

THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 27 No. 11 • July 2019





Let us serve God with holy joy.

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

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Front cover image: Fr. Dave Matz, C.PP.S. (left) and Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.PP.S. (right) during the Provincial Council Installation, June 10, 2019 at Savior Pastoral Center, Kansas City, Kansas

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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Kansas City Province

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



Hopeless Is Not An Option

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

*You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.*

Still I Rise, Maya Angelou

Anne Frank was born on June 12, 1929. She would have celebrated her 90th birthday last month. The date of her death is not known, except that she was fifteen when she died in a Nazi concentration camp. It is of course her diary that has kept her memory alive and given inspiration and hope to millions of readers. As she wrote, “I want to go on living after my death.”

And so, she has. Her diary chronicled her ordinary daily life in hiding, but also, as one writer put it, she “tried to record the movements of her own heart, her hopes and dreams, her moral determination to maintain the virtues that might contribute someday to a better world. . . . She bears witness to a power stronger than her tormentors—the sacred core of a human soul that refuses to yield to darkness” (*Give Us This Day*, June 2019, writer unknown).

I find it difficult at times to maintain hope in the face of what we are experiencing in our country, to name just a few things: divisive rhetoric, name calling, denigration of the press, scandals, cozying up to dictators, ginning up of culture wars, stoking of anger and resentment, fomenting discord, relentless lying and devaluing of the truth, ignoring gun violence and mass murders, denial of climate change, and—most difficult for me to comprehend—the cruelty of separating children from families at the border and jailing of those seeking asylum. In the midst of it all there is an inability of some in Congress to address any of it. In many cases, just rolling over and going along to get along—out of fear, I guess.

As I consider all of this, I reflect on the following three quotes from Anne Frank's diary.

“How do you stay hopeful right now; how do you keep going when there is so much to grieve over, so much cruelty in front of you, when there is such daily violence to contend with?”

“I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness; I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too. I feel the suffering of

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The First “Yes” Was Easy

by Fr. Bill Nordenbrock, C.P.P.S., Moderator General

I attended the recent assemblies of the Cincinnati and Kansas City Provinces. At these gatherings we overwhelmingly said “yes” to our hope of creating a vibrant and viable future together as a New Creation. At these gatherings I chose to remain rather quiet (for me!) during the discussion. When I attend assemblies as the Moderator General, I try to be sensitive to the “weight” that some members might attribute to my opinion, and I don’t want to unduly affect a voting process in a unit. But now that the vote has taken place, and the provincials have the task of bringing the results of our votes to the Major Superiors Meeting in September, I am writing as a member of the Cincinnati Province to share my reflections on the assembly discussions.

My first reaction on hearing the decisions made in the assemblies was gratitude and a stronger sense of hopefulness. But I also realized that the “yes” vote of the assemblies was only the easy first “yes” of what will need to be a series of tough decisions that we will need to make. It is relatively easy to say: “Yes, we want to be a new creation.” But can we say “yes” to the death of the old ways, so that there is room and resources, mainly personnel resources, to create something new? We can say “yes” to our desire to be more missionary, but can we say “yes” to the death of stability and the comfort that the old ways give us?

Choosing to allow the old ways to die will be very difficult. Without reservation or qualification, I believe that the current reality of the provinces is the fruit of our personal discernment of the will of God for us. Each of us have created a way of life as a Precious Blood member that we believe is faithful to our vocation. Many members joined our community because they saw the traditional apostolates as ways to use the gifts that they received from God for the good of the Church. There can be no faulting that discernment. Perhaps without exception, we are all working in the apostolate that we believe uses the gifts that God has given us to dedicate our lives to the mission of the community. So, if we are currently

being faithful, why do we need to allow our current way of life and apostolate to die?

The painful truth I see is that the witness of our way of life and the apostolic mission of the Provinces in the United States has ceased to attract vocations. Our faithfulness is greatly appreciated and admired by those whom we serve in our ministries, and a great many lay associates of a certain generation have wanted to join us. At the same time, we need a dramatic refounding that will attract vocations in order to create a viable and vibrant future.

