some this can be positive and growthful; for others, however, this shift can become stifling. Those who have not mastered the competencies of change can find themselves emotionally ill at ease and can react in ways that are less than growthful.

Change doesn't happen by itself. Those in leadership need to articulate as clear a vision of desired change as possible and make sure that their members have a firm grasp of the competencies of change, the skills that together allow religious to internally assimilate change and even become a protagonist rather than an antagonist of the overall change process itself. Ill-handed change can constrict morale, accelerate miscommunication, and escalate negative competition in any organization.

When we become over-saturated with change we begin to resist it; we can become reactionary, pine for the past, and even become passive-aggressive. On a conscious level we may openly agree with whatever changes come our way, while on a subliminal level we make psychological "side bets" so to speak, that the proposed change will not work! Without ever being aware of it, we may stiffen our resolve and act against change, even to the point of sabotaging it. This presentation is designed for anyone going through any type of change or personal transition, such as ministerial, career, residential, organizational, or relational.

In addition to Dr. Johnson's presentations on Tuesday, we will celebrate province jubilees at St. Francis Xavier Church on Wednesday evening at 5:00 pm. The Companion Covenants will be celebrated on Tuesday evening, at 7:00 pm.

The business parts of the assembly on Wednesday and Thursday will highlight our Mission in Vietnam, a spending proposal for a volunteer program, and discussion on the results of the gatherings we had this past year on vision and the future of our parish commitments of the province. 🐾



2008 JUBILARIANS

<i>Incorporation</i>	<i>Ordination</i>	
Al Fey, 70	Bernard Mullen, 60	Vince Hoying, 50
Ed Oen, 50	Dennis Schaab, 40	Joe Uecker, 40
Ron Will, 40	Mike Volkmer, 40	Garry Richmeier, 25
Al Ebach, 40		

Welcome . . .

I am a life-long Catholic. I grew up in the Chicago suburbs and attended Catholic grade and high schools. My wife, Cheri, is a consultant in the health care field; we will celebrate 32 years of marriage this June. Our son, Thomas, works in Instructional Design at California State University, Northridge, California.

For a majority of my career, I have had the privilege of getting to do what I wanted to do—be on the radio—and get paid for it! I started at



Michael Throop

a radio station group in Evanston, Illinois in the summer of 1966, mowing lawns and painting fences, and operating the controls on Saturdays.

I remember very precisely when I decided I wanted to be in broadcasting.

One summer day when I was 12, I was

hanging around with a friend in my bedroom when my mother told me that her old radio in the kitchen had quit. Since she and my dad had bought a new one, I was welcome to see if I could make it work again. My friend Rich and I began fiddling with the tubes and suddenly one apparently dead tube lit up, they all lit up, and we had sound. We discovered stations that our parents never listened to, and from then on, I knew this was my direction in life.

That direction has had twists and turns, of course. I was working at a radio station in Dubuque, Iowa in 1972 when I decided to enter the Dominican priory there. As it turned out, the Holy Spirit eventually showed me it was not my calling, and I took the message to heart. I returned to broadcasting and on Christmas Eve, 1975, I met the person I married. Now there was a direct message from the Spirit! I have worked with a large public relations firm as well as independently in concert with a much smaller group. My knowledge of news media needs and the search for story ideas has proved valuable to the clients with whom I have worked.

We've moved all over the Midwest, including two stints in Peoria, Illinois, and a return to Kansas City in 2001.

I am an education "late bloomer." After starts and stops over the years, I finally decided in late 1997 that if I were ever to have a life away from broadcasting, I would need a degree in the long term. I finished my undergraduate degree in Communications in December 2001 from City University of Seattle. I completed my Master of Public Affairs from Park University-Kansas City in May 2007. I have been an adjunct instructor in Mass Communications at the University of Kansas William Allen White School of Journalism and this past year at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. It has been a joy to work with the students; they have helped me learn more about my capabilities to develop a message and communicate it effectively.

