

THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 27 No. 2 • October 2018





Let us serve God with holy joy.

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

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Cover photo: Fr. Jim Sloan, C.P.P.S. at St. Barnabas Parish, mid to late 1980s

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

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

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

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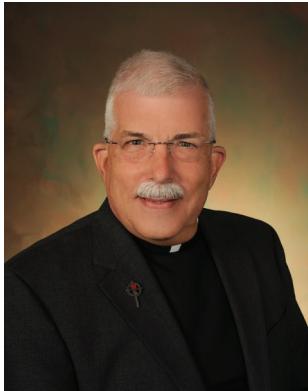
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Justice is Social

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

Recently a group of 14 Evangelical church leaders released a document called *The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel*, which has since been electronically co-signed by 7,000 clergy members throughout the U.S.—and has brought about a great deal of discussion and opposing viewpoints within the evangelical community. Here are two of the quotes that many have found troubling.

The Bible's teaching (in the areas of race and ethnicity, manhood and womanhood, and human sexuality) is being challenged under the broad and somewhat nebulous rubric of concern for "social justice." If the doctrines of God's Word are not uncompromisingly reasserted and defended at these points, there is every reason to anticipate that these dangerous ideas and corrupted moral values will spread their influence into other realms of biblical doctrines and principles.

We emphatically deny that lectures on social issues (or activism aimed at reshaping the wider culture) are as vital to the life and health of the church as the preaching of the gospel and the exposition of Scripture.

Is it really possible to separate action for justice from the proclamation of the Word of God? In Luke's gospel, Jesus—in his first public words—declares his purpose and role:

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Social Justice has always been a constitutive part of the Catholic/Christian faith tradition. It is grounded first of all in scripture—the Old Testament prophets and the teaching of Jesus. The prophets continually denounced injustice and called listeners to a new way of being in the world. In the above passage from Luke, Jesus identifies himself with this prophetic tradition. Are we—as people of faith—not also called to denounce injustices when we see them and call for more just ways of living together?

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Crisis Calls for Substantial Changes in Church

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

*Brothers and sisters, thus should one regard us:
as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
Now it is of course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.*
1 Corinthians 4, 1-2



In giving retreats to priests, I often use this verse from St. Paul to define our role: "Servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." As we face the ongoing crisis of sexual abuse in our church and continue to ask forgiveness for our failures and our sins as bishops and priests, Paul reveals the reason why we are where we are: "Now it is of course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy."

As a Spirit-driven institution founded on the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Way the Truth, and the Life, we are to stand as a beacon of integrity and transparency. But in our arrogance to protect the institution, we have failed our most vulnerable, and lost the trust of God's people.

The church has always been led by sinful men. The first followers of Jesus were certainly fearful and fragile, misunderstanding the message of the cross, abandoning him when he was arrested. After telling his disciples he would have to go to Jerusalem, suffer and die in shame on the cross, the disciples discussed who among them was the greatest. Jesus chastises them as he points out the religious leaders who wanted to be noticed and given high places of honor. Jesus tells his disciples, "It cannot be that way with you." Jesus reserved his harshest criticism for the religious elite who chose power and privilege over service.

Peter and Paul, pillars of a patriarchal institution, were both identified by their faults. In Luke's Gospel, Peter's call to follow Jesus comes in the context of an enormous catch of fish. Peter falls to his knees and says, "Leave me, Lord, I am a sinful man." Those words were echoed by his successor, Pope Francis, in an interview soon after he was elected Pope. When asked how he would identify himself, Pope Francis said, "I am a sinner." As we heard recently in Mark's gospel, just after professing his faith in Jesus as the Christ, Peter the Rock began to crumble as he tries to dissuade him from talking about the cross. For Peter's failure to accept the cross as the center of our call to discipleship, Jesus tells him, "Get behind me, Satan."

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Paul, the Missionary, was notorious for his persecution of the first followers of Christ before the Spirit of Jesus transformed him and called him to extend the boundaries of belonging to all. And yet, for Paul, his sin was always before him. He famously talked about the “thorn in his flesh” that plagued him every day to remind him of his weakness, his fault.

As this crisis continues to unfold, I think of Peter after denying Jesus a third time, running out of the garden and weeping bitterly in the dust. This is where we are today. We need to weep bitterly for the betrayal of trust. We need to seek God’s mercy and ask again and again for the forgiveness of those whose trust we have betrayed.

Remember, the Eucharist was born amid betrayal. It was on the night he was betrayed that Jesus gave us his body and his blood. Jesus stayed at the table even though the community of the beloved he brought together was eroding for the very reasons the church as institution is unravelling today: pride, power, betrayal, greed. In the enveloping darkness, on the night before he died, Jesus gave us bread and wine and said, “Take this, all of you, and eat; take this all of you and drink, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant that is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin.”