I think that it is important that we reflect on the interplay of individual and communal discernment. I would ask: Do the decisions that come forth from communal discernment affect or influence your individual discernment? From past experience, I would say that often communal discernment has a very small effect on the choices that some members make about how they live and work. At the recent assemblies, in casual discussions, I heard members express the opinion that they can vote “yes” for the New Creation because the decision won’t affect them much anyway. If a member is elderly or retired, then perhaps this is just stating a simple truth. But for those who are still working full time in the apostolate of the provinces, this statement is a cause of concern.

Our Normative Texts make clear that all members acting together have the responsibility of leadership. Communal action and decision have authority. I believe that this means that all members, especially active members, have a responsibility to participate in the necessary discernment for the reimagining of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood reality in the United States. In a very positive way, we are engaged in this process. But as we discern the future, as we discern a new way of communal living, and as we discern a refounding of our apostolic mission, we need to be obedient to the authority of the community and allow the communal discernment to influence our individual discernment as we freely say “yes” to our own transformation. ✠

Home on the Edge

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

“The Word of Christ is intended to reach out to everyone, in particular those who live in the peripheries of existence, so that they might find in Him the center of their life and the source of hope.” Pope Francis, March 21, 2015

In his first novel, *Player Piano*, Kurt Vonnegut explores the dystopian theme of automation taking over human labor. A quote from the book resonates as I prepare to leave the Midwest and return to Berkeley where I was living when I was elected provincial eight years ago: “I want to stand as close to the edge as I can without going over. Out on the edge you can see all kinds of things you can’t see from the center.”

As a community, we have explored in recent years—especially as we embarked on becoming a New Creation—the call of the blood leading us to mission with those on the margins. Before the conclave that elected him, then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio reportedly told his fellow cardinals, “The Church is called to come out of herself and go to the peripheries, not only geographically, but also the existential peripheries: the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference, of intellectual currents and of all misery.” As pope, Francis has sought to put this vision into action.

When one walks the streets in downtown Berkeley, the campus of the University of California and the commercial area that surrounds it, one can’t help but see the homeless huddled in storefronts or staking a claim to their space on the sidewalk or street corner. They are so visible that they often become invisible. But in May, I encountered a young woman who was picking at the strings of a banjo. Her coat was on the sidewalk shaped into a basket and on a piece of cardboard, she wrote in large letters with a crayon: “Tired. Homeless. Hungry.” I walked by at first but then turned around and dropped some money in her coat. She smiled and said thank you. The hood of her sweatshirt pulled close over her forehead made it difficult to see the color of her hair but her pale complexion suggested her cardboard sign was telling the truth.

Truth in advertising is not always what you get on the street or in the marketplace, mall, or magazines

for that matter. Not to mention cyberspace and maybe even sacred space. In the latter, the false self can seduce one into believing it is the true self. Truth is a rare commodity these days. But this young woman, who appeared to be a new resident on the boulevard of broken dreams, is the kind of person Jesus noticed in his ministry. He didn’t give them a handout but gave them his hand. He helped those feeling alienated and abandoned because of illness or sin, bad breaks or poor choices to reconnect with the image of God within and with the human community.

When Jesus adopted the prophet Isaiah’s vision as his mission statement, “to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord (Luke 4, 18-19),” he outlined for those who follow him our mission as well. Living his mission means we are engaged in the work of proclamation, restoration, liberation, and reconciliation.

Jim Wallis, in his book, *The Call to Conversion*, affirms how new vision comes from the margins of a society or community. “To be marginal in one’s society,” he writes, “is to be motivated and led by values and commitments different from and often contrary to the mainstream. New vision is always what any society most needs and the edges of society have always been the most likely place for it to emerge.”