I am grateful to the province leadership team for their interest in and support of developing a communications office. My goal is to collaborate with the many constituencies that make up the Kansas City Province, in order to tell the stories that can inspire and encourage us, to learn from one another, to be encouraging on the journey of faith, and to introduce others to the Missionaries and Companions of the Precious Blood. I look forward to visiting with you at the annual assembly in June. 🍷

From a recent letter by the Leadership Team to province members and companions:

"We want to inform everyone of another step that we have taken to provide support for the effort at articulating and living a vision for the province. Last fall we approved creation of a new province position, Director of Communications, and have recently hired Michael Throop to fill that role.

Mike is currently an adjunct instructor at Benedictine College in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications. He has extensive experience in radio and television as a reporter, news anchor, editor and writer. In addition he has education and experience in public affairs and non-profit communications.

In the upcoming May edition of The New Wine Press, Mike will introduce himself more completely than is possible in this letter. He will begin the position full time on June 1st. We are pleased that he is joining our province staff, and we look forward to having his expertise and personal and professional experience placed in service of our mission."

The Peace Pastoral at Twenty-five

During his recent visit to the United States, Pope Benedict XVI spoke to the bishops of the United States at a vespers service at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Affirming the “confidence in God” of the people in the United States, a confidence that is shown when “they do not hesitate to bring moral argument rooted in biblical faith into their public discourse,” Pope Benedict reminded the bishops, “Any tendency to treat religion as a private matter must be resisted. Only when their faith permeates every aspect of their lives do Christians become truly open to the transforming power of the Gospel.”

The pope’s words echo what the United States bishops wrote twenty-five years ago when they brought the Gospel’s transforming power to bear on the nuclear arms race and issues of war and peace: “Faith does not insulate us from the challenges of life; rather it intensifies our desire to help solve them precisely in light of the good news which has come to us in the person of Jesus, the Lord of history. From the resources of our faith we wish to provide hope and strength to all who seek a world free of the nuclear threat.”

Published on May 3, 1983, *The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise, Our Response* became one of the most important pastoral letters ever penned. It placed the church in the forefront of the public discourse regarding the morality of war and the policy of “Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD)” represented by the build-up of nuclear weapons by the United States and the Soviet Union. As with most documents of its kind, the process was as important as the final result. For at least three years before its publication, the bishops held listening sessions throughout the country, gathering as much information as possible and then releasing the pastoral letter in several drafts to give all an opportunity to critique the document.

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, the chair of the bishops’ committee drafting the pastoral letter, showed his genius as both a minister of reconciliation and a savvy politician by inviting John Cardinal O’Connor of New York, a military

chaplain for many years and an outspoken advocate for a strong national defense, and Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, auxiliary bishop of Detroit, who then and now is the closest the bishops’ conference have seen to a pacifist and a prophet, to serve on the committee. The seeds of Cardinal Bernardin’s “common ground” approach to issues threatening to divide the church and the country were sown here in including those holding very different points of view to dialogue about matters of war and peace.

Twenty-five years ago, the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union had many in our world shivering

at the possibility of a nuclear winter. Though the peace pastoral did not go as far as many hoped—it did not condemn the policy of nuclear deterrence completely but held that it could be justified “as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament” and was “judged morally acceptable” only as a means to complete disarmament—the bishops sought to respond to what they



THE CHALLENGE, THE PROMISE, THE RESPONSE

Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S.

described as “a new moment” in history and raise the awareness of all people to the threat of nuclear weapons. “Today the opposition to the arms race is no longer selective or sporadic, it is widespread and sustained,” the bishops wrote. “The danger and destructiveness of nuclear weapons are understood and resisted with new urgency and intensity.”

If the peace pastoral did not transform the Catholic faith community into one of the historic peace churches, it certainly underscored the central place of peacemaking in the life of an active Catholic. Even today many define “active Catholic” solely by Sunday Mass attendance and often exclude the other “constitutive” dimensions of the faith defined by the bishops in 1971 as the celebration of the sacraments, ministry of the Word, and the work of justice and peace. The bishops affirmed this definition of an “active Catholic” when they wrote in the pastoral, “Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers,

See *Peace Pastoral*, continued on next page...

not by some movement of the moment, but by Jesus Christ.”