But we need more than prayer, penance, fasting, and weeping. This crisis calls forth the need for substantial transformation in the structures of the institution. Each of us need to reclaim our baptismal identity and to remember the church is us—not the institution, cardinals, bishops, priests or provincials. The Church is us. Our charism calls us to renew the Church, and this challenges each of us to accept our call to holiness to offer our lives in humble, loving service.

Yes, we need to repent, repair and restore the relationships we have damaged because of our betrayal of trust. But we also need to reform this tired institution. As Pope Francis wrote in his letter to the world on August 20, “It is impossible to think of a conversion of our activity as a Church that does not include the active participation of all the members of God’s People.” He condemned the sin of clericalism calling it “an approach that not only nullifies the character of Christians, but also tends to diminish and undervalue the baptismal grace that the Holy Spirit has placed

in the heart of our people. Clericalism...leads to an excision in the ecclesial body that supports and helps to perpetuate many of the evils that we are condemning today. To say ‘no’ to abuse is to say an emphatic ‘no’ to all forms of clericalism.”

People of faith must demand to be Church and the bishops must get out of the way and allow women and men of faith to embrace their God-given call to servant leadership. As theologian Ilia Delio wrote recently, “It is no longer acceptable for the Pope to issue a public apology nor is it sufficient for any group merely to reflect on what has happened by issuing position statements. The Church has a deep structural problem...that at this point requires...a radical decision towards a new ecclesial structure.... The rock-solid Church has crushed human souls and twisted authority into deceit.”

As we reflect often in the ministry of reconciliation, we are saved by our stories. In the last few weeks, a story found its way into the shame and humiliation I feel as a priest and given me a way forward. On the website, “On Being,” Carolina Hinojosa-Cisneros writes of learning the art of cleaning pinto beans from her grandmother. “I push them into the colander. Some frijoles bounce back out like firecracker sparks celebrating a sort of liberation. Most frijoles fall into the colander like a family ready for a reunion. I’m sloppy at it, impatient even.”

But her most vivid memory is when she was six and she went face first into the grill. “Before I could hit the metal,” she recalls, “I stretched out my hands to cushion my face from making contact. As a result, my left hand was severely injured. I managed to slice through two layers of skin perfectly rounded on the palm. It left a flap of skin that could easily tear off.” The pain was excruciating, and she wondered if she’d ever use her hand again. But her grandmother had her help clean frijoles to keep the hand flexible and useful. “When you help someone else, you heal faster,” her grandmother told her. Later she realized her grandmother’s hands were always working in service for others.

“This is how we heal,” she remembers. “By stretching out our hands in the service of others. When I am tempted to lose my faith, I can count on my hands to be the bridge between service and healing.”

As servants of the blood of Christ and stewards of the sacred mysteries, we drink from the chalice and seek forgiveness for our sins. Like Peter, we weep bitterly at our betrayal, and like Paul, sense the thorn in our flesh in every step. But, like Mary Magdalene, apostle to the apostles, we embrace the challenge to be women and men of renewal and reconciliation who stretch out our scarred hands and our broken hearts to become a new creation—not only as a religious community, but as a Church. ♦

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Catholic social teaching is well developed, and can be summed up in the following principles:

- *Dignity of the Human Person.* Ask whether our actions as a society respect or threaten the life and dignity of the human person.
- *Family, Community, and Participation.* Support the family, so that people can participate in society, build a community spirit, and promote the well-being of all.
- *Rights and Responsibilities.* Protect the rights that all people have to those things required for a decent human life, such as food, clothing, and shelter.
- *Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.* Pay special attention to the needs of those who are poor.
- *The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.* Protect the basic rights of all workers: the right to engage in productive work, fair wages, private property, and the right to organize, join unions, and pursue economic opportunity.
- *Solidarity.* Recognize that, because God is our Father, we are all brothers and sisters, with the responsibility to care for one another.
- *Care for God's Creation.* Care for all that God has made.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World which emerged from the Second Vatican Council, states that it is Christians' responsibility to "scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel" (something that St. Gaspar spoke of 150 years earlier). So those seven principles need to be brought to bear today—often challenging society's policies and politics (which the writers of the above statement seem to be uncomfortable with).

Jesus made it abundantly clear that faith in him will be judged by how well that faith was put into action: "Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me'" (Mt 25: 37-40). A Gospel without reference to God's heart for the poor is no Gospel worth preaching, or listening to.

Social justice has everything to do with what we are about as a faith community. John Pavlovitz writes, "Jesus was a social justice warrior. He was compassionate caregiver and status quo changer. He was gentle healer and radical activist. He was wall-destroyer and barrier-breaker and least-lover. He was shepherd to the people of the street and he was a holy terror to the wolves wielding religion like a hammer against them. He poured out his life in acts of service and generosity and empathy and sacrifice. He made selfish, powerful, entitled religious people the most uncomfortable—because he welcomed everyone to the table and declared them equal. With every breath he preached social justice, with every act he engineered it. *If we try and have a Christianity without social justice, we cut out the beautiful, beating heart of Jesus and we are left with only a lifeless corpse of religion to drag around*" [italics mine].

