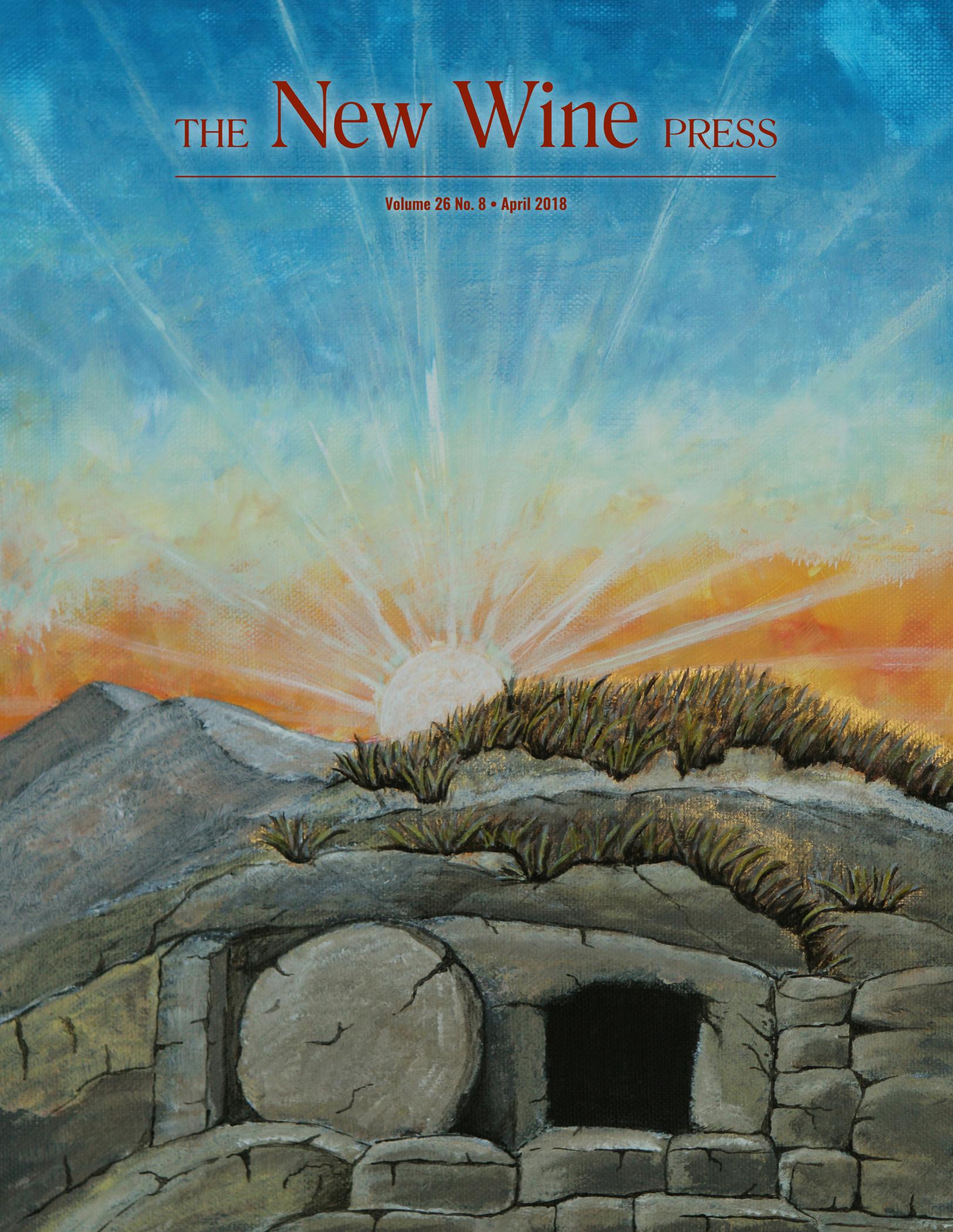


THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 26 No. 8 • April 2018





Let us serve God with holy joy.