During some Sabbath time, I hope to explore what this might mean as we embark on the New Creation. Sonnino Mission House in Berkeley will be my home base, but I also have reserved two months of solitude at the Hermitage in Big Sur, California. Though the mission statement of Jesus is very clear about restoring relationship through proclamation, liberation, restoration, and reconciliation, what is less certain to me is my role. But then, as Thomas Merton wrote in his journal, “If everything in my life remains indefinite to

some extent (though it is superficially definite), I accept this as a good thing.”

I’m not sure I am as trusting as Merton, because I would like a little more certainty. But as I approach this Sabbath time with a grateful heart to all of you—all the members, companions, province staff, volunteers, and friends of the community from around the world, but especially the Kansas City Province who have supported and encouraged me during these years in leadership—I go with the prayer I penned many years ago, and trust that in God’s time we will live the answer to the prayer:

*Spirit of Gaspar,
take us to the edge.*

*With a gentle push,
send us forth to fly
beyond the confinements of our minds
to the heart of mystery.*

*You preached the vision
of a new heaven and a new earth.
This vision has its time
and will not disappoint.*

*Etch the vision in our imaginations
to help us see the time is now.*

*Give us courage
to find our home
on the edge
where heaven meets earth
and hope is born.*

+ Amen.

***Have a Precious Blood Members,
Companions, Parish, or other
community event happening?***

Tell us about it! We welcome submissions and higher resolution photographs.

Send submissions to:

communications@preciousbloodkc.org

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millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more.”

“It’s difficult in times like these: ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It’s a wonder I haven’t abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart.”

I know this to be true, mostly from my own experience, but also because every poll taken in this country in the last several years shows clearly that a majority of citizens do not agree with what is happening policy-wise and are appalled by the abandonment of adherence to long-held norms of decency from some who serve in leadership.

So, what do we do when it seems, in the words of Anne Frank, “there is so much to grieve over, so much cruelty in front of you, when there is such daily violence to contend with?” Well, if we believe that people are really good at heart, then we get to be the good people now, hold on to ideals, carry them out. As the writer John Pavlovitz puts it: “I stay hopeful because hopeless is not an option. Hopelessness is defeat and resignation; it is a willing surrender to darkness that insults the memory of so many who have courageously made this planet their home long before we ever showed up here.”

He also simplifies the solution with two brief sentences, stated both negatively and positively: “Don’t be a jerk. Just be kind.” And, as he points out, being kind means working hard to do some good: “move toward people, help them, listen to them, see them, share with them, carry them. It’s the whole point of you being here....Let people love who they love...allow people to believe in the God they desire—or to believe in no God at all...treat people as if them gaining something does not have to automatically mean you losing.” In other words, it’s unkind to prevent people from the happiness they seek and deserve, unkind to not respect and celebrate difference, unkind to live as if there is not enough of everything to go around. He concludes: “Be

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Changing the Narrative

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

Last week PBMR was invited to participate in a conference of Illinois judges and court personnel. They asked if we could present on the topic of restorative justice (RJ) and the practice of peacemaking circles. That in itself is not out of the ordinary. We are often asked to present on RJ. However, to a group of judges is a little different—but not out of our experience.

Something a little out of the ordinary was that many of the keepers of the circles were some of our own staff persons who had spent decades in prison. Since there were approximately 150 judges and court personnel, we opened with a brief explanation of restorative justice and then broke into ten different circles.

It is ironic that those condemned as a threat to society are now looked upon as keepers of a new way of repairing harm and building community. Years ago, they stood in front of a judge and were sent to prison; they were each seen as a menace to society. A number of them were given life without the possibility of parole—unredeemable. But this day, they were seen differently; they were the keepers of the circle in order to help judges and court personnel understand and experience the power of relationships and ensuring accountability—true accountability.