The mission statement of the Kansas City Province states that "we are prayerfully motivated by the spirituality of the Precious Blood...to serve the needs of the Church as discerned through the signs of the times and in light of the gospel"—reflecting the call of Vatican II quoted earlier. For many years, we have placed an emphasis on social justice and ministry with the marginalized as we continue to read the signs of the times. This is why we have a long-standing Justice and Peace Committee, as well as corporate stances on the death penalty, gun violence, and immigration reform. Social justice issues are pro-life issues: preventing hunger and poverty; fighting racism, bigotry, and homophobia; a living wage and health care; compassion for immigrants and refugees; climate change—to name just a few. We have a responsibility as people of faith to be well-informed and formed by principles of Catholic social teaching and our shared spirituality as a Precious Blood community. ♦



Fr. Dave Matz, C.P.P.S. with parishioners from St. Agnes Parish

Live the Questions

by Fr. Dave Matz, C.P.P.S., St. Agnes Parish, Los Angeles

When I think about the New Creation Commission and my participation in the process we have embarked upon in our community, I am reminded of Rainer Rilke's letter to a young poet and the hope it can inspire for us missionaries, an apostolic society living into the questions of becoming a New Creation. Living the interplay of phrases, "Try to love the questions. Don't search for the answers ... Live the questions now," it takes great courage and the ability to risk not stopping at the easy answers and allowing our spirituality to guide us into the renewal of our ministerial and communal lives.

Courage and the ability to take risks, I believe are some hallmarks of our Precious Blood spirituality. One of our prayers begins, "Spirit of Gaspar, take us to the edge. With a gentle push send us forth to fly beyond the confinement of our minds to the heart

of mystery." I moved to the edge when I accepted the call to minister in Los Angeles at St. Agnes Catholic Church. It was a courageous step for this midwestern man and an intentional choice for both provinces to work collaboratively and to envision a way for us to create anew a mission house here and to apply our charisms of renewal and reconciliation to the needs of an inner-city parish made up of diverse racial and ethnic groups of people. I want to share some of the challenges and some dreams, albeit, questions that we want to dynamically live into not for quick answers but with hope that someday the Spirit of Gaspar will lead us into an answer, a new creation.

St. Agnes has long had a history of participating in justice issues that affect the inner-city neighborhoods and communities. Fr. Bill Delaney is well known for his activism and ability to gather our community when

civic and political life oppresses people. The tradition continues. We belong to an organizing committee called One LA, affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation, the nation's largest national organizing and leadership development network in the United States. Collaborating with them, we have responded to the immigration crisis, because a large majority of our parishioners are undocumented. We courageously chose daily to stand on the edge and help our parishioners get their documents, become citizens, and register them to vote. We are gearing up again for a workshop on voting in order to help our parishioners understand that even in a national environment that incites fear, their vote does count and they have the right to exercise their vote.

Housing and homelessness are other justice issues that are affecting our neighborhood and community. St. Agnes is located southwest of downtown Los Angeles in the West Adams District. We are in the same neighborhood as the University of Southern California. Over the past seven years we have experienced the promise and the ugliness of gentrification. Because of a lack of affordable housing and rising rents on apartments, many of our parishioners have lost their homes, been defrauded of their rights as tenants, and have been forced to move to areas outside their original neighborhoods. As agents of reconciliation and renewal, St. Agnes has stood in solidarity. Last year at a delegates' assembly, myself and another pastor stood up and confronted Mr. Eric Garcetti, the mayor of Los Angeles, about these issues. We asked to work together with his office to find pragmatic and alternative solutions to the housing and homelessness crisis. In February of this year that dream came true. We met with the mayor at St. Agnes for a civic academy educating ourselves and hearing personal stories of those affected by these issues. Even the mayor was visibly moved to hear a professional newly-married couple share their story of how they could not afford to live in their own neighborhood because they could not find affordable housing.

There's a growing population of elderly who are being expelled from their apartments. In response, we held a workshop at St. Agnes on tenants' rights. The Los Angeles city council heard of our endeavors and has approved a plan for a citywide "Know Your Rights Workshop."

We are dynamically living into the questions of immigration, exercising citizenship, housing, and homelessness. We experience stretching and cringing, impatience and anger, and excitement when something new occurs, because we created spaces where voices could be heard.