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

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

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

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

THE New Wine PRESS

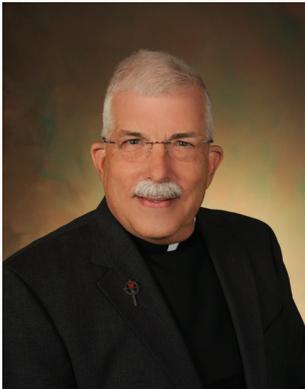
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Don't Hold Your Breath

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

The wildly popular NBC drama, *This Is Us*, tells the generational story of the Pearson family—Jack and Rebecca and their three children, Kate and Kevin (biological) and Randall (adopted), born on the same day. The program moves between the family's beginnings in the 1980s to the present day, chronicling the lives of each character and the family.

In the final episode of season two [spoiler alert], it is Kate's wedding day. She had a very close relationship with her father, up to the day that he died while she was in high school. Since his death, she has kept the urn holding her father's ashes. On the morning of her wedding Kate drives to a spot in the woods that was for her and her father a favorite place for conversation. She sits on a large stump with her arm around the urn and begins to speak.

"You remember the carnival that would come to town every summer with those old roller coasters? I loved riding those with you. Feeling so scared, but so safe, all at the same time. I've been holding on to that feeling for a really long time now, the feeling of you next to me. But, Dad, I'm getting married today. And I've got to make room for Toby. I've got to let go a little now." We see her taking the cover off the urn as the scene ends.

Later, at the wedding reception, Kevin, giving a toast to his sister Kate, speaks to her, his brother Randall, and his mother. "Earlier last year, Kate said something to me that was, well, profound. She said, 'Kevin, if you don't allow yourself to grieve Dad's death, it will be like taking a giant breath in and just holding it there for the rest of your life.' At the time, I didn't want to hear any of that. But here we are and I'm thinking maybe you were onto something when you said that to me. I think we've all been holding our breath for a long time. So, before we toast Toby and Kate, I think the four of us should release that breath together. I think it's important that we do that, that we just let go of those things we've been holding onto. So here we go." The camera then focuses on each one individually as they take a deep breath and then slowly exhale.

As we grow and mature and age, we are invited to let go again and again in order to make room, to become something new—as individuals, families, parishes, religious communities. Some of it is obvious and exciting and eagerly chosen, some is thrust upon us (illness,

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The New Creation: Advancing the “Companionship of Empowerment”

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

Our liturgical calendar this year reflected a unique convergence. The season of Lent, Ash Wednesday, began on February 14th, Valentine’s Day; and Easter Sunday, April 1st, was also April Fool’s Day. On Ash Wednesday we were marked by the sign of love, the sign of the cross, the sign that we were willing to enter more deeply into the paschal mystery. That afternoon, seventeen students and teachers in Parkland, Florida were shot and killed by a former student and we were once again confronted with the suffering and death, the shock and grief of students and parents, families and friends, as the nation’s heart was shattered yet again by gun violence.

The Easter hope coming out of this horrific tragedy is that students, parents, and teachers are taking to the streets and to the halls of political power to demand sensible gun control measures to help prevent future massacres like the one on Valentine’s Day. Unfortunately, too many still believe this is a “fool’s errand.” But with Valentine’s Day converging with Ash Wednesday to reflect how the greatest love is to “lay down one’s life for one’s friends,” Easter Sunday being celebrated on April 1st reveals the greatest practical joke played on the forces of death: the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The purpose of April Fools’ Day—and Easter Sunday—is to touch the heights of God’s joy in making us holy fools. On Easter, the yoke of sadness disappears as we embrace the joy of God’s eternal joke on those who believe death is the end. The joke is on those who think the forces of death have the upper hand. We are people of life, not death, as this Easter puts spring in our step and a smile to crease our soul as we celebrate the season for holy fools.

I read somewhere that the origin of April Fools’ Day is actually found in the way Jesus is sent from Annas to Caiaphas to Pilate, and then from Pilate to Herod and back to Pilate in a bureaucratic dance of red tape that resembled “the ultimate fools’ errand.” Another source points out that April Fools’ Day originally “was an early Christian feast observing the day that Christ was dressed in the robe of a fool, paraded through the streets, and mocked as an imposter king” before his crucifixion. G.K. Chesterton said April 1st was one “of the most perfect feasts of the year.” In his book, *Lunacy and Letters*, Chesterton wrote that “it is the day of practical jokes, and by that perfect artistic instinct that endures in the heart of humanity, it was fixed for a day in early spring. For spring is a practical joke.”

