

THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 26 No 1 • September 2017





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: View of the Great American Eclipse 2017 from Precious Blood Center in Liberty, Missouri, photo by Tim Deveney

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

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

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

THE New Wine PRESS

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Kansas City Province

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



Total Eclipse

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

As I write this, we are just several hours away from a total eclipse of the sun here in the Kansas City area. Preparation, anticipation, excitement, and craziness abounds. Much has been written about this phenomenon in the past weeks, and no doubt many will reflect on the experience afterward. This cosmic spectacle is occurring almost exclusively in the United States, a country and a society that has been struggling recently as we once again are faced with the ugliness of white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and members and admirers of the Ku Klux Klan in our midst. Today's shared experience as well as the overwhelming response of good in the face of evil are both signs of hope. The eclipse will last only minutes, although the memories much longer. Our need to address the racism which continues to be America's "original sin" will take much longer and be much more difficult.

This past week a coalition of Catholic organizations (including the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, and Pax Christi USA—all of which our province has membership or affiliation with), published a statement in response to the violence in Charlottesville. Here are several quotes.

"As representatives of national and international Catholic advocacy organizations working for peace and justice, we condemn unequivocally the display of hatred, overt racism, and violence manifest this past weekend in Charlottesville, Virginia by members of white supremacist, Ku Klux Klan, and neo-Nazi groups. These shameful acts expose in the most explicit way the racism and violence against African Americans and other racial groups in our country that has become deeply imbedded in our history and in our institutions, as well as those who embrace the hatred and genocide of Nazi Germany against Jews. These acts of domestic terrorism have no place in our society."

"There is no place in our society for hateful words or violent actions that put the lives of our sisters and brothers at risk, especially African Americans and other people of color, as well as Muslims, Jews and people of other faiths."

White supremacists, neo-Nazis, and the KKK all swim in the same sewer, as what they hold in common is a belief in some kind of "pure" race—a belief that when taken to its extreme leads to not just marginalization or expulsion, but physical extermination of the "other." And the "other" or the "undesirable" list is a long one. The Klan not only targeted African-Americans, but in its second iteration in the 1920s directed its hate and

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New Wine; New Wineskins

by Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S., Provincial Council

On June 30th, I closed one chapter of my life as the pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish in St. Joseph, Missouri. It had been a wonderful ten-year experience. I could write a book about it. On July 1st, I began a new chapter of my life, beginning with a sabbatical experience that will lead to becoming part of the renewal team at Precious Blood Renewal Center in Liberty, Missouri.

There are a lot of unknowns as I begin this chapter, so a theme that is running through my mind is, “Father, I put my life in your hands” from Psalm 31. I think our whole Province is putting our lives into the Father’s hands as a Symposium on Community Life recently took place in Rome with representatives from all the units of our world Community. I am confident that it will produce new ideas for both our Community-living and our ministry. In September, discussions between our Kansas City Province and the Cincinnati Province will lead us to another stage of ministry. So, we are all putting our lives in the Father’s hands.

As I drove away from my last chapter, with St. Francis Xavier Church in my rear-view mirror, tears in my eyes and heaviness in my heart, I felt deeply that I was leaving behind so many fond memories, endearing people, strengthening prayer experiences, and multiple effective parish activities—more than I can count. As I drove away, I knew that there was a lot of unfinished work and unfinished relationships. But now it is time to begin a new chapter. Jesus said, “I must go to other towns and villages to preach the Good News.” The Holy Spirit is nudging and inspiring me and us to do the same thing. I am sure that Jesus felt the same way at his Ascension; there was unfinished work.

The day I drove away was July 1st, the Feast of the Precious Blood, a day when we re-commit to live our missionary lives more faithfully. After I delivered my belongings to Precious Blood Renewal Center and got settled in a little, I went for a walk on the labyrinth with its twists and turns. It was a foretaste of what my future is going to be. But I know that it will lead me to something good, just like the labyrinth did. Along with Don Quixote, I am off to new adventures—but no windmills!

God longs to make my life and our Community life a glorious adventure. We must, however, stop clinging to old ways and be on the lookout for all that God has prepared for us. In Isaiah 49:14, God says “See I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up, do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.” Notice that God did not say, “I am going to do a new thing.” God says I am creating a new thing.