St. Agnes is a place where we can allow the Spirit of Gaspar to push us into a new creation. How about forming an international mission house where missionaries come and live in community to both share their cultural experiences and share ours? Yes, St. Agnes is predominantly Spanish speaking, but we have Filipino, Belizean, Korean, and Anglo as well. How about developing retreats and workshops about cultural sensitivity, acculturation process, and orienting foreign missionaries for ministering in the United States? Have courage as we take the risk at a New Creation. Now is the time when hope is born. ♦

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2018 Precious Blood Volunteers Stephen Dougherty, Lina Guerrero, Brooke Buth, and Koby Buth at Gaspar Mission House, Kansas City Missouri

2018-2019 Precious Blood Volunteers

by Tim Deveney, Precious Blood Volunteers Director



Lina Guerrero

Lina will serve at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) in Chicago, Illinois and will live with Dayton Precious Blood sisters in the Bridgeport neighborhood. She was born and raised

in Austin, Texas, and then graduated from Mount St. Mary University in Emmitsburg, Maryland

with degrees in international studies and Spanish. She spent the last year serving as part of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in western Missouri with the Migrant Farmworkers Assistance Fund. She has committed to serving as a Precious Blood Volunteer for a full year.

Why do you want to volunteer?

"After being a Jesuit Volunteer this past year, I felt a call to do another year of service because I felt like I wasn't 'done' yet. There is still so much work to be done, systems to tackle, and things to learn about people for me to not try to volunteer again."

Why do you want to volunteer with Precious Blood Volunteers?

"After meeting, living with, and attending a parish with Precious Blood priests, I truly enjoyed and was spiritually nourished by their examples, ministries, and spirituality. I also have had a Precious Blood priest as my spiritual director this past year, which allowed me to discern my desire to continue volunteering as well as working with the Precious Blood community. Also, we Jesuit Volunteers spent a lot of time with the Kansas City Precious Blood volunteers over the past year, with some of our placements overlapping with theirs. So, in short, all things Precious Blood were of great support to me and my fellow Jesuit Volunteers during our JV year in Kansas City."

What are you looking forward to about your volunteer experience?

"Being able to continue serving in many ways that I did as a Jesuit Volunteer, but also have the ability to learn, serve, and grow in ways that I didn't during my JV year. Just the fact that this experience will be very different from my previous volunteer experience is exciting for me."



Koby Buth

Koby Buth will serve in Kansas City at KC CARE Health Center and will live in Gaspar Mission House. In June of 2018 he married Brooke Buth, who will

be serving at Cristo Rey High School and Bishop Sullivan Center. Koby grew up in Coopersville, Michigan near Grand Rapids. He graduated in May of 2018 with a Bachelor of Science in biology and also in honors humanities through the John Wesley Honors College at Indiana Wesleyan University. Koby has committed to serving as a Precious Blood Volunteer for a full year.

Why do you want to volunteer?

"I wanted to volunteer because I wanted more clinical experience going into medical school. When going to college, it's easy to work on

academics, but much more difficult to volunteer and work in the healthcare field as preparation for medical school."

Why do you want to volunteer with Precious Blood Volunteers?

"I wanted to volunteer with Precious Blood volunteers primarily because it's a Catholic organization. I went to a Protestant college for four years, and it will be nice to spend a year with devoted Catholics."

What are you looking forward to about your volunteer experience?

"I am looking forward to moving from the academic sphere of college to the practical sphere of the clinic, talking with patients, better learning how the medical field operates, and making connections to other healthcare professionals."

Steven Dougherty

Steven Dougherty will serve as a Precious Blood Volunteer at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) and will live in community at the Formation House in Hyde Park. He grew up in Kingsport, Tennessee in northeastern Tennessee. Steven graduated in May 2018 from the University of Dayton with a Bachelor of Arts in English and Philosophy. He has committed to serving as a Precious Blood Volunteer for a full year.



Why do you want to volunteer?

"I want to volunteer because I am tired of feeling powerless in the face of pain and injustice."

Why do you want to volunteer with Precious Blood Volunteers?

"I decided to volunteer with Precious Blood Volunteers because of their focus on peace and justice. I want to help untangle fear and violence from the lives of others."

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Father James Sloan, C.PP.S.

January 15, 1934 – August 22, 2018

Funeral Homily, August 25, 2018

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

Art Imitating Life

One of the great debates that found its way into conversations I had with Father Jim Sloan over the years goes all the way back to Aristotle. The question, “Does art imitate life?” or “Does life imitate art?” Fr. Jim probably raised that question the first day of school my freshman year at Precious Blood Seminary in September 1969 when I took his art class. Whether art imitates life or life imitates art, I know this much: Fr. Jim’s life as a priest and as Missionary of the Precious Blood was a work of art and a ministry of the heart.

