



THE NEW WINE PRESS

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

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THE MISSION OF MISSIONARIES

Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S.

What is our mission as a community? Can we state it in one sentence that someone unfamiliar with us would “get?” What type of ministry fits our mission and which kind doesn’t?

In July I attended the international meeting of C.P.P.S. members in Salzburg, Austria at which we discussed mission as it applies to our community. Fr. Steve Bevans, S.V.D., a professor at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, laid the groundwork for our discussions as he described how mission is central to our work as people of God.

He began by proposing that mission is the essence of the Trinity itself, evidenced by the Spirit being sent out to share with humanity the wonder of God’s love, especially through Jesus Christ. The Church receives this wonderful news and is commissioned to go out to all the world and proclaim the Good News. He then outlined the missionary activity in the early Church, especially how the first disciples went out to Jews and Gentiles alike to spread Jesus’ message. Much later the Church stated its mission in the documents *Ad Gentes*, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, and *Redemptoris Missio*.

In our small discussion group at the gathering we discussed how the mission of our community has changed over the years, but at the same time “going out” or being sent has always

been part of our identity. A reclaiming of this sense of “going out” is probably why we as provinces are more uniformly using the word “missionaries” in our title. Gaspar went out to the Roman hills to preach to the bandits. He went outside the confines of traditional parish work to preach missions and lead clergy retreats. Brunner’s mission was to accompany the German immigrants to this country in order to minister to their needs. Until recently we have seen our province’s mission as “going out” to minister where no one else wanted to go. It seems that we have always been able to describe our mission quite clearly and easily.



Participants in the recent international meeting on Mission in Salzburg included Frs. Jim Urbanic, Garry Richmeier, Lac Pham and Dien Truong from the Kansas City Province.

See Missionaries, continued on page 5...

LEADERSHIP NOTES

Common Ground or Battleground?

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

During the first years of the Cold War, fear of nuclear attack was part of the national consciousness. In 1961, the government began to designate certain public buildings as fallout shelters; some still bear the familiar black and yellow signs. Earlier, in the 1950s, those who could afford to do so built bomb shelters in their backyards and stocked them with food, water and survival supplies. Thousands were constructed. During a press interview, then President Eisenhower was asked if he planned to build one at the White House. He is said to have responded, “No, because I couldn’t afford to build a shelter large enough for all the people I love.”

Fear does ugly things to us. It makes us think of ourselves. It separates us from others, and excludes others from our circle. Fear whispers to us that there isn’t enough of anything to go around. As I wrote back in January 2008, “Fear...is crippling and harmful. It erodes the best part of our nature: the compassion which fuels our passion, and the generosity which does not allow for limits on that compassion.”

Fear not only does ugly things to us, it is also used by others to do ugly things and bring about ugly results. The health care “debate” over the past month is an example. Fueled and funded by for-profit insurance companies and the pharmaceutical industry, several organizations began to orchestrate protests at town hall meetings in order to stop reform in its tracks. They instructed people to do whatever they could in order to disrupt the discussions, including shouting down speakers, yelling anti-government slogans, and carrying signs filled with lies and racist depictions of the president. No more patriots, just hatriots.

What began with these phony demonstrators (called “astroturfers” by some, as opposed to “the grassroots”) soon spread to the general population, in great part by way of lies about the proposed bills on health care reform working their way through different committees of the congress. Town hall meetings in many places became louder and uglier still, and the media at first was all too happy to cover the angry, the negative and the crazies, while the decent folk who were quietly working to bring about change were drowned out and thus ignored. Intelligence, good sense and compassion were often absent.

Unfortunately, many good people who are misinformed, disinformed and ill-



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enough of anything to go around.”*

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Missionaries of the Precious Blood
Kansas City Province
www.kcprovince.org

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 re-founding. We accept and encourage unsolicited manuscripts and letters to the editor.