While the cold war has thawed and given way to the “war on terror” that is currently being waged on at least two fronts—the war of retribution in Afghanistan and the war of aggression in Iraq—the bishops recognized twenty-five years ago how our fears can paralyze us and cause passivity. The pastoral was a call to action. If one were to replace “nuclear war” with “terrorism” in the bishops’ pastoral, one could see how timeless the call remains: “Apprehension about nuclear war is almost tangible and visible today. . . . As bishops and pastors ministering in one of the major nuclear nations, we have encountered this terror in the minds and hearts of our people—indeed, we share it. We write this letter because we agree that the world is at a moment of crisis, the effects of which are evident in people’s lives. It is not our intent to play on fears, however, but to speak words of hope and encouragement in a time of fear.”

One might have hoped that the bishops would have spoken with the same prophetic voice against the preemptive war with Iraq—as the late Pope John Paul II did—but by the time the Bush Administration was planning the war of aggression by manipulating the fears of the American people, the moral authority of the bishops was severely compromised by their cover-up of clergy sexual abuse. To paraphrase Simon and Garfunkel, “Where have you gone, Joe Bernardin?”

But a quarter of a century ago, the bishops did address those who were selling a policy of nuclear proliferation through fear by responding with prophetic hope. The bishops wrote, “Hope sustains one’s capacity to live with danger without being overwhelmed by it; hope is the will to struggle against obstacles even when they appear insuperable. Ultimately our hope rests in God who gave us life, sustains the world by his power, and has called us to revere the lives of every person and all peoples.”

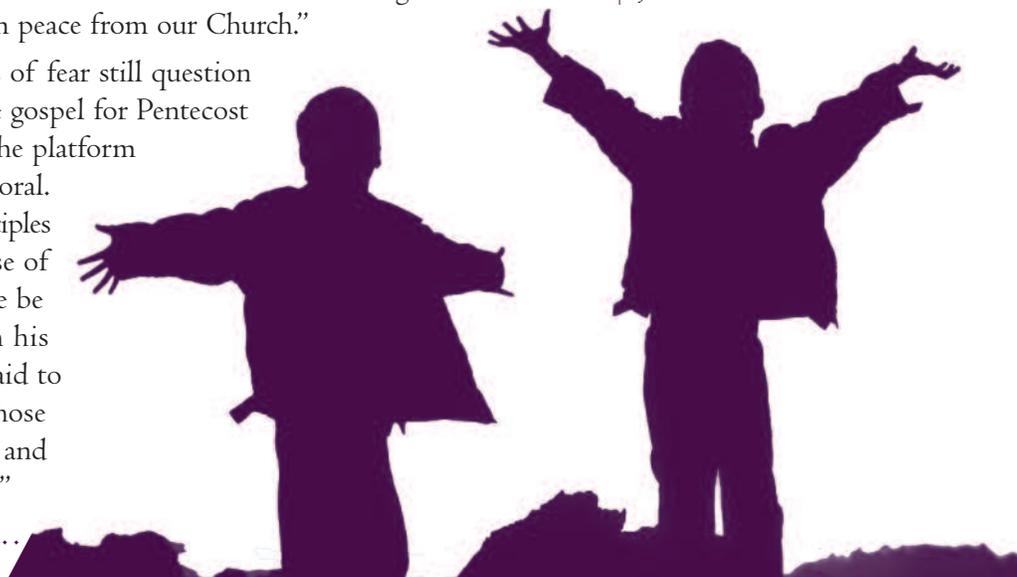
As the bishops reflected in the title of their pastoral letter, peace is God’s promise that demands our response. But as Pax Christi, USA (www.paxchristiusa.org), the national Catholic peace movement points out, “Certainly ‘our response’ to ‘God’s promise’ has fallen far short over the years since the pastoral’s publication.” So to commemorate the silver anniversary of the peace pastoral, Pax Christi is sponsoring Ten Days in May “to remember and recommit to peacemaking and to encourage sincere discernment over the challenges of peace today.” Beginning on the eve of the anniversary, May 2, and concluding on Pentecost Sunday, May 11, Pax Christi invites all to pray and witness “both for peace in our world and for a stronger commitment to build and proclaim peace from our Church.”