Orlando, who himself spent 20 years in prison, tells of his circle and how powerful it was. Court personnel are often trained in keeping their feelings and their emotions well under control. If there is expression from judges in the courtroom, it is often frustration and contempt. That day, in circle, emotions were shared and stories were told, but they were stories and emotions that brought people together. There was trust among those who sat in that circle and it was truly healing. As they concluded and readied themselves to go back to the larger conference room, one of the judges came over to Orlando and gave him a hug. He smiled as he tells the story. “I’ve never been hugged by a judge before,” he says. “Amazing!”

We have just celebrated Pentecost, where the many different people with different languages and cultures were amazed because they understood one another.

Egyptians and Romans, those from Asia and Persia—all understood one another. The power of the spirit opened their hearts and minds and they saw themselves, not as strangers or aliens, but as one community, one people.

Circles, while maybe not a Pentecost experience, are spaces where we intentionally step out of our titles and hierarchical statuses and work to see one another as a brother or sister—a fellow human being on a journey.

Tito (named changed), a young kid who we know very well and who has been a part of the Center for a couple years, was caught taking some money out of one of the staff’s purses. When confronted, he admitted he did it and gave the money back. There was more to it than the money—there was the violation of trust on a number of levels. Tito and the staff person from whom the money was taken chose to sit in circle. That staff person was able to talk about how she felt that he—whom she has supported in so many ways—would steal from her. She shared her disappointment and hurt. Tito had the opportunity to apologize. He spoke about what happened and why. He was able to share about how he was dealing with many issues—the illness of his mom and so many other things—not as an excuse, but as part of the story.

He was asked to write a “repair of harm agreement.” Here is what he wrote to the staff person: “I am sorry for the harm I caused you and PBMR. I accept the consequences, and this will never happen again. I know now it was wrong; let me know if there is any more you need from me.”

Because the theft harmed PBMR as well, he was asked to write a statement to PBMR that would be shared at staff meeting. Here is what he wrote to us: “Sorry for the harm to PBMR. This will never happen again, and I accept my consequences.” He went on to say, “The Center means a lot to me. I would not want to do anything to be put out. I will work at being respectful to everyone here.”

Restorative justice allows us to repair harm done by focusing on the harmed relationships. It allows us to

see beyond the crime/issue and recognize the persons involved. In order to recognize someone, you have to listen to their story, understand where they are coming from, and maybe begin to understand some of what they are experiencing as well.

This is our mission: changing narratives—to move beyond the superficial and embrace the stories, relationships, and experiences that make up our lives. †

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kind to people, because every single person you share this planet with right now is going to die. In less than 100 years they'll be gone. They all have a finite amount of time here, and in that fleeting and fragile real estate they are doing the very best they can to hold it all together; to overcome their grief, to find open spaces of breath and moments of unfettered joy; to feel comfortable and accepted in their own skin; to experience times when they feel fully known and genuinely loved. Help them all. Just be kind." It's called people being really good at heart.

And nowhere today is this needed more than in our attitudes, policies, and rhetoric about immigration and, more specifically, the current situation of refugees legitimately seeking asylum, mostly—but not exclusively—at our southern border. There is a lot of xenophobic hatred and fear being stirred up by some in leadership—instead of actually confronting this humanitarian crisis with solutions. Terms like criminals, invaders, predators, terrorists, gang members, drug mules, and rapists have been and are being used. What one sees, however, are individuals and families making the perilous journey to flee from violence, poverty, and hopelessness in their native countries. Unfortunately and sadly, for many in our government (and in the populace) compassion and kindness have borders. Instead of working for comprehensive immigration reform and strengthening humanitarian and solution-based policies in response to refugees and asylum seekers, these people are being used as short-term political fodder. Separating children from their parents is abhorrent to the vast majority of Americans, but it is continuing. Over 24 people have now died in the custody of our Department of Homeland Security. Plans are being made to house some of these families in what was an internment camp for Japanese-American citizens during World War II—a stain that continues to exist on our history.