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informed succumb to fear and can't see beyond their own plate. Some politicians, with no apparent shame, are helping spread the falsehoods and taking advantage of the situation in order to further their own interests—which in some cases, by their own admission, include “bringing down” this administration instead of working together in any kind of good faith to bring about change. Bi-partisanship seems to be just a word these days, because it requires common ground—and our landscape has become a battleground.

Perhaps the ugliest and most reprehensible lie which has been told by some (and believed by many) is that under a government administered public option for health care, there would be so-called “death panels.” These groups would have the power to decide who gets care and who doesn't—particularly in regards to the elderly and critically ill of any age. In the popular—and distasteful—parlance of the day, they can “pull the plug on grandma.” End of life planning, living wills, conversations with doctors about options for care—all of these have been around for years. They are necessary, appropriate, and helpful. One of the bills included a provision that doctors be compensated for their time spent talking with patients and families about end of life care and decisions. Thus began the lie. Thousands of people still believe it.

That is not to say that “death panels” do not exist. Insurance companies are in the business of making money, not providing health care. Countless people with pre-existing conditions have been denied coverage. Others have been dropped by their insurance companies (often based on a technicality) after they got seriously ill. Many people have died because of these decisions. Being denied and being dropped are both legal under current law—and immoral. Someone is determining who is too big a risk and too much of a threat to the bottom line.

Back in the 1960s we had death panels, only they were called draft boards then. Today, in those states with capital punishment, they are called judges and juries. Death panels do exist, just not where the liars claim they do.

Our Precious Blood spirituality calls us to renounce our membership in any kind of death panel. We all people of life. Life panels, now there's something we can believe in. Some already exist, others need to be formed. Life panels are those groups who witness for the sacredness of life in front of abortion clinics, people who gather in vigil outside prison walls as someone is executed, crowds who demonstrate in opposition to war. Let's take it one

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logical step further and call it a life panel when folks gather in front of a for-profit health insurance office and protest the death panels that exist there.

In the book of Exodus, when Moses encounters the burning bush, he hears the divine voice speak, “Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” That voice still calls us to stand on holy ground—and recognize it when we find it.

While in Guatemala several years ago, I visited the Herman Pedro Institute in Antigua, which provides a home and care for hundreds of the destitute, rejected, severely handicapped, mentally ill, and often abandoned children of God. In the midst of these broken bodies and confused spirits, I talked with an employee named Veronica, who had worked there for 15 years, six days a week, 12 hour days. She had just returned from vacation and told me that she came back early, because “I think of these people all the time; I just can't wait to come back.” This lovely, compassionate woman added that she sees God in the grateful smiles of the residents—in some cases the only physical action they can accomplish. I stood on holy ground.

Just as with Moses, holy ground is wherever God meets us, wherever the divine voice says, “I have heard my people's cry,” wherever we meet one another with care and compassion, wherever we witness for life and push back on fear.

Battleground must become common ground. And when we come together on common ground we stand on holy ground. There is no need to build shelters in this ground. There is fallout, but it gives life.

Fr. Richard Bayuk, a member of the Province Leadership Team, is Provincial Treasurer and Director of Communications. On weekends he preaches for the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging.

ELEMENTS OF A C.P.P.S. THEOLOGY OF MISSION

International C.P.P.S. Mission Workshop Discussion Document

It is a mandate from the 2004 Extraordinary General Assembly that: The Moderator General and the General Council, in consultation with the Major Superiors, develop a plan for “mission” which would include:

- 1) A process for arriving at a common theology of mission.
- 2) A plan for the congregation where we should next expend our missionary efforts and develop a concrete plan.

In July 2009, the Moderator General and the General Council met with the Major Superiors and all unit directors, along with other selected representatives from the various units, for a Mission Workshop to begin a process that will respond to and fulfill this mandate. The process, which we anticipate will continue for some time, is to engage in a broad discussion and dialogue about a theology of mission which will reflect the history, charism and spirituality of our congregation. We wish to engage all of our members, with the participation of our Companions and Associates, in this dialogue.