On Easter Sunday, we hear the story from John’s gospel when “Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb.” Unlike some of us, Jesus was

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clearly an early riser and already about the work of the resurrection when Mary arrived at the tomb.

In Mark's version of the story, Mary Magdalene is accompanied by Mary, the mother of James, and Salome. They bring spices to the cemetery but are worried how they would remove the large stone that was rolled in front of the tomb to get inside and anoint the body of Jesus. When they arrive at the tomb, they discover the stone has already been rolled away.

Taking a deep breath to brace themselves, they enter the tomb. They are expecting to be overwhelmed with the smell of death. But instead they are amazed to see not Jesus but "a young man...clothed in a white robe" who tells them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised up; he is not here." The young man tells the women that this isn't a joke! If they did not believe him, look around and see for themselves: "Behold the place where they laid him." But after they look around, they are must "go and tell the others" for the work of resurrection has begun.

"This is resurrection," David Wade writes. "It is a stirring to life that which was slumbering. It was saying to the oblivious, the distracted, the apathetic, 'Wake up! Awaken, sleepers, for there is only one moment, one life in which to live and it is now.'"

The work of the resurrection begins in the darkness of a tomb, damp and dreary, a place of death. But from this place where once there was the stench of decay, the scents of new life emerge. The tomb is empty! The work of the new creation begins.

At the first meeting of the New Creation Commission in Chicago in February, the group discerned how the work to which we are called is to create something new. In his book, *Religious Life in the 21st Century: The Prospect of Refounding*, Diarmuid O'Murchu writes that our "most formidable task" is to ask ourselves, "What is it that we seek first?" If the paradigm is to seek first the kingdom of God—what O'Murchu refers to as the "Companionship of Empowerment"—what implications does this have for our new creation?

When O'Murchu writes of this Companionship of Empowerment, it sounds like the spirituality of the

Precious Blood because this "gospel blueprint...stretches horizons far beyond creed, denomination, or ethnicity." It is an inclusive vision of mission that our founder St. Gaspar embraced as he sought to bring all peoples near through the blood of the cross.

As people of the new creation initiated by Jesus when he rose from the dead, and served by Gaspar with his charism of renewal and reconciliation revealed in the spirituality of the Precious Blood, our work is to advance this Companionship of Empowerment. We are empowered by each other's stories as we seek to live the spirituality of the blood of Christ in our daily lives, in our families, our mission houses, our parishes and apostolates. We need to tell these stories and make them known to one another and to the wider community.

We are empowered by those with whom we walk who will not remain hidden in tombs of fear and indifference but embrace the challenge to be people of life, not death. As we continue the work of becoming a New Creation in the United States, we realize the work of the resurrection compels us to wake up those who are sleeping in, sluggish, indifferent, or giving in to the belief there is nothing we can do to stem the tide of violence in our society. We empower one another to join forces with the young people calling for new policies to prevent gun violence. We are empowered to reach out and stand with those who are being separated from families because of deportation as we seek a comprehensive and just immigration policy.

Inspired by our founder, we are empowered to renew a church that still finds too many reasons to exclude by bringing to bear the inclusive vision of this Companionship of Empowerment. Too many are still told they are not welcome because of sexual orientation, gender, or ethnicity. The work of the resurrection, the work of this new creation, is to be ministers of reconciliation and renewal in our local communities and churches.

If this new creation is a fool's errand, then so be it. We are Easter Fools in the service of the Companionship of Empowerment. The work of the resurrection and the new creation begins in earnest. God's eternal April Fools' joke on death is ours to live. Will you join us? ✠



Dreaming With Your Eyes Wide Open

by Vicky Otto, *Precious Blood Companions* Director

Anyone who knows me is aware that I love musicals. It doesn't matter if they are old or new, I love them all. Recently I saw the movie musical "The Greatest Showman." There was a line in one of the songs that struck me. As P.T. Barnum begins to gather people for his circus he offers them this challenge, "... And you know, you can't go back again to the world that you were living in 'cause you're dreaming with your eyes wide open." As spring begins and we start the great celebration of Easter, it feels to me like we are crawling out from under our blankets where we have been all winter. We can begin to embrace the

world around us, see anew the world around us, and dream about all the possibilities available as we look to the future.