Minnesota native Jason Fotso was eighteen years old in 2015 when terror attacks in Europe caused increased anti-refugee sentiment that found its way to the U.S. and became expressed in an unwillingness by numerous governors and members of Congress to accept Syrian refugees. His response was the following dual-perspective poem, titled "The Refugees." Consider reading it with Anne Frank's quotes in mind.

(Read following the punctuation, ignore the spacing.)

*Turn away the refugees.
We will not

open up
our homes and hearts
for

children.
Close our doors on
the weak.
Only

fear behind
our
love can put
strength in our

hands.
We cannot let them bleed into our

nation.
They share the blood of our

enemy.
Our own
are endangered by
the refugees.

We have forgotten
the words that
the Statue of Liberty shines.
In this darkest hour,

terror
stands stronger than
our people
of
power.
This

fear
conquers
the home of the brave.*

(Read from bottom to top, use the spacing.) †

Tending

by Vicky Otto, Companion Director

There are amazing people in our world today who seem to know how to get things done. You may see them in your parish, your office, among your friends, and you might even be lucky enough to have them in your family. What is extraordinary about these people is that they appear to know everything. They know who to ask to get something done, where supplies are located, who to call when something breaks, and the list goes on and on. They often take care of needs without fanfare, so everyone benefits. The latest phrase to describe this marvelous attribute in organizations is called “tending.” People who “tend” to others by helping with all the tasks that often go unrecognized truly hold groups, organizations, and even families together.

The Conveners and Sponsors of the Companion Movement are true examples of “tending.”

Conveners are covenanted Companions discerned by the Companion group for a three-year term to serve as in this role. During this time, they take on a multitude of new responsibilities, including ensuring that the monthly gatherings for the groups are planned appropriately, reviewing materials that could be used for gatherings, serving as a leader by encouraging Companions to learn new tasks such as leading prayer and facilitating discussions—and the list goes on. They also provide a critical link to the Companion Office and the provinces by ensuring that information for the Companions is updated, arranging for Covenant Rites when needed, as well as asking for resources or support when needed to benefit the Companions in the group.

Sponsors are incorporated members of the Precious Blood community who serve as the critical link with the Companion group and the community. They offer support to Companions in many different ways. They assist the Convener with planning the monthly meetings and offer valuable information about the Missionaries of the Precious Blood as well as Precious Blood spirituality—especially during times of formation for Companions. They support Companions during their discernment when writing covenants, as well as if and when the time comes that they decide

to not renew their covenant. They serve as liaisons at provincial events as well as advocating on behalf of Companions. What is truly amazing is that they do all of this when many of them are also serving as pastors or associates at busy parishes.

Over the last three years we have been blessed with Companions who have served the Companion Movement faithfully and honorably. Thanks to Maureen Lahiff, Ann O’Brien, Jeanette Kolberg, Angie Schienebeck, Linda Thieman, Kathy Mescher, Carla Assell, Lynda Quistorff, Judy Himes, Walter Napier, Theresa Wade, John Hess, Claire Ann Wheeler, Don Wolff, Mary Chaston, Fran Westervelt, Rena Tulipana, Delores Nagel, Ron Miller, Connie Schaffer, Carolyn Wynk, Mary Elizabeth Eckstein, Sandra Scott, Lisa Athas, Tim and Mary Ellen Lehman, Edna Lange, Jean Swymeler, Francisco Ortiz, Tom Hark (RIP), and Leo Barron for your service to Companions. The dedication and care that each of you have provided to your groups has been inspiring to all Companions.

We have been blessed with wonderful Sponsors as well. Thanks to Fr. Jim Urbanic, Fr. Mike Volkmer, Fr. Joe Miller, Br. Nick Renner, Fr. Ken Schnipke, Fr. Bill Hubmann, Fr. Mark Miller, Fr. Joe Bathke, Br. Tom Bohman, Br. Joe Fisher, Fr. Mike Goode, Fr. Al Ebach, Fr. Ben Berinti, Fr. Ron Will, Fr. Timothy Armbruster, Br. Terry Nufer, Fr. Rick Nieberding, Fr. Alfons Minja, Fr. Rick Friebe, Br. Jerry Schulte, Fr. Matt Link, Fr. Dave Matz and Br. Brian Boyle for your willingness to support Companions. We have been blessed because of your ministry.