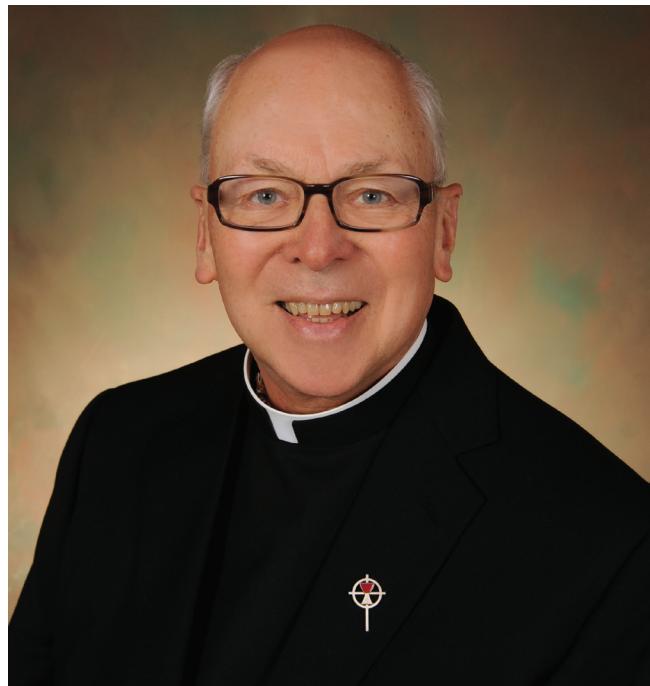
A few years ago, Father Jim wrote an article for the *Wine Cellar* on *Art and Spirituality*. Jim mused about the diversity of life and food and people he experienced every time he walked the few blocks from Sonnino Mission House to the Berkeley Bowl. “Across the nation,” he wrote, “life pulsates with extraordinary creativity: in music, dance, theater and film, architecture, painting and sculpture, and literature. These works of human genius, creativity, vitality, imagination, and often great beauty and insight are all reflections of God who gave humans such giftedness.”

Fr. Jim’s vocation to the priesthood was a gift from God and for fifty-six years as a priest he shared his gift generously with the church and the world. As principal, pastor, provincial, spiritual director, teacher, and friend, Fr. Jim gave us a rich and remarkable portrait of priesthood. In his reflection for the *Wine Cellar*, Fr. Jim wrote, “For the believer, works of art speak of God in some way. Appreciating a work of art, a person might say, ‘If this is so wonderful, in a way that stirs my soul, what must God be like who is the source of all this?’”

Well, now Jim knows. For as today’s second reading reminds us, “we are God’s children now,” but when we are welcomed home and the end of this life, we “shall see God as he is.”

What's Next

The poet, Mary Oliver, in one of her famous verses, writes:



When death comes...

*I want to step through the door full of curiosity,
Wondering: what is it going to be like,
That cottage of darkness?*

I understand that the night nurse who was with Father Jim when he died, said Jim asked her, “What’s next?”

That sounds like Jim. He was creative and curious about so many things, about ideas and arts, spirituality, and social justice. In her poem, “When Death Comes,” Mary Oliver captures this endless quest for understanding, knowledge, and fulfillment. She approaches death not with fear and trembling, but curiosity and hope: “When it’s over I want to say all my life I was a bride married to amazement, I was the bridegroom taking the world into my arms.”

Jim spent his life “married to amazement”—he wanted to know more; he wanted to know, “What’s next?” If I have a quibble with Mary Oliver’s poem, it is calling death “a cottage of darkness” because as today’s gospel reminds us, it is a house of lights. Jesus tells his disciples and us, “Do not let your hearts be troubled, have faith in God. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?”

I can imagine that once God looks at Jim's resume and sees his expertise and experience in art and architecture, God will immediately appoint him to the building and design committee! He served on that committee for the Diocese of Oakland for several years and was involved in the design of the cathedral.

In this house of light, he will see the banquet where God will provide a feast for all eternity. In this house on God's holy mountain described by Isaiah in today's first reading, God "will provide for all people a feast of rich food and choice wines, juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines." Some of my best memories of Jim were dinners at good restaurants—the most recent one was in late May when after giving a day of prayer in San Rafael, I picked Jim up at Nazareth and we went to his favorite Italian restaurant.

Conversations with Jim were easy, never forced. There was a gentleness about Jim. He was a gentleman, a gentle man. When you were in his company there was always humor. As his nieces, Mary Ann, Betty, and Judy told me, there was always laughter as their Uncle Jim had a wonderful sense of humor.

His good friend, Father Jim Franck, was provincial when Father Jim Sloan was completing his time as pastor at St. Barnabas. In a letter, Father Jim Franck expresses his gratitude for the excellent leadership that Fr. Jim Sloan provided the parish. "What I feel best about is the wonderful spirit in the parish," Father Franck writes. "I attribute this to your gentle and loving care. It is hard to resist. Personally, I am grateful for your authenticity and your unique good humor."

Soul Explorer

When I was on sabbatical in 2001-2002 and lived with Jim at Sonnino Mission House in Berkeley, and then when I moved there in 2009, I would sometimes accompany Jim on his Saturday morning ritual to walk at Crissy Field in San Francisco. We would walk to the Golden Gate Bridge and afterwards sit at an outdoor café and have a cup of coffee and a Danish. When he went by himself, he told me he would watch people and wonder about their story—where they were from and how they made their way through life.