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Reminder of Ministering With Those on the Margins

by Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S., Vocation Director

“Why a vegetable and a flower garden in the middle of the city?” was the question I asked at our last circle of the week at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) in Chicago. I know what both Sr. Donna Liette and Sr. Carolyn Hoying would say as they both tend to the gardens, but I was answering from my experience. For four days, beginning Sunday evening July 23rd through Thursday, July 27th, Fr. Steve Dos Santos and I hosted a PBMR Mission/Discernment. We invited our inquirers to experience firsthand our Precious Blood spirituality. Each day we touched upon a different aspect; everything from Circle, to the vegetable garden, to the peace garden, to the wood shop, to preparing a meal, to the art shop and painting a peace pole. We listened to stories of the youth and mothers as the talking peace was passed. We pulled weeds from the garden beds and walking path. We dug potatoes and planted seed potatoes for the next crop. We shared meals together.

Each day we had a different aspect of the ministry of the center that we focused upon and participated in. We began and ended each day with Circle to share and unpack what we had been doing and how we experienced it. We sat in Circle with the youth/young men who have come to call the Center home and heard the stories of how it has impacted their lives and the difference it has made for them and the neighborhood. We heard the stories of Mothers who have lost loved ones

to violence or being locked up. We heard the stories of finding a place just to feel safe and share the stories.

We had two inquirers join us for the week, Travis from Mercer County and Marcus from Tampa, Florida. It was a week of learning and experiencing. Hearing the stories of the ministry that happens at the Center is much different than being there and experiencing it. As we sat in Circle the last time, I answered the question about the gardens by sharing my experience of finding a bit of beauty and peace in the midst of the struggles of a south-side Chicago neighborhood. For a time I had forgotten about the struggles and the gunfire and the violence. I truly believed that we are making a difference in many peoples lives. In previous visits, I had heard the stories of some of the young men who had been part of the Center, but because of wrong choices or being at the wrong place at the wrong time had been arrested. It was sad to hear the challenges that still remain even with all the good that was being accomplished. Despite all the various setbacks, the hope of a better tomorrow is still very much alive.

As we ended our time, I went outside to put some things in my car before leaving. As I stood at my car, I heard gunshots. Not thinking too much about it, I went back inside to wait with the others. As I walked in, I met Fr. Dave Kelly and Sr. Donna running down the steps. The shots rang out from the backside of the

building in the alley between the vegetable garden and the main building. Two of the youth—one boy, one girl—had been shot. The police had been called and while we waited for the ambulance we stood on the edge of the wrought iron fence. Sr. Donna walked back to us. I could see her hands red with blood. We just stood there. Eventually the ambulance left. The officers questioned some of the youth and the adults. At the end of the wrought iron fence they tied yellow police tape from one side of the alley to the other. Fr. Denny Kinderman made the comment, “I never thought I would see yellow tape on our property.” It was a tragic ending to such a beautiful week. Both youth were expected to survive but still it left a mark. For me it was a harsh reality check that we are still very much on the edge. ✠

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opposition additionally to Jewish and Catholic immigrants. The Nazis of course sought to eliminate Jews, the disabled, gays and lesbians, and anyone who wasn't “pure” (Aryan) racially. These hate groups are still with us today. They were there in Charlottesville.

Let me put this in the context of this publication and our province and the world-wide Precious Blood community. If this hateful and evil ideology would prevail, here are some of the people who would be excluded from our circles: almost half of our present cohort of Precious Blood Volunteers; most of the youth and their families served by the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation; all members and Companions of our units in Latin America, Africa, India, and Vietnam; almost all the parishioners of St. Agnes Parish in Los Angeles and many parishioners in other parishes staffed by the Kansas City and Cincinnati Provinces; and a number of members and Companions in the United States.

After a break to watch the eclipse with a group of friends, I am back to conclude this reflection. It was indeed awesome (not a word I like to use lightly). I was reminded of something I read just the day before, a commentary by a Muslim leader: “The total eclipse is a time of spirituality for many faith traditions. It is the time of unity and healing, especially in the aftermath of Charlottesville tragedy. It is the time to remember we have far more in common with each other than things that divide us. It is the time to remember we all share the same sun and the moon as we all enjoy and reflect on the spectacular solar eclipse.” Amen. ✠

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As I begin this sabbatical I can identify with Abraham, whose readings we listened to at daily Mass during July. God is leading and I trust. I also identify with Moses being called to eventually “set my people free.” Somehow at Precious Blood Renewal Center, spiritually I will be involved in “setting people free” from whatever burdens or whatever is holding them back from a deeper relationship with God, eventually leading them to a new covenant. I also identify with Peter, James, and John called by Jesus with “Come follow me.” Leave behind that with which you are familiar and begin something new. “Just learn from me,” Jesus says.