As war rages on and purveyors of fear still question the patriotism of peacemakers, the gospel for Pentecost Sunday (John 20, 19-23) provides the platform for preaching about the peace pastoral. The Risen Jesus appeared to the disciples hiding behind locked doors because of their fear, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” Then he showed them his wounds, “breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.’”

Continued on page 10. . .

Arise all women who have hearts, whether your baptism be of water or of tears! Our sons (and daughters) shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy, and patience. We women of one country will be too tender to those of another country to allow our sons (and daughters) to be trained to injure theirs. . . . As men have forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of council. Let them meet first as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace. . . .

Julia Ward Howe



VOCATIONS OFFICE

Sharon Crall

Trivia Question: What woman has appeared on the cover of Time magazine more than any other?

Answer: The Blessed Virgin Mary.

Mary is our ultimate role model when it comes to responding to God's call. While there was a bit of discernment involved, her final answer was "yes." Simply and honestly she asked the angel how this could happen, and the answer was by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mary was called to be the Mother of God, and she allowed the Spirit to lead her in her vocation.

That journey brought her many experiences and emotions. She traveled through the joys and apprehensions of motherhood (remember that little incident about Jesus staying behind in the Temple?), through the time of intercession in the first miracle of Jesus at Cana, through the piercing of her heart as she watched her son die on the Cross, and through the witnessing of the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In all of these situations, it was Mary's will to do the will of God, no matter what the cost.

It is my contention that St. Gaspar must have understood Mary's vocation in a special way. It is obvious that he had a special and intense devotion to Mary. The Congregation was founded on August 15th, the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. Another important date for Precious Blood members and companions is the Feast of Mary, Help of Christians on May 24th. St. Gaspar chose this depiction of Mary as a patron of his newfound Missionaries of the Precious Blood. He once called Mary "the director of divine graces and the mother of graces themselves."

Recently I noticed that there is an image of Mary on the mission cross of the community. It had not caught my attention before. St. Gaspar also commissioned the beloved painting of the Madonna of the Precious Blood—with its deep symbolism. As she gently presses her Son to her motherly heart, she extends her right hand in a gesture of invitation to the viewers to open themselves to the message of the chalice held by Jesus.

Devotion to Mary continues to play an important role in the lives of those who follow St. Gaspar today. My own devotion to Mary grows even stronger as I realize her importance in our story of salvation. In my role as RCIA Director, I have often

See *Mary*, continued on page 10...

A Mother's Day Proclamation for Peace

This year Pentecost Sunday, May 11, the last day of the Ten Days in May commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the peace pastoral, is also Mother's Day. It is appropriate that we reflect on the challenge of peace on the weekend when we honor our mothers since the origin of Mother's Day is often traced to social activist Julia Ward Howe. After the Civil War in the late 1860s, Howe wrote what has become known as the Mother's Day Proclamation to unite women against war.

Twenty-five years ago, the U.S. bishops affirmed Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as "the first disciple and the Queen of Peace" and asked the Blessed Mother "to intercede for us and for the people of our time that we may walk in the way of peace."

Though Julia Ward Howe failed in her efforts to get formal recognition for a Mother's Day for Peace, many in our world today are working to revive her original vision and make Mother's Day a holiday to honor all who are working for peace.



"My conviction is that Mary spent a great deal of time in listening, prayer, and action. So too we are called to spend time listening to discern our own vocational calls, praying for vocations for our Precious Blood community and the Church, and being proactive in inviting others to a life of service to the Church."