Over this past spring, Companion groups across the country were in discernment regarding who should serve as Conveners over the next three years. After training in the summer, they will assume their responsibilities as Convener. We will also be welcoming some new Sponsors as the ministries of some of our Incorporated Members will be changing ministry sites. We look forward to the fall as new “tending” step into their roles, while we all continue to “Step Out, Stand Up and Speak Clearly” about the Precious Blood of Jesus. ✠

Father Sam Homsey, C.P.P.S.

by Fr. Michael Goode, C.P.P.S.

Fr. Sam Homsey, C.P.P.S. was born and raised in St. Joseph, Missouri, in a Lebanese Catholic family. He learned family dedication and work early in his life and allowed God to speak to him. He became a man of faith, courage, and hope.

His dad was a fruit and vegetable vendor in St. Joseph, and Sam took on the task of helping his family early in his life. He grew up in a community where the Lebanese Catholics deeply valued their faith in an environment where their tradition and culture were sometimes not appreciated by the larger community. Faith planted itself early in Sam's heart. He began to ponder the possibility of priesthood and spoke to Precious Blood members who ministered in the in the parish of St. Francis Xavier. Sam went to Brunnerdale Seminary in Canton, Ohio and on to St. Charles Seminary in Carthagena, Ohio for his continuing education and formation.

He often shared how he felt he had to continuously “prove himself” because he was made fun of by the larger student community because he was “Arab” [editor note: *Lebanese people are of Persian descent, which is different from the Arab heritage. Therefore, to call a Persian, “Arab” is considered a slur to many Lebanese people*]. He said that even some of the incorporated members would say painful things to him because he wasn't German like most of them. He took it all in stride, however.

He was ordained and ministered in various parish communities. He lived among black people in a parish in Nashville, Tennessee and learned to appreciate the wonderful friendship they extended to him. He would strongly defend the dignity of African-Americans when in the presence of whites who said ugly things.

Sam worked in Chile for years and learned that mercy and a pastoral approach were infinitely more important than church laws and rubrics and regulations when dealing with real people. He learned to accept people as people. He once shared that being

the pastor of an immense parish in Santiago, Chile, he realized that he and his assistants could not offer Mass often enough in the church to serve all 50,000 Catholics in the parish—and stopped worrying about whether or not they were missing Mass.

He learned he was simply called to serve God's people and let God do the saving. His ideas about God and grace changed, and he began to more and more experience God's mercy and compassion in his ministry.

Sam served the people of North Dakota for several years and then moved to Texas where he ministered in the West Texas town of Fort Stockton. His example and influence helped many people begin to change their attitudes towards Mexican-American people and immigrants from Mexico. Sam treated all people with dignity and respect. Even Anglo Protestants went to him for advice and a kind word about God's love.

Sam became a member of the Rotary Club and met many people from the larger community. He became a greatly respected speaker, witnessing to the truth in the name of justice, peace, hope, and acceptance because of his faith in Jesus Christ and the Gospel. He emphasized the dignity of women, and taught men that it was wrong to strike their wives or any woman. There were some marriages that were preserved because of Sam's wisdom from the Gospel. Decades have passed since Sam left Fort Stockton, but people still remember him and speak of his having been a profound influence for good in their daily lives. ✠