Over the last few years, the Companion Retreats have truly challenged Companions to reflect upon their own ministry and most especially their relationship with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Last year, Fr. Ben Berinti challenged the Companions to reflect upon what it means for them to be part of an apostolic society. He encouraged all the Companions

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to reflect and discern what their own apostolic works would be. This year, Fr. Joe Nassal challenged the Companions who participated in the days of reflection or retreats that were held across the country to begin to discern what it means to be a new creation.

At each retreat and day of reflection we listened to the song, “I Am for You” by Rory Cooney. The theme for the retreat and its message was clearly seen in one of the lines of the song, “There is a world that waits in the womb; There is a hope unborn God is bearing.” The Companions reflected about what it means to be part of God’s dream—especially if they were willing to serve the new life that waits in the womb. Recognizing that this new creation is something that God is bearing and that we are needed to make this new creation a reality allowed the Companions to begin to comprehend that the new creation was not something they are supposed to watch the community do. Rather, each of them is called to participate in making the new creation a reality. The sentiment in the song gave all those who participated a fresh idea of what “new creation” means. Opening up this dimension for the Companions sparked new energy and creativity regarding the role of the Companions in the new creation of the community. During each of these special times the energy in the room was palpable as participants began to dream about the new things that they would like to see Companions accomplish, and how they saw God’s dream being born anew in them as individuals and in our community.

The message of both these retreats continues to resonate with Companions, especially as the community explores the possibilities of what it means to be a new creation. Companions across the country are discerning and dreaming about the possibilities that may become reality. Companions continue to treasure the relationships that they have with the community and hope that the new creation allows everyone to deepen these relationships. They also dream of the possibility of working hand to hand with members in different apostolates around the country. They look forward to building a new creation where everyone’s gifts and talents are freely used for the benefit of all. The words of the song that I quoted at the beginning of this article are coming to life. Companions honor and respect all those that came before them in the Companion movement and

are grateful for all that they gave to the community, yet they have no desire to stay in the same place they were twenty-five years ago when Companions began in the community. The Companions of today eagerly await and look forward to greater opportunities to stand up, step out and speak clearly about the gift of Precious Blood spirituality.

Sometimes dreamers have a bad reputation in society. “You’ve got your head in the clouds.” “You need to be more realistic.” Yet dreamers, like prophets, help us see a vision of a new creation. Harriet Tubman wrote, “Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.” May this time of our new creation allow each of us to utilize all our passions and patience to truly “dream with our eyes wide open.” ✠

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diminishment, aging, e.g.). Resistance and denial are instinctive and perhaps universal, but ultimately not life-giving—like holding our breath.

The Kansas City and Cincinnati Provinces are engaged in a process of coming together to create something new. It is happening with some degree of excitement and hope, but also for many some fear and anxiety. If it is going to work, we will need to exhale, to let go.

As you read the articles in this issue, please take note of how each one speaks to “creating something new.” Fr. Joe Nassal writes of our call to join in the work of the resurrection and the new creation. Fr. Dave Kelly at PBMR describes their mission of creating a home, a community of hope. Precious Blood Volunteer Alia Sisson finds growth in the experience of self-denial. Companion Denise Murrow works to facilitate and bring to life a new ministry. Vicky Otto challenges all Companions to participate in making the new creation a reality.

Moving forward, risking, trying something new is a bit like taking a deep breath. Stopping because of fear and the inability to let go or grieve the loss, is forgetting to exhale. Once we do exhale, we can let go of what we are hanging onto, make room for something new, and take the next breath. ✠



Passion is the Strength of Ministry

by Denise Murrow, Precious Blood Resource Services Director

In the March 2017 edition of the *New Wine Press* I wrote an article titled “In Faith a New Ministry is Born.” In it I spoke of the spiritual inspiration I received during a retreat given by Father Ben Berinti in October of 2016. The retreat was about apostolic life and the “Four Irritatingly Beautiful Questions for Companions of the Precious Blood.” They were questions about where we were in our apostolic life, how we could improve our relationship with God, and how we could help our brothers and sisters in need. The last question included Isaiah 6:8, “Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I. Send me.’” I felt a strong calling to ask God to “send me” to bring life to a new social service ministry and embrace St. Gaspar’s vision to help the poor.