Because of my personal timeline of making a 30-day directed retreat during the month of August and because of the publishing timeline of the *New Wine Press*, I am writing this article before I have heard the final results of the Symposium on Community Life. But I am presuming that new ideas will come out about constructing “New Wine Skins.” Jesus says in Matthew 9:16-17, “No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth onto an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak and a worse tear is made. Neither is a new wine put into old wine skin, otherwise the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wine skins and so both are preserved.” The new wine is the Gospel message. The receptacle for this new wine must be conformed to it, not the other way around. To take in the Good News, we can't live in the cramped space of our old habits and attitudes. We can't have an “expect-the-worst” attitude. Instead we must change the minds that we have. If God is love then only a soul that is on fire with love can properly take him in.

We all know that it is really hard to let go of old habits and old patterns of living. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to quiet our minds so that we can think his thoughts. Let's sit quietly in God's presence letting God's thoughts re-program our thinking. Let's dream together.

Our Community Life Symposium and our work at Precious Blood Renewal Center can build on the past, but also allow the Holy Spirit to create something new. Gaspar was totally dependent on the Holy Spirit to be able to carry the Gospel to people who had lost faith. He was very successful. He used new wineskins that hadn't been used before. Today we are searching for another set of new wineskins. I am confident that we will find it. ✠

The Working Poor and Catholic Social Teaching

by *Gabino Zavala, Justice and Peace Director*

Among the marginalized and vulnerable that St. Gaspar called us to serve are today's struggling, minimum wage workers. These workers struggle to provide the basic needs for themselves and their families. Many workers who earn minimum wage work long hours, cobbling together multiple jobs to get by. Others amass enough hours to pay basic bills, surviving only with a patchwork of help from family and government subsidies. Many are employed in the fast food industry or are personal and care service workers.

Nicole, a single mother of two boys, makes \$7.50 an hour in a fast food establishment. She struggles "living paycheck to paycheck just barely getting by working full-time and only getting part-time benefits...which is nothing...I work to live and live to work, no time for anything else. I've been on food stamps for some time now, and that just gets me by thank goodness but that's all it does. To make ends meet I've had to move in with my parents, stopped driving because I couldn't afford car insurance and gas at times. I work long endless hours, no breaks, so I can get a decent check."

Nicole's story is all too familiar in the state of Missouri and I dare say throughout our country. The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour. The minimum wage in the state of Missouri is \$7.65 an hour. How can a single person survive on this salary? How does a mother or father support their families on these wages?

Here in Missouri there has been a concerted effort to raise the minimum wage for fast food workers and other low wage earners to \$15 an hour and unionize these workers. The fight for a living wage in Kansas City has been a long one. In the recent August elections, Kansas City voters voted overwhelmingly (68% to 32%) to raise the minimum wage. However, the struggle continues because our state legislature has preempted the will of the voters from making an increase to the minimum wage a reality.

September is the month to give thanks for the right and gift of work. It is an appropriate time to reflect on the plight of workers who struggle to survive as well. It is also an opportune time to reflect on Catholic Social Teaching as it addresses the rights of workers.

Throughout its history, but most especially in the last one hundred years, the Church has spoken widely and often prophetically the truth about the social order and the world in which we live. This social teaching derives from four fundamental beliefs:

- Human beings are created in the very image and likeness of God, so precious that God sent his own Son to save people from death (cf. Genesis 1:26-27; John 3:16).
- We are called to live in communion with God and with our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ (cf. I Corinthians 12). As such, we are called to work for the common good rather than self-interest.
- We are called to serve those in the greatest need, the "least of these," as, in doing so, we serve God (cf. Matthew 25:40).
- We are called to preach and to help bring about the kingdom of God: "an eternal and universal kingdom: a kingdom of truth and light, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love, and peace" (Preface for the Solemnity of Christ the King).

In light of these four beliefs, the Catholic Bishops of the United States have identified seven key themes that suffuse Church teaching about building a just society and living lives of holiness and integrity in the modern world. Let me identify each of these themes and in light of them reflect on the rights of workers.