It began as a fleeting idea: exhibit the art and poetry that we have from those who are incarcerated—an art/poetry show. In our neighborhood, art shows aren't all that common—nonexistent to tell the truth. But this one would have a different twist—art and poetry from men, women, and children who are incarcerated.

It required a little work, placing the artwork on some background to give it a visual affect. It grew from a small display to a week-long event celebrating Victims' Awareness Week and Restorative Justice Week. We invited families one night, youth another, and community leaders yet another. There were also groups such as schools and church organizations who wanted to view the art and poetry.

The greatest testimony is the kids themselves. We work with youth who have been locked up, and they have really taken to the art and poetry. Many of them have come back two, three, and four times, just looking and commenting on the artwork and poetry and how it speaks to their life. They talk about their own experiences and reflect upon how they felt when they were locked up.

I am glad we did this; it has been good for us. It has caused us to think about the work we do and how we are called to bring people together. This show was an act of hospitality. Reconciliation is about hospitality: bringing the stories together, creating a place where people can share their experiences.

One young man, Robert, brought his great grandmother, his grandmother and his teacher to the family night. The great grandmother walked from one piece of art to the next; each piece would cause her to reflect on her own life. She came up from Mississippi at a young age, spending most of her life in this neighborhood. As she spoke, kids and families listened to her stories. It didn't take long when the whole room was sharing their stories of the neighborhood. The individual stories became a community story. 🌱

Stupid America
Jennifer, CCJTDC

Stupid America, hear that chicano
shouting curses in the street.
He is a poet without paper and pencil.
And since he cannot write ,
he will explode.

Stupid America, remember that chicanito
flunking math and english.
He is the Picasso of your western states.
But he will die
with one thousand masterpieces
hanging only from his mind.



**THE ART OF
RECONCILIATION**

Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S.

[More poetry and art on pages 10 and 11.]

God help me understand

Walter B., CCJTDC, 4B

Jesus, was it like this for you? I mean they took you to their so called police station.

I bet they didn't have cuffs then.

You know, it feels so bad—not just the pain—it's like every time you move the cuffs tell you to stop. The cuffs are your mom and dad. To tell you the truth, I can't do nothing without my hands; not write, not pick up things, not smoke, not even talk at times. Is it ok to pray like this God? with my hands behind my back and head down. I should have started praying when people told me lockdown was getting near. But I just couldn't believe it.

I had a lot of bad dreams but nothing this real. Make it a dream; wake me up and let it all go away. Let me be in my bed at my crib. And if I don't wake up at my crib in my bed, do me a favor and stay with me God. Don't you be a dream.

IMAGINATION AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Timothy Guthridge, C.P.P.S.

In 1982, I spent a month at a Trappist monastery near Ava, Missouri. One evening, I had a private chat with the novice master, sharing with him that during adoration and benediction, I felt closer to Jesus than during other times. He told me this was purely my imagination and that Jesus was just as present, if not more so, in Scripture and the Eucharist.

He was correct, but imagination is important. I have always been convinced that God blesses us with much grace through the imagination. During Eucharistic adoration, Jesus is just as present in the tabernacle as in the monstrance. However, the use of the monstrance, candles, incense, and sacred music, stimulates the imagination and helps people sit in the presence of God, thus the reason it is attractive to so many.

During one of the school masses at St. Mary's in Centerville, I asked the children to tell me what the Holy Spirit looked like, sounded like, felt like, and tasted like. Once they realized I wasn't looking for a correct answer, they let their imaginations go to work. One little girl told me the Holy Spirit felt like Christmas—about as good an explanation as I have heard. Prayer with children requires a lot of imagination, play and song; this is how they enter the presence of God—a practice that needs encouragement and perhaps imitation.

Many Mexican-American communities have large, realistically bloody crucifixes hanging in their churches—an artform brought with them from Mexico. People who experience suffering need a Christ who suffers with them. Once again this is imagination—big cross, little cross, the redemptive act of crucifixion is the same. The imagination stimulated by these huge scary crucifixes helps many people place themselves in God's divine presence, a good thing.