This was his nature. He was an explorer of the soul—a good temperament not only for an artist and a priest but for a spiritual companion and friend. One

of our brothers, a former student of Jim's, emailed me when he found out Jim had died and told me that when he was in high school, he remembers Jim saying "the focus of his prayer since the seminary and every day since was a verse from Psalm 27: "One thing I ask of the Lord and this I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." This was his mantra and we celebrate how Jim's prayer was answered early Wednesday morning when he asked, "What's next?" and the angel of God took him by the hand to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his eternal life.

This seeking, this searching, this exploration of the soul began early in Jim's life. In a letter to the director of the seminary at St. Joseph's College on August 4, 1953, one month before he entered the seminary program, 19-year-old Jim Sloan writes, "Hello, Father, after long and serious thought, I have decided that I should like to join the priesthood, the Precious Blood Fathers, if you will have me." Jim notes this isn't a "passing whim" but "something I've known ever since eighth grade."

He says he told his Dad he wanted to be a priest, but his father told him "to put such foolish thoughts out of my mind." But he tells the seminary director that since he left St. Joe's, he's "gotten practically everything" he could possibly desire. "I have my own apartment, an excellent position where I work and just about everything this old world has to offer to a fella my age. I even went to a year of art school like I always wanted."

But ultimately, Jim writes, "it just didn't give me any satisfaction or bring me any happiness. All along I've known why: it just wasn't what the good Lord meant for me. It seems I've tried everything, Father, except what I knew in my heart was the only way to happiness and peace of mind. I'm through kidding myself," he concludes, "I know what I want, and I pray that nothing will stop me."

And so, Jim found happiness in the priesthood because he knew in his heart what Jesus tells Thomas in the gospel, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Speaking the Truth

Jim knew how to speak truth. One of the most memorable truths he ever spoke to my province was *continued on page 12*

Fr. Jim Sloan, continued from page 13

at our Assembly in 1983 when we were discussing and voting on whether to continue our high school seminary. Jim's words carried weight because he gave eleven years of his life to the seminary as principal and teacher. But community life was difficult for some who lived at the seminary and at one point, Jim stood up and with tears in his eyes, his voice quaking with truth, said, "We just don't know how to love one another." We recognized his words were true: we just don't know how to love one another. But Jim believed deeply that we could learn a little more about love because he saw "what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called children of God. Yet so we are." Jim spent his life looking and seeking that child of God in himself and others. He tried to encourage each of us to live as "God's children now."

At the conclusion of Mary Oliver's poem, "When Death Comes," she writes:

*When it's over, I don't want to wonder
If I made my life something particular and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened
And full of argument.
I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.*

Fr. Jim Sloan doesn't have to wonder anymore. His curiosity is now complete for he has found his way home to the dwelling place prepared for him.

For eight-four years of life and fifty-six years as a priest, through various ministries and responsibilities, Jim stirred our soul, sparked our faith, and gave us a glimpse of God through his preaching and teaching, his companionship and his compassion. We are grateful to God for all God has done for us through priestly life of Fr. Jim Sloan. It has truly been a work of art.

Rest in peace, Jim. The Golden Gate Bridge and all the cathedrals in Europe only prepared your artist's heart for the sights you now behold. I only wish I could be sitting across from you at an outdoor café, sipping coffee or perhaps a stronger beverage, telling the stories of what we have seen and heard. Until we do, enjoy the view, good and faithful servant and friend. ♦

Volunteers, continued from page 5

What are you looking forward to about your volunteer experience?

"I am looking forward to getting to know the people in the community I will be working in."

Brooke Buth

Brooke will serve in Kansas City at Cristo Rey High School and at Bishop Sullivan Center and will live in Gaspar Mission House. In June of 2018 she married Koby Buth, who will be serving at KC CARE Health Center. Brooke grew up in Aurora, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. She graduated in May of 2018 from Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana with degrees in youth ministries and honors humanities. Brooke has committed to serving as a Precious Blood Volunteer for a full year.



Why do you want to volunteer?

"I want to serve people who have been on the margins of society. I want to learn how the Church and the community can better support the poor and our youth, and I want to meet Christ in the people I serve."

Why do you want to volunteer with Precious Blood Volunteers?

"I love Precious Blood Volunteer's focus on spirituality and reconciliation in service, and I appreciate that they have long-term connections with the city and the organizations where we serve. I think it's a sustainable way for the volunteers and the city to benefit from our service."

What are you looking forward to about your volunteer experience?

"I'm excited to spend time focused completely on others. College is an intense time of self-growth and encourages you to focus on your own knowledge and studies, so I am excited to transition into a time of being other-focused. Of course, I'm excited to live with priests! And to see the Kansas City library!" ♦



Creating Something New

by Fr. Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S., Kansas City, Missouri

As we are discussing creating something new as a community, or redefining ourselves, it might be good to look back at how we have described ourselves in the past.