Over a year ago a very dedicated committee was formed whose members believed that providing charity to the poor and marginalized is an integral part of Precious Blood spirituality. They had enough faith in the ministry to devote their time and energy into its structure and organization. As a result of their passionate efforts, Precious Blood Resource Services (PBRS) emerged.

Precious Blood Resource Services is a ministry of accompaniment. We offer those in need assessments of their individual situations, provide them with referrals and resources and then accompany and walk them through a very tedious process. As a former city, county and state social service worker, I can attest to

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the fact that it is not easy for the public to understand the process they must go through in order to get the services they need and are entitled to.

I recently retired from the State of Missouri and am now the Director of Precious Blood Resource Services. An office has been provided to us in the rectory of St. James Parish at 3909 Harrison, Kansas City, Missouri. Bishop Sullivan Center, next door at 3936 Troost Avenue, has also provided us with space. We now have access to MAAKLink (Mid America Assistance Coalition) database, providing us with information from approximately 200 providers in the Kansas City area. We will be able to track services that have already been provided and then locate services that have not been provided. At this time, we have six volunteers. We are actively collaborating with other resource services in the community and we have already started to assess several clients in need.

The story of Jason is one example of the service we provide that can help those in need. Jason is a 71-year-old gentleman who came to us for assistance. He had been in prison for 20 years. When he was released in 2010, he started receiving Social Security benefits and had his own apartment. Unfortunately, a year ago he met a woman who began to financially exploit him and was spending his Social Security check. He was eventually evicted from his apartment and faced homelessness. He was living in a house with many other homeless and without electricity. Since Jason had a felony and an eviction on his record, finding housing seemed impossible. Most low-income apartments subsidized by the federal government do not accept as tenants those who have a felony. We collaborated with another social service agency that had found Jason a payee so that the woman could no longer take his money. We completed an assessment on Jason and found a local agency that had access to grants that could help people who had been incarcerated to find housing. They agreed to complete an emergency assessment on Jason. In the meantime, a homeless shelter nearby accepted Jason into their program and provided him with a bed and case management services until permanent housing could be found. If the shelter cannot attend to all his needs, the other local agency will be a secondary option for Jason. Jason told us that he had finally found some peace. We will continue to monitor Jason's progress in case he should need other services in the future.



On February 14th, a general email was sent out to members and Companions with an attached survey for anyone who would be interested in volunteering their gifts and talents to Precious Blood Resource Services. The volunteer categories range from assessing individuals, case management, data entry, making phone calls to providers, office work, gathering and collating resources. Although we are currently located in downtown Kansas City, volunteers can work from a convenient location for them or from home by making phone calls to providers or collecting resources. Training is being developed for those who want to be part of the ministry.

My passion continues for Precious Blood Resource Services and my vision is that it will branch out to other areas where Companion groups are located, enabling those communities to benefit from our services. Although the mustard seed has grown, it takes time, patience, strength and unity to bring the seed to blossom and give it life. I am confident that God will give me the strength to continue my journey with this ministry and spread Precious Blood spirituality. I turn to two scripture passages: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13) and "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Our new e-mail is pbrs@preciousbloodkc.org and the phone numbers are 816-548-6008 (office) and 816-499-2798 (cell). ☩



Martin Ehtler, Lota Ofodile, Alia Sisson and Tim Deveney at Alia's Confirmation

Liberty and Justice for All

by Alia Sisson, Precious Blood Volunteer

*"I practice the "highest" law in the "highest" court,
the law of charity in the court of heaven."
– Sr. Nirmala Joshi, M.C.*

As I gear up for the biggest test of my life, the Ohio bar exam, I find the above quote comforting. Not because if I fail then I can quip, "Oh, it's okay, I practice the law of charity in the court of heaven," but because it is a reminder of the ultimate truth: God's law. While I am honored and privileged to be a future lawyer, I pray that my vocation will not only keep a roof over my head, but also enable me to be an agent of charity through the legal system. While it is important to have a fulfilling career, my highest ambition is to be a conduit of the Holy Spirit to those whom I serve.