A theology of mission has six essential elements: Witness and proclamation; Liturgy, prayer and contemplation; Justice, peace and the Integrity of Creation; Interreligious dialogue; Inculturation; and Reconciliation. [For an explanation of these elements see the presentation: *Themes and Questions in Missiology Today* by Stephen Bevans, S.V.D., posted on the generalate website with the other materials from the C.P.P.S. Mission Workshop 2009.]

As we begin to define a common C.P.P.S. theology of mission, those gathered at the mission workshop in Salzburg propose the following statements for reflection and discussion. These statements are not seen as a final statement of a C.P.P.S. theology of mission. Rather, it is our hope that these statements might assist the congregation to move towards a common understanding through an active dialogue about these statements in which they may be modified, or expanded, or rejected in favor of different expressions of our theology of mission.

Witness and proclamation

United in community and seduced by the Love of Christ who shed his Blood that we might have life in abundance, we commit ourselves to being truthful witnesses and proclaiming the prophetic word with passion.

Liturgy, prayer and contemplation

As Missionaries of the Precious Blood our mission flows from our prayer and contemplation. The liturgy of the Eucharist embodies the process of conversion and reconciliation that we are called to put into action in the world and with the people that we serve.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

The cry of the blood calls and sends us as Missionaries of the Precious Blood to participate actively in the work of justice, to restore peace and so to reconcile the human family, ourselves, and creation, so that we all can live together in our common home.

Interreligious dialogue

Affirming that all are one through the Blood of Christ, with a humble, receptive and non-judgmental attitude, and recognizing the inherent dignity of those who are “other,” the C.P.P.S. missionary creates the space for mutually enriching dialogue that promotes an understanding that allows all peoples to live together in harmony.

“United in community and seduced by the Love of Christ who shed his Blood that we might have life in abundance, we commit ourselves to being truthful witnesses and proclaiming the prophetic word with passion.”

Inculturation

Following the same attitude of Christ who emptied himself of his divinity and delivered himself to share our humanity, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood are present with respect and witness in concrete cultures, in order to discover and value the seeds of the Reign of God through accompaniment and dialogue, announcing the Good News and denouncing that which is contrary to the Reign of God.

Reconciliation

Contemplating the Blood of Christ as a source of reconciliation, as St. Paul writes: “...bringing those that are far off near” (Eph. 2), our charism calls us to be ambassadors of Christ for reconciliation and the healing of wounds at the personal, communal, social, ecclesial and political levels, taking into account the need for inculturation and dialogue.

Missionaries, continued from page 1...

But there was a consensus in our small discussion group in Salzburg that the mission of the provinces in the United States is not so clear today. As provinces our mission is no longer to go where no one else wants to go. On the contrary, we have spent much of our energy recently trying to stay in our chosen apostolates (mainly parishes) without giving them up. We've become rather comfortable and seem to have less desire to "go out," whatever that might look like. Individually we hopefully are "going out" by challenging ourselves to grow spiritually, ministerially, emotionally, relationally, and professionally, and are inviting the people of God to do the same. But how are we "going out" as a group?

"In a world where polarization and demonization of enemies seems to be the norm, speaking, ministering and living reconciliation is definitely "going out" to new territory. Reconciliation is a concept easily understood by people, and it is integral to our work and our spirituality."

"Proclamation of the Word for the renewal of the Church" has been proposed as a way to state our mission. It says something important, but it could describe anyone's ministerial activity, and so becomes too general to adequately describe our unique mission as a community. "Ministry to the Marginalized" has also been used to describe our mission. It is clear and is central to who we are as a community. But when we say that we can minister to the marginalized anywhere and in any ministry, we make it so general that it is not so helpful in guiding us in what we do. Other attempts to define our mission have included the ideas of the Bond of Charity or the Spirituality of the Precious Blood. These are unique to us as a community, but they are so unique that others have little immediate idea of what they mean regarding our mission.

One possibility we discussed in our small group was a mission of reconciliation. In a world where polarization and demonization of enemies seems to be the norm, speaking, ministering and living reconciliation is definitely "going out" to new territory. It is a concept easily understood by people, and it is integral to our work and our spirituality.