In simple (simplistic) outline form, we used to describe ourselves as:

- A religious community of priests and brothers
- United in the Bond of Charity
- Engaged mainly in parish ministry

We basically identified with ordained ministry and religious life. Most of our “recruitment” involved inviting young men to become priests or brothers. Our vocation personnel regularly wore the distinctive cassock and mission cross to symbolize the ministry/life young men could choose.

At some point, more and more young men began choosing vocations other than the religious life. This

was probably one thing that prompted us to define ourselves a little differently.

More recently, we've described ourselves as:

- A religious community of priests and brothers
- Companions
- Bond of charity
- Mostly parish ministry
- C.P.P.S. Spirituality
- Ministry of the Word for the renewal of the Church
- Charisms of reconciliation and care for the marginalized

I purposefully did not include Companions on the first line of this description. If we really believed that we are a community of priests, brothers, and Companions, Companions would have the right to vote in community matters, would be part of

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Creating Something New, continued from page 13
Provincial leadership, and would be referred to as “members” of the community also.

Now we are considering creating something new, which would seem to necessitate a new description of ourselves. Using the “signs of the times” as a guide, it would be possible to create (and live) a description which not only speaks to the people to whom we already minister, but which also resonates with the greater population, especially younger folks.

But what resonates with younger folks? Celibate religious life still doesn’t seem to be attracting people. Many people see little need for organized religion and going to church. A number of younger people are attracted to the more conservative Catholic rituals, but do not necessarily embrace church dogma and church law—which means this population generally won’t be interested in invitations to parish ministry or to renewing the Church.

What I surmise from the sociological literature on the subject, younger people generally seem to be attracted to a spirituality which is expressed through hands-on, practical, person-to-person caring for others. The young people who have been part of our volunteer program are examples of this. Maybe it is a way people are getting back to basics in response to this confusing, polarized, “fake news” social climate.

If this is indeed a significant dynamic at work in the younger population, how could we define ourselves anew in a way that would better invite these people to join us in our work? Here is one possible redefinition:

- A community who stands with the forgotten, the excluded, and the voiceless
- Charisms of reconciliation and care for the marginalized
- Bond of Charity
- C.P.P.S. Spirituality
- Any who are interested, including priests, brothers, Companions, and volunteers

In one way, this new definition would not radically change the day to day work we do in our ministries. It would, however, move us from primarily a clerical/church identity to more of a social justice identity. It would be the larger umbrella under which the

canonical religious order of the C.P.P.S. would be a part. It would also change the way we promote/advertise ourselves. Just as we used to highlight priesthood/brotherhood as a reason to join our community, we would now highlight social justice work as a reason to join our community, which seems to interest more people today. Some who accept the invitation may very well decide later to join the community more closely as a Companion, priest, or brother. This new identity would also necessitate a more diverse leadership structure. To make the shift to a new identity, we would also probably need a more vocal, comprehensive, and organized way of promoting who we are.

It seems to me that our discussions so far about creating something new have been focused mainly on changing the structure of our community, i.e., how the Kansas City Province and the Cincinnati Province could come together. The assumption seems to be that if this union could be accomplished, we would have something new. That certainly would create a new structure, but would not necessarily create a new kind of community. Maybe changing the structure is a necessary first step to creating something new as a community. But to be successful in creating something new, we cannot confuse changing structure with changing substance as a community.

Another challenge in creating something new will be the amount of work involved. With all the time and energy, it will take to change structure, we may not have enough energy/will left to address more substantial changes, especially since we will be a larger community with more diverse views which will need to be combined.

The above example of a new definition of our community is only one of the many possible ways we could recreate ourselves. The jury is probably still out regarding whether we are really up for creating something new or simply want to rearrange the same furniture in a different structure. ♦

I'm Precious Blood, and I vote!

by Maureen Lahiff, Alameda, California Companion

When I was in high school, I was very active in debate and extemporaneous speaking. I had a lively interest in U.S. politics and international affairs. I was really looking forward to being old enough to vote. But instead, I have found voting mostly a chore and a burden. It has felt like a responsibility. Most years, I have felt neither optimistic nor hopeful. It has been hard to convince myself that my participation matters.

I was encouraged some years ago when the U.S. Bishops Conference issued a document called *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, which has been updated several times. The latest version, from late 2015, can be found online at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship>—along with some podcasts, bulletin inserts, bulletin announcements that are still useful with some updating, and liturgy suggestions. There are some great questions for reflection and discussion and suggestions for small faith sharing groups that could be adapted for Companion gatherings.