The first theme of Catholic social teaching is the life and dignity of the human person. All workers' rights are based on the inherent dignity of the human person. Workers are not only a means of production like raw materials and capital. They also bring their unique talents to their work. In return, their work should provide them not only with the material things that allow them to live in dignity, but should also provide them with satisfaction and personal fulfillment.

Unions grew out of the struggle for social justice, not class struggle. Over the past century, unions have been an important force in ensuring that workers are

treated with the dignity that is their due. Through their efforts to ensure just wages, increase workplace safety, eliminate child labor, prevent harassment, and provide security despite changing economies, unions promote the common good.

The second theme is the call to family, community, and participation. At their best, unions are the embodiment of this principle. By organizing, workers combine their efforts to ensure the benefit of all. Labor organizations have helped promote policies that support families, including family leave and limitations on the work week. In many places, labor organizations are significant sources of support for families in particular need, such as those facing the illness of a child or substantial job dislocation.

The third theme is rights and responsibilities. This theme reminds us that rights are always accompanied by responsibilities. The ultimate good of labor organizations is not to ensure the greatest economic benefit for their members or greatest political influence for their leaders. Their goal is to help workers take their appropriate role in the building up of a more just social order. A reliable safety net for workers facing hardship, policies that provide for full employment, a business culture that respects the needs of families, safe workplaces, and employees that value workers' contributions are important elements of a just social order, as are policies that ensure a fair day's work for a fair day's wage and appropriate returns on investment.

The fourth theme is the option for the poor and vulnerable. Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus showed a special affinity for those who were marginalized in society—the poor, the migrant, the outcast, the sinner. Throughout its history, organized labor has stood up for the poor and vulnerable—protecting new immigrants, fighting the exploitation of child laborers and demonstrating for civil rights.

These efforts must continue in the present economy. Unions must reach out to new audiences of the poor and vulnerable, including immigrants, seasonal and migrant workers, and those who lack the skills to participate in the current working environment. Unions must look beyond the self-interest of their current members and work for the good of those who have no voice or power. Workers must use their right to organize to work for the greatest good of the

greatest number. They must judge their success by how the most vulnerable members of society are faring.

The fifth theme is the dignity of work and the rights of workers. The relationship of this theme to the role of organized labor is clearest. The principal reason for the right of workers to organize is to ensure that the rights of workers are protected. Unions must also take steps to help people grow in their understanding of the dignity of human work. Work is not simply a way to provide for our material needs. It is the way we participate in God's work of creation. Ultimately, we are judged not by our stock price or profit margin, but by our love of our sisters and brothers. This love is made concrete by our efforts to ensure that all persons are treated with justice and have the opportunity to work in conditions that enhance their dignity rather than detract from it.

The sixth theme is solidarity. We belong to one human family—a family that knows no boundaries of race, class, or country. The right to organize into unions does not include the right to ignore the needs of those who are not members. Our ultimate focus must be the common good, not short-term self-interest. We are called to look beyond our boundaries and comfort levels to speak for the voiceless, to promote human rights and dignity, and to see the good of all our sisters and brothers.

We live in an economy that is increasingly globalized and interdependent. This structure presents new moral and economic dangers. It is easy to demonize foreign workers who benefit from jobs that are outsourced or immigrants who take local jobs. Solidarity means that our organizations must reach across boundaries to forge collaborations and undertake efforts that enhance the life and dignity of all.

The seventh theme is care for God's creation. God has given us the resources of the earth to use for our benefit. However, these resources are not limitless. Increasingly, scientific evidence and our experience demonstrate the fragility of our natural world. Our unions must work to promote policies that will protect our environment, use resources wisely, and pass this wondrous heritage to generations of workers yet to come.

The right to work is an essential element of the Church's social teaching. But we must use this right

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An Authentic C.P.P.S. Community Life

In the spirit of Saint Gaspar, we are a community which sees, hears, and responds to the cry and call of the Blood of Christ in the world today. United in the bond of charity, our sacred relationship reveals the presence of the trinitarian God among and within each of us. Our community life helps each of us to reach our full potential as missionary disciples and gives witness to the Gospel of Christ. Our mission houses are safe places of dialogue where we value equality and create an atmosphere of trust and joy. Inspired by the open arms and heart of the crucified Christ we are sincerely present to one another and appreciate others as gift while recognizing our brokenness and need for conversion. Our charism calls us to be reconciled to each other so that we can be a reconciling presence in the world. Marked by the Blood of Christ, our communion impels us to deepen our relationships with one another and our lay associates. We acknowledge living together in mission houses is the ideal promoted in our policies and practices. We recognize there will be exceptions.