With a political science degree and three years of formal legal training, you could say I am a big proponent of "law and order." However, I cannot deny that we live in a country with a dark history in which some were—and still are—considered "more equal than

others" (in the prescient words of George Orwell). Even our language about certain groups of people betrays our true feelings. Depending on whether you call people "illegal aliens" or "undocumented immigrants," I can pretty much predict your views on immigration policy. Despite the distinctions drawn by U.S. law, I am reminded that under God's law we are all His children and worthy of safety, love, and respect. While it is important to follow the law, blind obedience to unjust laws does not serve the interest of justice for the human family.

In my placement through Precious Blood Volunteers, I assist the attorneys at Legal Aid in applying Missouri law to the facts of each individual's case. However, we also practice the law of charity—Legal Aid only helps those too poor to afford a lawyer. We receive hundreds of calls and referrals each week from people in desperate need of legal help with issues ranging from housing to child custody

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to immigration. It saddens me that so many people feel crushed by poverty and forgotten by politicians beholden to wealthy donors. We are many times their last hope for justice.

As Precious Blood Volunteers, we not only help the poor, we are the poor. Of course, there is the caveat that volunteers choose to live simply for a year, rather than endure a lifetime of unrelenting poverty by necessity. Nonetheless, this intentional pillar of the Precious Blood program is one its most wonderfully uncomfortable and growth-inducing aspects. I now understand why religious orders take vows of poverty. It is not a punishment; it is an opportunity to critically examine what we value and how few material things we actually need to be happy. It is truly a gift that shows every good thing we have is from God alone. In fact, most material comforts are merely an obstacle to holiness (iPhone, I'm looking at you).

As a child, thanks to my family, I never had to think about food, shelter, or clothing—they just appeared. Later, in college and law school, thanks to my good friend “Sallie Mae,” I was able to mindlessly shop when I was bored, perusing endless aisles of fluorescent lit products I soon felt I couldn't live without. I slowly amassed closets full of designer clothes, yet I still felt empty and restless. This undoubtedly first-world problem was nonetheless a true poverty, borne of the lack of a deep relationship with our Creator.

Now on my modest volunteer stipend, I no longer have the so-called “luxury” of mindless—and frankly egotistical—consumerism. I am happy with everything I can fit in two suitcases, and smile to realize it is still more than enough. Through this experience, I have learned that the fewer possessions I have, the more room I have to grow in love and charity. In the long run, self-denial is the road to freedom because we are freed of unhealthy attachments that separate us from God. Especially during Lent, I found myself called to reflect on these truths and learn them through experience.

As a completely unexpected side benefit of this life lesson, forced to become a less vapid person, I have picked up a hobby that is both free and incredibly liberating: running!

Beginning in October, a month after I arrived in Kansas City, I started to run basically on a whim. I didn't have a goal other than to run a mile without stopping. Soon I had conquered the 5k distance, and by January I ran a 10k race after a weeklong battle with the flu. Now I am training for my first half-marathon, which is coming up on April 14th. In September, I will conquer the full distance, 26.2 miles, at the Air Force Marathon in my hometown of Dayton, Ohio.

Beyond the physical and mental benefits of training, there is something profoundly inspirational about continuing to put one foot in front of the other despite pain and exhaustion. It's something Jesus did to the extreme during his passion, when he felt the loneliest and abandoned. It is something I see my clients do every day at Legal Aid. It something I still need to work on in my own incredibly privileged life.

As I meditated on Christ's passion throughout the waning days of Lent, I was reminded that in every seemingly hopeless situation, God is there waiting to comfort. Remaining optimistic despite fear and pain is something I am gradually learning with every client helped, every mile run, and every law outline studied. No matter the outcome, God is *semper fidelis* (always faithful). The true test is whether or not we as “the faithful” live up to that name.