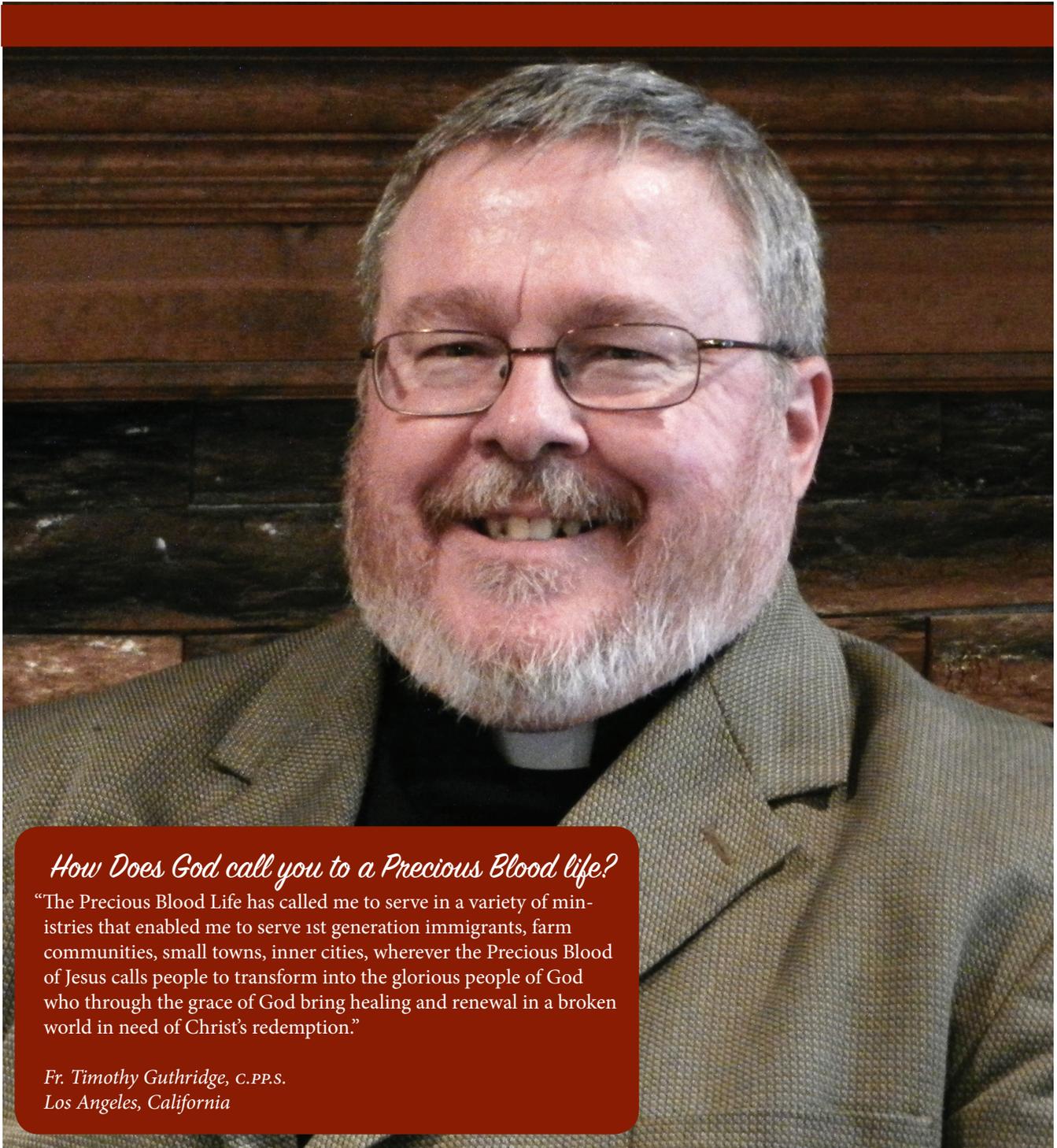
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How Does God call you to a Precious Blood life?

“The Precious Blood Life has called me to serve in a variety of ministries that enabled me to serve 1st generation immigrants, farm communities, small towns, inner cities, wherever the Precious Blood of Jesus calls people to transform into the glorious people of God who through the grace of God bring healing and renewal in a broken world in need of Christ’s redemption.”

*Fr. Timothy Guthridge, C.P.P.S.
Los Angeles, California*