Granted, reconciliation is a part of the work of every religious community and can be done in any ministerial setting by anyone. If we were to claim reconciliation as our unique mission, we would have to demonstrate how it guides every one of our decisions

regarding ministries we choose, places we live, corporate statements we make, our use of finances, and other groups and organizations with which we collaborate. For example, if we



chose to staff a parish with reconciliation as our mission we would do so because that parish as a whole was especially in need of reconciliation for some reason. We would constantly be identifying the people and organizations that are polarized and would see those as appropriate places in which to minister. If that was our mission and our passion, we would soon become known as the reconciling, healing religious order, just as the Jesuits are well known for higher education and the School Sisters of Notre Dame are known for teaching in schools.

We may like having a mission that is more vague and general since that allows individuals to do whatever ministry fits them. But it doesn't help unite us in our different ministries, and it makes it difficult for people who might want to join us to get a clear idea of what we are about. It also makes it difficult for leadership because there is no clear mission on which to base decisions.

Perhaps it is time to be more clear and specific about the mission of a Missionary of the Precious Blood.

Fr. Garry Richmeier is a member of the Province Leadership Team, serves as sacramental minister at St. James Parish in Kansas City, MO., and has a counseling ministry out of St. Charles Parish in Gladstone, MO.

A FATHER'S LOVE

Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S.

"Hello?"

"Fr. Timothy?...Grumpy needs you."

"Um, I'll be right there."

Grumpy, aka Tony, was an older gentleman I had first met in the hospital a few months before. Tony had grown up Catholic but for whatever reasons had fallen away from the church. He had been diagnosed with lung cancer and was facing a long road ahead, but in a short time. He wanted to see a priest and make sure all was well with God.

During that first visit I met Tony and his wife Florida and his daughters. We visited and laughed and cried and celebrated the Sacrament of the Sick. I assured them of my prayers and left. After a few more months, his daughter called and asked if I was the priest that had visited her dad, because he wanted "that priest" back.

Tony's health was now declining. His last wish was to die at home surrounded by his loved ones. His family had been caring for him at home and it was getting to be a bit much. The doctor suggested Hospice. Tony decided it was time to call the priest again. "Sure, I have time, what if I come by later this evening around 6:30?" I went and sat with Tony and his family.

That evening I left there around 11:00 P.M. We had a great visit, sharing family stories. They shared a bit of "Grumpy" and how he got the nickname. I shared a story of "Sonny Boy" and how a parishioner had given me that nickname. (When she ended up in the emergency room and the family called me in the middle of the night and woke me up and I wasn't making any sense and didn't recognize her name—until they said "Sonny Boy.") I told Tony's family that if they ever had to call me, just say "Grumpy needs you," and I'll know—knowing that in a time of crisis, trying to make sense and communicate is sometimes hard to do.

For about a month, I visited weekly with Tony and his family. I brought him communion, and when he could receive he did. Those visits were more than just bringing communion, for I got to witness first hand his love for his family and them for each other. Love was expressed in the touch and holding hands. It was shown in the way of watching the clock and administering the next pain pill. It was evident the way of helping Tony in and out of his chair or his bed. It was a witness of living.

We had agreed that Tuesdays at 2:00 P.M. would be a good time to visit. The very first Tuesday I was to visit, I got sidetracked and didn't make it. Around 7:00 P.M. that night, the phone rang and the family asked if I was still coming by? Honestly, I had

forgotten. I said if it wasn't too late I would visit now. We agreed. I went into the church to get communion.

As I walked past the tabernacle to get the key, I noticed a man sitting there praying. I waved to say hello and walked on. After I got communion and was leaving, this man stopped



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me. He asked if I knew if a priest was around. When I told him who I was, he asked if I had a minute.

He shared with me a bit of his story and why he was there. He had recently changed jobs and was now in the area. For many months his prayer had centered on writing prayers. His wish was to share these prayers with others. He added that he had not felt like writing anything for a couple of months, but tonight got an urge to write something. He showed me the prayer he had just written. It was entitled "Flame of Hope."