Soon, God willing, I will be practicing law as an attorney. I will apply the laws of Ohio to assist clients with their legal needs. In this sense, I will be seeking individual justice. In the broader sense, with every case I will seek to reinforce the self-evident truth that *all* men and women are created equal.

Lest we forget, Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. Through his death and resurrection, he made it possible for everyone to be saved if they freely choose Him. As we witness and celebrate the Easter miracle in 2018, let us ask ourselves if we are living according to God's law as He has called us to do.

And what exactly does that look like? As always, the Gospel is a good place to start. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:36-39). †



Creating a Home in the Love of God

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

Relationships are hard. It takes work to maintain a healthy relationship—with God, your spouse, or even your children. It should be no surprise, then, that it also takes work to transform broken relationships into healthy relationships—creating a beloved community, a community of hope.

In reality, the work of reconciliation is counter-intuitive—rather than moving away from pain and hurt, you move toward it. You move into the pain and the hurt and stand in that muddled mess. It is not that we are seeking more pain in our lives, but rather that God lives in the suffering of his people. We are called to stand alongside those who are hurting.

We do a circle every Thursday at the only Catholic school in our area. It is a small school, serving many of the poor of our community. I cannot imagine any of the children paying much of a tuition. As our last circle concluded, a young girl handed a note to one of the staff. It was a long note, but the message was simple—she and her family of nine were recently evicted from their apartment. They were now living in a hotel—and not the Holiday Inn type of hotel.

Given all that we are already trying to deal with—other families who struggle to maintain a

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roof over their head, the violence and the daily impact of poverty—I have to admit that I was tempted to say, “What can we do?” However, in conversation with the principal of the school—a 78-year-old nun—we are working on a plan.

Reconciliation is a ministry that demands that we be willing to be stained by the blood of Christ—to touch the wounds like Thomas, to walk alongside the harmed on the road to Emmaus, or to stand at the foot of the cross. It is not an easy place to be. It is messy and at times very lonely. You want to say enough is enough!

The ministry of reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel. It demands that we go to the margins or stand in the breach and witness to God’s love. The margins can be the kid who sits in the classroom shunned by other students or the neighbor who never seems to come out of the house.

Whenever I go into the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center, I go to two places for sure: intake, which houses the recent arrivals, and segregation, which houses those who have been deemed “bad.” You never know what you will encounter—anger, fear, loneliness, or all of the above.

A young man who had just been brought into the Juvenile Detention Center asked if I would call his father. He wanted his father to know where he was. I assured him that his father knew, but he wasn’t convinced and so I agreed to call. Before I left the unit, he called out again from inside his cell. I approached and—with a look of desperation—he asked if I was really going to call. I assured him I would.

When I did call on my way home that night, the father was obviously relieved and overjoyed to hear that his son was ok. I could feel the relief in his voice to finally hear some word about his boy. He was extremely thankful. “I know you have much to do,” he said, “but that you took time to call means everything to me; you don’t know how much I wanted to hear some word from my boy.”

Nothing really changed in their situation; the young man still was held in the detention center

and the father was separated from the son he loved. But for that very brief moment their isolation from one another was interrupted.

The gospel writer John says that it is the love of God that will dispel the darkness. God’s love creates a home in which we reside.

I sat in court for Joe a young man from our Center. I had been in court with him many times before. He had no other family member there. As they brought him in, he glanced out over the gallery of waiting families and caught my eye, and for that brief moment he was not alone.

The sentence was 8½ years in prison. That sentence felt like an eternity to Joe. His lawyer walked over and said that Joe asked the judge if he could say goodbye to me. The judge allowed it and I approached the front of the courtroom, embraced Joe, and said that I would be there for him through the years. As Joe was being led back to lock up, he turned and thanked me for being there for him.