The bishops had a conversation about again updating this document at their meeting last June, and decided not to. To me, there didn't seem to be any energy for doing this, and there were questions about the usefulness and effectiveness of these sorts of documents. So, for this fall's elections, we're on our own to read the signs of the times as we consider candidates and propositions. I don't have any easy fixes or shortcuts, but I do think it's worth planning to spend some quality time gathering information, having conversations that matter, and praying. For me, that includes praying about my decisions, praying for my fellow citizens, and praying for the candidates.

I tend to rely on the websites of our local NPR station and major newspapers for interviews with candidates. There, I can compare positions across candidates on issues. I've found candidate forums and town hall meetings to be frustrating, because seldom do the candidates answer the questions they are asked. Rather, they tend to launch into a spiel that is tangentially related to the question.

I have found over the years that it has been very helpful to talk with people who share my core values, even if we do not share the same priorities. I also find this extremely helpful in making some sense out of the myriad of propositions we are asked to vote on here in California. Sometimes I feel that we have to deal with these propositions because our legislators in Sacramento aren't capable enough or cooperative enough to get anything done.

Our province's corporate stances on the death penalty, gun violence, and immigration reform are also signposts for me in discerning my choices. This fall, my prayer is that our Precious Blood values of compassion and inclusion will guide our voting in this complex time of structural change on so many fronts. As the daughter of an immigrant and a descendent of those who were essentially refugees from the Great Hunger in Ireland in the mid-19th century, I am grateful for the opportunities the U.S. provides. To me, this gratitude means opening doors and making room for migrants and refugees today. I will be voting accordingly, and then I am committed to continuing to take part in the work, no matter how the elections turn out.

This fall, we all face national and local issues. Our corporate stance on the death penalty has implications at the state level. Working against gun violence at both the local and national level is extremely difficult, due to very broad interpretations of the Second Amendment. (I think Marjorie Stoneman Douglas would be very proud of the leadership of the students at the high school in Florida that bears her name.) Historically, refugees have been defined as those fleeing religious persecution or severe consequences of political activity. Today, we need to expand that definition to include people who are fleeing gang violence and domestic abuse.

Environmental justice is a major issue for me; I take it into account when I vote on all levels. For me, the EPA is a health agency. The health of everyone in our communities is intimately linked

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Get Out of The Way

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

A phrase often used in jails, and to some extent here at PBMR, is “humble yourself.” In many ways, it means to get yourself “out of the way”—to open yourself to something other than yourself.

In the Catholic Church, we are struggling with the sin of church leadership: priests, bishops, and the sexual abuse of minors. It is a violation against the most vulnerable among us and causes emotional and spiritual harm. It is also a breach of the trust.

Some will leave the Church—and who can blame them—and others will remain. For those who remain, we must strive to reconstruct a Church that seeks to repair the harm done.

Richard Rohr, an author and lecturer, says that a litmus test for a true spirituality is whether you are the focus of conversion. Is it keeping you listening for God? Is it keeping your own feet to the fire? We cannot deny the pain or wait for better days. Transformation will only happen when we touch the wounds, when we give space to the pain and suffering. Spirituality is about what we do with the pain.

After the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples were confronted with the sacred wounds that still were visible in the resurrected Jesus. Unless the disciples were willing to touch the wounds of Jesus, they would have continued hoping for and expecting a savior who would dominate and rule.

The transformation of the Catholic Church must come from the suffering and pain that we have both inflicted and suffered. The response cannot be just another set of policies that are stricter or a more expansive.

A year or so ago, I was asked if I could help with something that happened at one of the local Catholic schools. One of the students had posted a racist comment on Facebook. It was shared openly and caused great pain and suffering within the school and the community. The school administration was seeking ways to respond. I suggested discussing

the incident using restorative justice practices. The postings made on Facebook merely highlighted what had existed and continued to cause great harm. The school administration took another way and expelled the students involved. They refused to touch the wounds. They refused to allow the humiliating wound to become sacred and sanctifying.

Transformation never comes easily; it is always the result of suffering. It happens only if we are truly willing to get ourselves “out of the way” and are willing to touch the wounds and allow them to become sacred wounds.

This should not be unfamiliar to us; it is what we do each time we gather around the table at Eucharist. We celebrate the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus—the Paschal mystery—because only when we are willing to touch the woundedness of one another, will we become a new creation. ♦

I Vote, continued from page 16

to the health of the planet. We are literally killing the earth with plastic and toxic waste. I wish our province had a corporate stance on the environment and our responsibilities to care for our common home. To see the Earth as a community to which we belong, rather than ours to use as we see fit, to think about the second creation story in Genesis more than the first, makes sense to me.

I realize that I should add to the title of this piece: I'm Precious Blood, and I contact my elected officials and appointed agency heads regularly. My Companion group occasionally writes letters to our representatives as a group activity. We always mention that our faith is guiding our recommendations. I'm Precious Blood and I volunteer with people who are incarcerated and with immigrants and refugees. I know every one of us could make a similar statement about how our actions reflect our voting choices. ♦



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