One of the biggest criticisms of contemporary church architecture is that not enough emphasis is placed on the sacred. Of course older churches are no more or less sacred than contemporary churches. Many of the latter,

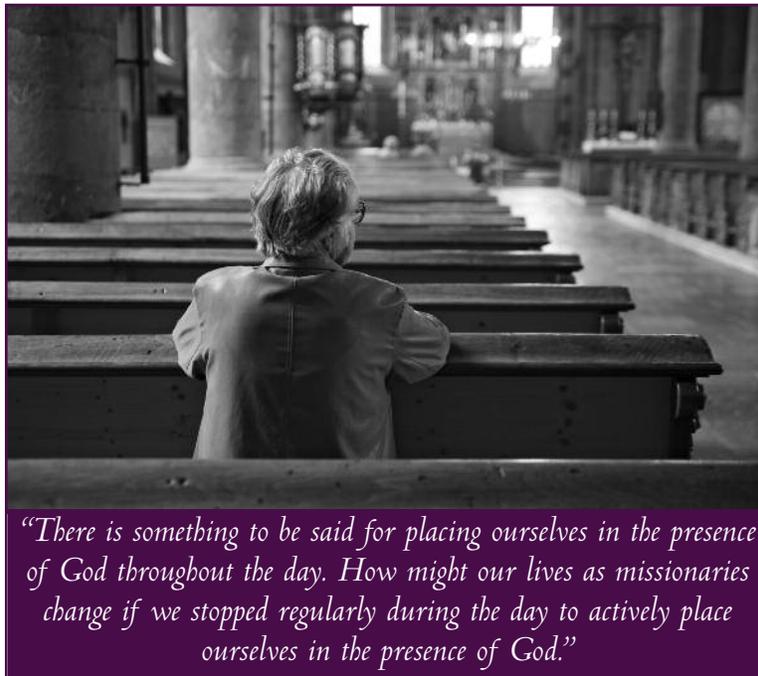
however, have very little to help the imagination focus on the divine—or for that matter the humanity of Jesus. Fortunately, this has changed some in the last twenty years with an emphasis on the use of symbols that speak—large crosses, baptismal fonts, Easter candles. Still, too many church interiors look like they were designed by the same people responsible for elevators and doctors' waiting rooms. At least church architects are doing better with church lighting. People who are to live in the light, must have light. Church architecture needs to stimulate religious imagination.

Precious Blood spirituality includes a focus on healing and reconciliation. When St. Gaspar engaged in mission, he did not go with the notion that he was going to bring healing and reconciliation into the world. He was inspired by the Precious Blood of Jesus. This obviously stimulated his imagination. This enabled him to be rooted in Christ's presence in such a way that he was able to give voice to an image of Christ and his blood that enabled evangelization, healing, and reconciliation to occur. To be successful in mission requires being rooted in Christ. Religious image and imagination can assist us.

We use Scripture for study and homily preparation, and for personal inspiration. Equally important is to just spend time with it—letting the living word of God wash over us with its images in poetry, narratives, even law, stirring our imaginations putting us more deeply in God's presence.

There is something to be said for placing ourselves in the presence of God throughout the day. I have always been inspired by the Muslim practice of stopping five times daily for prayer. How might our lives as missionaries change if we stopped regularly during the day to actively place ourselves in the presence of God through silence,

See *Imagination*, continued on next page...



"There is something to be said for placing ourselves in the presence of God throughout the day. How might our lives as missionaries change if we stopped regularly during the day to actively place ourselves in the presence of God."

Mail call

Oscar Pedraza

Pontiac Correctional Center

Darkness and loneliness fill my cell
with pain and fear too great to yell.

I wait for the mailman to deliver to me
as I wipe away tears that no one will see.