Our mission statement says that we are to be ambassadors of reconciliation. It is a mission to simply stand in the breach and witness to the power of God’s love to create in us a HOME! †

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**Let us serve God
with holy joy.**

- St. Gaspar del Bufalo



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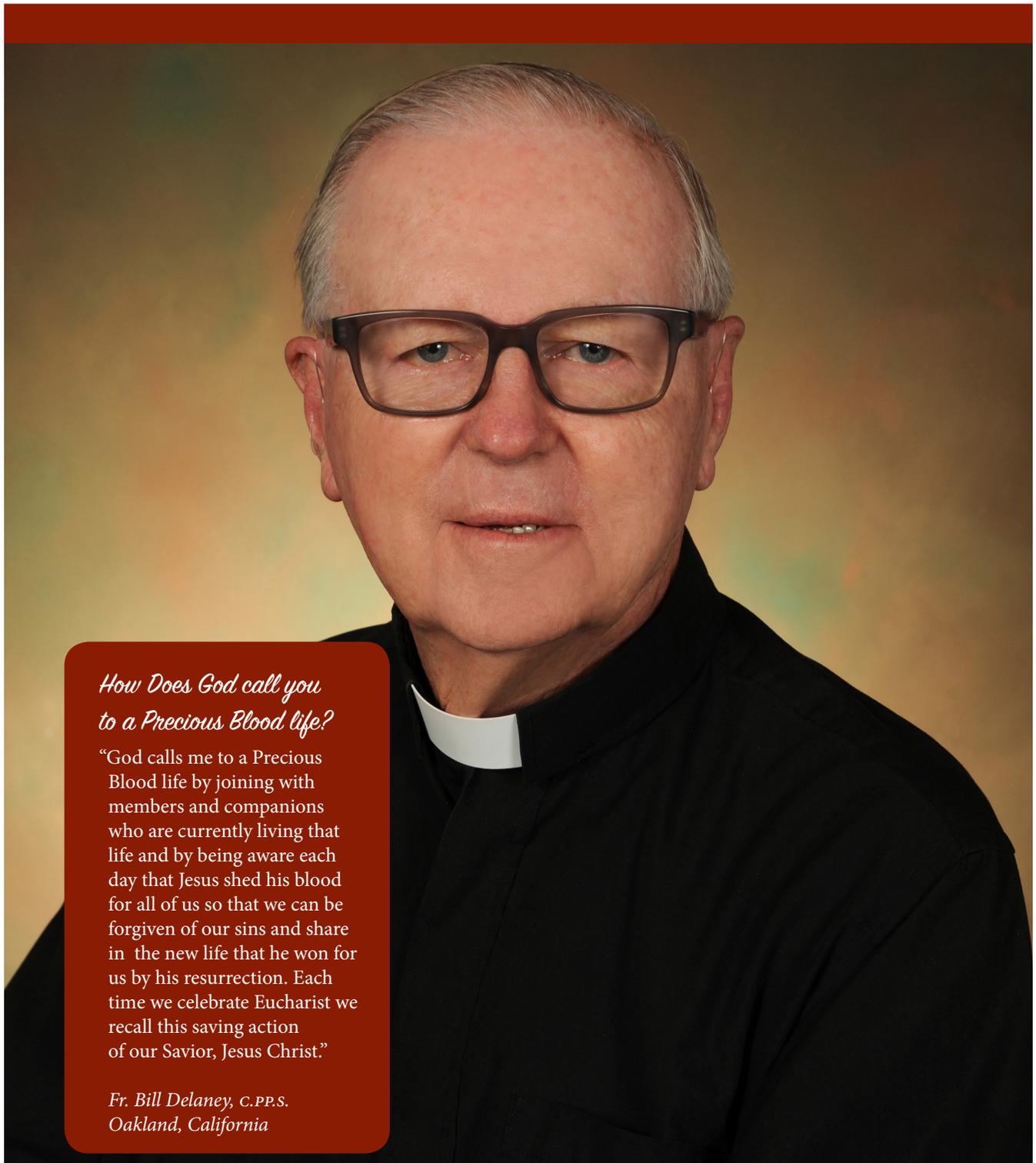
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Precious Blood Center

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Change Service Requested



*How Does God call you
to a Precious Blood life?*

“God calls me to a Precious Blood life by joining with members and companions who are currently living that life and by being aware each day that Jesus shed his blood for all of us so that we can be forgiven of our sins and share in the new life that he won for us by his resurrection. Each time we celebrate Eucharist we recall this saving action of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”

*Fr. Bill Delaney, C.P.P.S.
Oakland, California*