We challenge ourselves to live our commitment to communion in concrete ways by:

- committing ourselves to a simple life style. We live in solidarity with others by putting their needs before our own.
- embracing a prayer life which is enriched by the prayers of the Congregation, contemplation, the sharing of the Word, and the celebration of the Eucharist.
- sharing meals together.
- engaging in a program of ongoing formation and spiritual renewal.
- gathering for house congresses, social, and recreational times.
- being hospitable to one another, especially our most vulnerable members, lay associates, and visitors.
- devoting time to Congregational events and celebrations.
- practicing co-responsibility in sustaining our community life.
- developing best stewardship practices of our human and natural resources.

Community Life Symposium Summary

by Fr. Alan Hartway, C.P.P.S.

From Monday through Friday, July 24th–28th, Missionaries of the Precious Blood from nineteen different units internationally met at the Colegio on Via Narni under the sweltering Roman sun, as the city dealt with a drought and threats of water shortages appeared in the news.

In sharp contrast was the hospitality of the seminarians and staff of the Collegio. We were graced with abundance of food and beverages to cool everyone off. The schedule was fully loaded, hardly a minute wasted; if anything, it was too busy, with not enough time to socialize.

Monday was a day for listening. Fr. Bill Nordenbrock's opening homily observed that we live in liminal states, in between, and never settling in comfortableness. Our vice moderator general, Fr. Emmanuele Lupi, presented an excellent history of the community's rule from the original texts. He showed that our community began out of experience, and then only years later principles for community were written down in various kinds of "legal" documents. The point is that we are still "in process." Our specific apostolate and charism shapes our unique forms of community, and not the other way around. Lupi reminded us that our language even in these "legal" texts speaks in terms of *vinculum*, a theological and Eucharistic word, and not *ligamen*, a canonical legal term, which we don't use. These are two very different ways of approaching exactly what holds us together. A "vinculum" (Latin for "chain"—used first by St. Augustine in the phrase "bond of charity" in his Easter Sermons on the Gospel of John), means a spiritual bond that is deeper and richer than a mere legal matter.

Rather than more permanent institutional structures, the original Gasparian mission houses were "on the fly" transient priests and brothers working at a mission site. It is surprising to learn that the phrase "bond of charity" disappeared from our organizational texts from 1946 until the new Norms in 1988. The last 200 years of our community experience gives us permission to be adaptive and flexible to the needs of the Church in the times in which we live.

Fr. Ed Dougherty, Maryknoll's leader, and Bro. Robert Scheiler, Lasallian director general,

shared their experiences of community. Like us, these are communities with laity involved, and this has proven to be a blessing for them. Much like ourselves, their community life is often "on the fly" and "messy," which is to say not based in legalisms. Their apostolates come first. Societies of Apostolic Life are constantly living their way into new structures and associations to promote and benefit their unique charisms. The phrase "living alone together" comes close to describing at least our North American experience of community.

On Tuesday we listened to all the unit reports, answering the nine questions which our province addressed this past year and a half from the xx General Assembly. Rereading my notes, I saw several common threads emerge. We are very small numerically; house of four or more members are very rare. Money is not an issue in many places. Lay associates are almost everywhere in the international community, but Companions in the North American experience are moving toward a deeper involvement. Shared prayer and shared meals are hallmarks of community life. We must take up the challenge of being experts in communion. From these reports, a central point of much discussion began to emerge: can members live alone?

On Wednesday, each unit shared their hopes and dreams. Of course, everyone imagines future growth, some stressing more members and formation programs, and others like ourselves emphasizing companion engagement more fully. Words like reconciliation, hospitality, and "bond of charity" came up most frequently along with an enormous spectrum of formation practices. My favorite quotes from these two days: "We must take up the challenge of real communion" (Pope Francis). Community means being "attentive to the poverty of the other." "We are more than what we do." "Reconciliation requires the truth." "I exist because others exist."