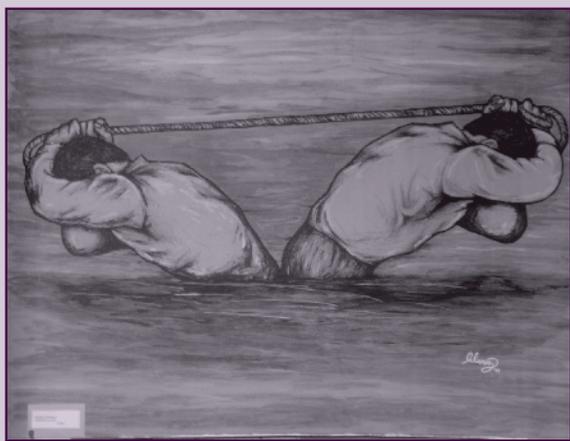
I pray so sincere with my head raised above,
“Please, God, soon send a letter of love.”

I long to gaze upon pages so dear,
with riches to bring my loved ones near.

Words of diamonds on pages of gold.
A message from heaven as their story is told,
We love you, miss you, and pray you’ll be free.
A treasure-filled envelope just for me.

Please bring memories of joy I once knew;
family, friends and things I would do.

The darkness and pain of my cell will prevail
As my name, again, was not called for mail.



“Inner Turmoil”

WE COMMEND TO GOD

+Joseph Lam Pham, brother of Fr. Lac Pham,
died Thursday, April 10 in California.

+Martha Eskowron, Grandmother of Fr.
Timothy Guthridge, died Sunday, April 27.

Peace Pastoral, continued from page 6...

Though we are a wounded Church in a world scarred by war, we believe peace comes from the Risen Christ who still bears the marks of crucifixion. When we inhale deeply this breath of peace, we will gather the courage to live the prayer of Pope Benedict VI at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City on April 19 “for a new Pentecost for the Church in America.”

As a wounded but risen Body of Christ, we embrace the challenge of peace and respond to God’s promise by once again making peace an essential requirement of our faith. 🙏

Mary, continued from page 7...

had the challenge of answering the question, “Why so much attention to Mary?” Someone coming from another faith tradition, one which does not emphasize strong devotion to Mary, sometimes struggles with understanding her role of service and intercession.

Mary heard a very special call from God, and what followed was a unique vocation as the Mother of God. Her openness and generosity of heart and spirit led her on this tremendous journey in faith. And so we try to answer our “calls” to discipleship and vocation as Mary did. Scripture does not share a lot about what Mary said. We in turn should constantly be inviting and calling others to follow her Son.

My conviction is that Mary spent a great deal of time in listening, prayer, and action. So too we are called to spend time listening to discern our own vocational calls, praying for vocations for our Precious Blood community and the Church, and being proactive in inviting others to a life of service to the Church. Vocation ministry is the work of the entire Precious Blood community. Are you saying “yes” to that call as Mary said “yes” to her special intercessory vocation? 🙏

Imagination, continued from page 9...

praying a psalm or a part of the rosary, thinking about where we saw God’s grace, or remembering a friend.

All throughout each day we find ourselves waiting for something: the microwave, the computer to boot up, the copier, red lights. We also find ourselves waiting on people, waiting in lines, waiting for something to begin or end. These are all good moments to take a breath, calm ourselves down, remind ourselves of who we are and what we are about, and invite God’s grace to touch an everyday moment of our lives. This is part of the reason God gave us imaginations.

True healing and reconciliation comes through God’s presence and grace. If we wish to be agents of healing and reconciliation then we must be open to God’s loving presence in all that we do. Our imagination is key to opening our hearts and the world to the presence of God. 🙏

The *Precious Blood Leadership Conference* announces

CONVOCATION 2010

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

July 26-29, 2010

St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri

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

The planning committee is looking for poems, artwork and a unique logo/design to be using during CONVOCATION 2010.

Guidelines for artists and poets:

- This is the 4th Precious Blood Congress
- Expressions of Precious Blood spirituality
- Suggested scripture reading: John 4:1-42
 - Designs are due August 15, 2008
 - Poems are due December 31, 2008

One design will be chosen as the logo for the overall promotion of the Convocation. Other designs may be incorporated into the materials used at the Convocation. Artwork and poems may be displayed and/or incorporated into the materials.