I read the prayer, listened to his story and heard his wish to share this prayer with others.

I smiled in amazement as I read the prayer, because I was scheduled to lead prayer the following morning for the teachers' workshop. The religious theme for this school year is "Journey of Hope." I had been looking for something like this. Here it was from this man. I asked him if I could have a copy and told him about the teachers. Not only did he get his wish to share this prayer with others, but I got my prayer. Had I not met Tony, had I not agreed to visit with him, had I not forgotten my promise, I would not have been in the church when I was. Coincidence? Maybe.

On the night Grumpy died, I returned a call from a friend of mine who had left a message earlier. When asked what I had been doing, I told her Grumpy had passed. "Grumpy?" she asked. And so I told her the story. I ended by saying this funeral will be difficult. "Why?" she asked, "Because he was special." "Why special?" "I don't know why, other than a father's love."

In my ministry at St. James Parish, I have had many experiences that I treasure. Some have been a result of being in the right place at the right time. I have heard people's stories of past hurts and what they were told by someone in the church. I've listened, I've laughed, I've cried, and I have been present.

How often have I heard the saying, "The Cry of the Blood." Many times it has been connected with some form of violence. I have heard others question, "What about the life-giving force of the blood?" I have started to realize that myself. In walking with others in their faith journey, in hearing the stories of others, it is listening to the cry of the blood. Not just as a result of some hurt, but as a way of giving life, living life. It is reconciliation, it is promise, it is hope. It is a father's love.

Fr. Timothy Armbruster is the associate pastor at St. James Parish in Liberty, MO.



CLEAN SWEEP

You claim
your destiny draws you
to mountaintops
and center stage celebrations,
so you're excused from what bores you,
from doing what isn't fun.

So is my destiny
dwelling in darkened valleys
and empty theaters,
sweeping up confetti
after your parade passes me by?

HIDE AND SEEK

If I hide,
will you seek?
Will you close your eyes
and count to ten?
Then will you do it again?

It was a surprise
last week
that you went inside
long before I charged the tree
only to find you'd made a fool of me.

THE BIG BLACK HOUND

Hour after hour
round the base of the tower
the big black hound
ran round and round
looking for a way in.

It was along about then
I began wondering about
who'd do what to find a way out.

It was then I found
I could chase the hound
down the hill
where he's running still
and always will,
as long as I stay clear
about not feeding my fear,

THE GLORIOUS WALK

Cayetana Maristela

I walked the three miles this morning, from Conception to Clyde. It was just a walk. I wanted to buy poetry books that one of the sisters published. There were lots of singing birds. I was thinking there may be frogs too, but the only frogs I saw were dead frogs. I thought of frog legs that my grandmother had cooked in vinegar and soy sauce. Nothing holy about that thought.

I saw some asparagus that had gone to seed. Too bad I hadn't walked the road a month or so before. I would have picked those asparagus and steamed them. If they had been on the tough side, I would have added cream and made asparagus soup. Either way healthy and delicious.

Hill over hill I walked. I hadn't brought my cell phone because I was on retreat. When I saw the tower at Clyde, I decided I'd better start my daily rosary. Today is Saturday, therefore, the glorious mysteries.

The first glorious mystery, the Resurrection. John the Beloved came from behind, running. Then he stopped and waited for me to catch up. I told him, "You waited for Peter too. Thanks for waiting. You're really nice to the elderly." He laughed.

I asked him if he was really Jesus' best friend. He said that was a misconception. Jesus loved all of them, no favoritism. "I bet," I muttered.

"No really, that's true," John continued. "I was the one enamored by Him. If you have seen Him look at you, you know He loves you. His words were spoken with such authority it would have been foolish not to listen." I had to agree with him.

I asked, "So when He was crucified and buried, did you really believe that He would rise?"

John replied, "I had a hard time believing, but I wanted to believe. When the tomb was empty, I knew without a doubt."

The second glorious mystery, the Ascension. This time two angels came into step with me. "It was a day almost like today when we told those apostles to quit looking up," one of them said.