In order to prepare for a plenary session on Friday, the last day, the participants broke out into language groups in order to gather the main threads as they heard it from the various unit reports on Tuesday and Wednesday. In my group, several welcome ideas were expressed: we are not provocative enough, several

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Community Life Symposium Reflection

by Vicky Otto, *Precious Blood Companions* Director

I love summer because it is a chance to take a break and take a breath with the hopes of perhaps seeing or doing things differently. Joyce Rupp describes this hopeful feeling as our spiritual or inner summer. She writes, “During our inner summer, we know we are growing. There’s a robust surge of spiritual vitality... During this time, we often sense the presence of divinity within ourselves and others.” This summer I was given the opportunity to do something different which really awakened the “inner summer” in me, as well as giving me a whole new perspective on what it means to be part of the Precious Blood family.

Representatives from all the units of the world-wide Missionaries of the Precious Blood were invited to participate in a Community Life Symposium in Rome at the end of July. The purpose of the Symposium was to discuss what it means for the community to live authentically and what it means to live a simple life style—as well as how each unit hoped to develop or deepen its commitment towards the fullest participation possible of lay associates in its communal life. Leading up to the symposium, many members and Companions participated in discussions to provide input into the reports that were given by each of the units. During the preparation for the gathering, Moderator General Fr. Bill Nordenbrock invited myself and another lay associate from Chile to attend the Symposium to bring the voice of the lay associates into the circle of discussion.

The Symposium began with a brief review of the history of the Community, especially focusing on how the Community was formed and structured. We then heard from two different religious communities regarding what community life meant to them. On Tuesday and Wednesday, we heard reports from each of the 18 units represented. Each representative shared what the current experience of their area was as well as their hopes and dreams. We concluded the symposium by drafting a document that captured all that was spoken during the symposium, which will then be presented to each unit to determine how to make these hopes and dreams a reality.

As I reflected upon the week of the symposium the two sentiments that come to mind were awe and gratitude. When I listened to how lay associates are

defined in each of the provinces I had a sense of enormous gratitude for everyone in the United States who worked to make the dream of Companions a reality in the United States. I realized that it took an enormous leap of faith to bring to life what Fr. Joe Nassal wrote about in 1987, “We are not forming a group to create more work for ourselves but a group to work side-by-side with us in the charism of St. Gaspar. That is our starting point: the charism of Gaspar... They are ‘companions’ in following the path of discipleship. They have their own special call.” Many of the other provinces were eager to talk about how Companions were structured and formed as well as their relationship with the members in the community. Many of the members were eager to develop something like Companions in their own areas and had lots of questions. It is exciting to imagine that the dream of Companions that began in the United States might continue in other provinces around the world.

I also had a sense of awe when listening to the stories of the members from the different units about their ministries. I was in awe after hearing about the members of the Tanzanian province working each day to help those in need throughout their country. They face each day with joy and spirit, despite the overwhelming needs of the people living in poverty. I was in awe after hearing about the members of the Mexican mission who work each day faced with violence due to the drug cartels and gang warfare—which often occur on their doorsteps. They too serve with joy and spirit, not letting the violence win out over reconciliation and peace.

As each of the members shared the stories of their ministries around the world with such intention and dedication, perhaps awe is too weak of a word to use to describe my feelings. It was an honor to spend the week with these dedicated missionaries. I left with a whole new appreciation of the work that is being done around the world by the missionaries under challenging and difficult circumstances.

While summer is a wonderful time to take a break and imagine new beginnings, we also know that fall will come. Joyce Rupp writes, “Autumn speaks of connection and yearning...” As I reflect upon my

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The Real Scream

by Magdalena Stasiak, PBMR Intern



Magdalena Stasiak

to learning about new cultures and about the world in general.

I grew up in a wonderful family. My parents' love is the most beautiful love I have seen in this world; I always know I am wanted and that my brother and I are the fruits of this beautiful love. I have had a very blessed life.

In Poland I studied psychology. As part of my program, I was required to complete an internship. I did not know that my placement would combine everything I had been dreaming about, such as practicing English, spending time in a beautiful place, and experiencing the spirituality of the Precious Blood on another continent.

As always, God has taken care of my desires and me. He gave me the opportunity to come to the United States and Chicago's Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation. I had no idea what my internship would be like or what I would do there, so my travel was full of fear. Fortunately, God is also in America, and put so many wonderful people in my path (especially the C.P.S. sisters with whom I live!) so that my fears disappeared in the blink of an eye.

So what do I do in the Center? I am present and I participate. My responsibility at PBMR is to walk with the people I meet and get to know their way of living, their mentality, and their stories. Therefore, I was entrusted with the most beautiful duty in the world. Before my arrival, I thought that my psychology background would be helpful in some way and that I would be serving people more than receiving

My name is Magdalena. I come from Poland. I appreciate my country, but I never feel that Poland is my place in the world. I hope to find this place someday, so I am open

services from others. So when I found myself at PBMR, I felt lost because it was completely the opposite of what I imagined before I came here.