Send to Lou Carey, Box 339, Liberty, MO 64069-0339
816-781-4344 • sec@kcprov.org

INTERPROVINCIAL RETREAT

Bishop Martin Amos, director
Shrine of our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, IL
July 28-August 1, 2008

Martin J. Amos, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Davenport was born in 1941. He has known the Missionaries of the Precious Blood throughout his life, having grown up at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Cleveland, OH. He entered formation with the diocese of Cleveland after high school, was ordained a priest in 1968. For most of his religious career, he was a parish priest as well as an educator—teaching Latin, history and humanities. He was ordained a bishop in 2001 and served as an auxiliary for the Akron area of the diocese of Cleveland before moving to Davenport in 2006.

Registration information will be mailed in the next couple of weeks. If you have any questions regarding the retreat please contact either Joe Bathke (joebcpps@yahoo.com) or Dennis Chriszt (dccpps@aol.com).

Forgotten souls
Darren Redmond
CCJ, Div. II

Out of sight, out of mind,
in many cases it's true sometimes.
But now I know, I don't have to be told,
being behind bars, we're forgotten souls.
Dismissed from society and thrown in a cell,
a nightmare worse than living in hell.
Now when you think about your friends from before,
you realize they don't even care anymore.
It's funny how your friends from the streets,
forget all about you when you're facing defeat.
Everything was great when you were winning the race,
but now that you're locked away they can't show their face.
We're forgotten souls with a story to be told,
with this X on our backs as we grow old.
Never will we forget these lonely days,
the price we paid,
or the bed we made.
Now as I lay in my bunk, my thoughts are cold,
living in a world of forgotten souls....

Concrete Man
Aureliano Fajardo
CCJ, Div. I—ABO

I sit behind this concrete wall,
not knowing when it will fall.
I sit alone with tears in my eyes
and nobody by my side to wipe them off.
I sit here in my cell alone,
watching the days turn into nights,
months into years.
I feel the love I once had fade away,
my heart turning like this concrete wall.
As the time flies,
I sit here
wondering if there is someone
on the other side of the wall
that thinks and cares about me.
As I draw close to the end,
I wonder if there's going to be
someone there to wipe my tears
and make this pain go away.

MY BACK PAGES

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

Ascension

Why do you stand looking up at the sky?—Acts 1:11

It wasn't just wind chasing
thin, gunmetal clouds
across a loud sky;
it wasn't the feeling that one might ascend
on that excited air,
rising like a trumpet note,
and it wasn't just my sister's water breaking,
her crying out,
the downward draw of blood and bone...

It was all of that,
mud and new grass
pushing up through melting snow
the lilac in bud by my front door
bent low
by last week's ice storm.

Now the new mother, that leaky vessel,
begins to nurse her child,
beginning the long good-bye.

Kathleen Norris

It's May 1st as I write this, Ascension Thursday. I am thinking about good-byes this morning, especially the one my mother had to make a year ago today. As this poem reminds me, to give birth to anything is to prepare to let go, whether that be a child, a disciple, an idea, a dream, or a vision for the present and future.

This issue speaks again to change—the challenge, the promise, and the response—especially as it applies to our journey as a province. In March 2007 I wrote here that “this time of discernment and decision places before us our diminishment, our enthusiasm, our hope, our letting go and hanging on, our opportunities, and our care for each other and God's people.” It continues, one day at a time.

This week, we are hosting two priests from the Tanzanian vicariate, Frs. Alfons and Benedict, as part of their preparation to begin full time ministry in the Cincinnati Province for the next four years. This and my recent trip to Austria for a meeting of provincial treasurers has reminded me again of the changing face of our international community. Tanzania now has the same number of members as our province. It was the Italian Province that “gave birth” and they have been gradually saying good-bye ever since. This is how the community began in the United States many years ago as well. And now we ourselves continue the sometimes painful process of bringing something new to life. 🍷

Kufstein, Austria



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