Exactly a month ago I flew to Chicago and now I am already experiencing what I had read and thought about in Poland—living the spiritual life deep in my heart.

Many times in my life I heard the answer to this question: "What is the spirituality of the Precious Blood for you?" The most beautiful answer I heard at PBMR this July: "This is the spirituality that gathers people. Those who are more open invite those who have less courage to come." This remark refreshed my outlook, because I know it's not just joining the community, but inviting everyone to join in this common path to the most beautiful place of peace and safety.

Who are the people who have more courage to invite others to this common path? A month ago I would have said they are very well-established Catholics. Today I would say they are all those who have experienced being invited, wanted, accepted. I have personally experienced how the people who get hurt so badly can beautifully invite others.

I thought that as a well-established Catholic, coming from a wonderful family, having a psychology background, I would initiate a joint trip down this path. I guess I thought I would be a guide, someone important. I had made my best plan to spend time here and I had specific expectations, and it turned out very differently.

I found myself being a psychologist then a patient, student and teacher, sheep and shepherd helper, the

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one who listens and the one who shares, the one who gives hope and the one searching for hope. I was a psychologist when I talked to people about their lives, problems, and successes, especially when I was just listening; a patient when the listening was too overwhelming and I needed support myself.

Student: all the time, when I had language problems, when I was asking about culture and customs, when I wanted to understand the stories of people I met, and when I did not know what to order in a restaurant. Teacher, when people asked me: “How is it in Poland?” “What is your story?” “Does your nation still feel the effects of war?” and finally “Where is Poland?” I was a sheep who knew she was in the right place and in the right flock, who felt good about other sheep, regardless of whether they were black or white, young or old.

I was a shepherd’s helper who was sitting at the back of the clearing and watching the sheep, thinking intensely about what exactly was missing and helping to see what at first sight I missed. I was also the one who listened when people shared their stories: stories of a brutally murdered beloved child, of a 17-year-old boy being sentenced to death in prison, of a newborn who died after not receiving proper care after birth because of his race, and whose body was put in a peanut butter jar.

I heard the story of a black father who loved and cared for his son but whose rights to see his son were taken away by the white mother. I listened to the stories of many people who are constantly traumatized, boys who have been shot several times by the age of 15, who at the same age have become fathers bravely educating their children, boys who have seen so much blood shed that this image will never disappear from their eyes.

I heard the story of a woman whose husband was murdered and she asked the court for the smallest amount of punishment for the perpetrator and the story of a Puerto Rican man who had been shot 15 times, paralyzed, and today is walking once again on his own legs and working to make the area safer.

I listened to the story of a young man who participated in a brutal murder and today is considered a member of the murdered boy’s family. I listened to so many stories of people who have gone so far and have come back hopeful.

I was also the one who shared—with what I had, whether I considered it rich or poor. I was trying to be the one giving hope: hope that life can be beautiful, that not every man/woman/child need struggle with such pain and fear, that everyone deserves a good life because we were called to it, because God created all people to share the beautiful and the good and know happiness.

And finally, I was at PBMR center when two people were shot in a nearby alley and lay bleeding on the ground. Their cry was not a metaphorical “blood scream,” which we try to hear in Poland. Their sound was the voice of true, untreated suffering, which resulted in surgery and prolonged paralysis.

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points are almost missing from our sharing like finances and sexuality, how members through formation can best internalize our charisms, ministry of the Word, being best practices witnesses of the gospel. There was very little reflection on what leadership means for us. When people see us, they should see a series of behaviors: Attentiveness to formation of community life, living in mission houses, living in communion of shared work, sharing finances, and honoring sacred spaces.

All day Friday was a plenary session to collate and write a draft document on community life as you will find elsewhere in this month’s New Wine Press. Writing a provocative and inviting document with the input of so many challenged the participants to be community. Typical of our history, the finished piece has neither legislative force, nor is it any kind of finished product to be shelved or filed away. We are definitely a group in process constantly. For some, it says it all, yet for others not saying enough. Can we live with this? Or more importantly can we move through and beyond this into something altogether new? †

Reflection, continued from page 12

time at the Symposium I have a greater sense of connection with the larger Precious Blood Community than I ever had. I look forward to what the future holds as each of us reflects upon what the future holds for the Community. †



Hector Avitia



John Lee



Leah Landry



Lota Ofodile



Marijo Gabriel



Martin Echtler



Alia Sisson

Precious Blood Volunteers: the Magnificent Seven

by Tim Deveney, Precious Blood Volunteers Director

We are excited to introduce seven new Precious Blood Volunteers. Four of them have already started at their placement sites and three more will be joining us in mid-September. If you would like to have a more active role in the lives of our volunteers please contact Tim Deveney at tdeveney@preciousbloodkc.org or call Precious Blood Center. Please keep each of our volunteers in your prayers.

Below are short biographies of each of the new Precious Blood Volunteers. You can read more about each of them on the Kansas City Province's website.

Volunteers Starting in August

HECTOR AVITIA

Hector Avitia will serve in Chicago at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation and will live in community at the Formation House in Hyde Park. He grew up in Los Lunas, New Mexico and graduated in 2010 from the University of Notre Dame. He received a bachelor's degree in business administration. Over the last seven years Hector has worked in the corporate world along with volunteering in his church community. He has committed to serving as a Precious Blood Volunteer for a full year.

JOHN LEE

John Lee will serve as a Precious Blood Volunteer at Cristo Rey Kansas City High School. He is a native of Galloway Township, New Jersey and attended Villanova University. John graduated from Villanova in May with a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering with business and mechatronics minors.

He has committed to serve for the first semester of the 2017-2018 school year at Cristo Rey and will be working with students in the STEM subjects.

LEAH LANDRY

Leah Landry is a native of Glen Ellyn, Illinois, a western suburb of Chicago. She will be moving east into the Back of the Yards neighborhood serving at Precious Blood Ministry Reconciliation. She will be living in community with the Dayton Precious Blood sisters who live and serve in Chicago. This past May she graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a Bachelor of Arts in political science, Spanish and peace studies. Leah was awarded the Yarrow Award from the Kroc Institute at Notre Dame. The Yarrow Award is awarded to peace studies undergraduates who demonstrate academic excellence and a commitment to service in peace and justice.

LOTA OFODILE

Lota Ofodile was born and raised in Kaduna, a city in the northern part of Nigeria. She moved to the United States to attend college at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York. In December 2016 Lota graduated from Canisius with a Bachelor of Science in biology with a minor in psychology. She will be serving at KC CARE Clinic in Kansas City, Missouri for a full year and living at Gaspar Mission House.

Volunteers Starting in September

MARIJO GABRIEL

Marijo Gabriel is from Phoenix, Arizona and completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology



Leah Landry, John Lee, Hector Avitia, and Lota Ofodile completed their Volunteer Orientation in August

at Creighton University in May. She will be serving at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago and living in community with the Dayton Precious Blood sisters who live and serve in Chicago. Her term of service will run from September 2017 to June 2018.

MARTIN ECHTLER

Martin Ehtler grew up in Bernbeuren, Germany, a village in rural Bavaria near the Austrian border. He currently resides in Munich, Germany. He will be serving for six months in Kansas City at St. James Place living in community at Gaspar Mission House. He has received a Master of Science and a Bachelor of Science in human resource education & management along with Catholic theology studies from Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich. He also has degrees in business management. Martin worked for several years in the banking industry in Germany before returning to school.

ALIA SISSON

Alia Sisson was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Dayton in 2013. Alia graduated from the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law with her Juris Doctorate in 2016. She plans to serve the poor and practice public interest law as her vocation. She was recognized for completing over 200 hours of pro bono student legal service. In her free time, she loves to sing and play guitar. Alia will be serving from September to at least June of 2018 at Legal Aid of Western Missouri working with their domestic violence division. ✦

PBMR, continued from page 12

I experienced all this at the age of 23 by participating in the life of PBMR. I experienced the strength of suffering and realized that it is an extraordinary wealth. I experienced joy, which has its roots in the pain, which makes it only more beautiful and true. I experienced love despite weakness. I experienced a life of reconciliation, which will not be forgotten until the end of my life. ✦



Peace & Justice, continued from page 6

to speak for those who struggle to find their voice. In the words of the prophet Amos, we must use this right to “Let justice surge like water, and goodness like an unfailling stream.”

The challenges are great, but so is our strength if we work together and stand as one. ✦



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