"What?" I asked.

One of them, the taller of the two, said, "You know, cloudy and cool. It'd be several days yet before the sun would break out."

The other one began moving her head left to right and back again, said, "Who knows how long they'd have stayed there if we hadn't come. They acted like they were orphaned kittens. Jesus told them, 'I will not leave you orphans; I will send the paraclete.'"

The other responded, "Yeah, they were like people who had no sense."

I said, "You guys are too harsh. You've never had to let someone go, someone you love?"

The two stopped and looked me in the eye. The taller one continued, "Yes, of course. When He came to be born, we let Him go and He lived among you for thirty-three years." I took a big gulp and felt guilty.

The shorter one continued, "The point is the disciples had forgotten. He said, 'I will be with you till the end of the ages.'"

The third glorious mystery, the Coming of the Holy Spirit. Mary herself walked beside me.

She had her trademark blue shawl around her. I realized I was still cold, after almost three miles of walking. Still I was actually grateful for the clouds because I would have been miserable if it had been sunny.

Mary laughed and animatedly began, "We were no longer cold after the Spirit came. It was as though our hearts were afire. We couldn't wait to proclaim His message. You should have been there. People from all over the world understood the apostles. There was only one explanation for all of that. But the night before was a different story. Actually after He returned to Abba was one of the most challenging times. We wanted to tell people, but something held us back."

Then Mary's voice became wistful, as she continued, "Of course nothing can compare to that Good Friday." She stopped briefly and



continued. "It was hard not having my Son. After the Resurrection we were together again for forty days. It was like the good old days, but better because we knew He had already suffered and died, and was with us again."

When Mary was gone, I stopped walking and took a deep breath. It came to me that Mary never stopped talking! Where did all those stories of quiet, demure Mary come from? There was definitely no stopping her when the Spirit dwelt in her heart.

The fourth glorious mystery, the Assumption. John returned. "You're getting closer."

"I know, one foot in front of the other."

"I heard Mom tell you about the heartbreak of Good Friday."

I smiled when John called Mary 'Mom.' "Well, she was. Remember when Jesus was on the cross? That was a gift not just to me, but for all of us. My own mother had died when I was born. Different aunties and neighbor women helped to raise me, but I kept wanting my own mother. The day Jesus said, 'Here is your mother.' was one of the best days of my life.

"The day Mom died wasn't easy either. She was getting weaker; she always went with me or one of the disciples when we shared Jesus' story. She was our number one witness to the Good News. She wasn't very much older than you are now, but in those days, that's over the hill."

I laughed, "Some days I feel 'over the hill.'"

"Funny! Well, as I was saying, the day Mom died she tried to get up out of bed to make breakfast like always. I was already outside getting water to sweep the front steps when I heard a shattering noise. I ran inside and I saw chards of a broken pot around her feet. I led her back to bed. By the time she was settled, neighbor women had gathered. I held her hand as we prayed. Talk about a peaceful death. We were sure Abba, Jesus, and abba Joseph were all there to welcome her home. When she breathed her last, she was gone. The only thing left was a slight curved impression in the bed that let us know she had been there."

The last glorious mystery, the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin as Queen of Heaven and Earth. "Remember when you thought you were just going for a walk? This was more than just a walk. I know you always try to pray when you walk to the park or around the neighborhood, but not today. June 13, 2009. Pilgrimage with a capital P!

"This morning you welcomed my messengers, you welcomed my brother John, and you welcomed my mother. You're living



hospitality. You didn't just learn that from the Benedictines. You had it in you all along.

"My mother is with us in heaven, body and soul, not because it was her reward, even as some of the religious authorities have said. We want all of you here. Remember when I said, 'My mother and brothers and sisters are those who listen to Abba's words and see to their fulfillment'?"

"We'll wait for you. Pass the word."

Cayetana Maristela lives in St. Joseph, MO and works as an ELL (English Language Learners) teacher at Indian Creek Elementary in Kansas City, MO. As part of her course work towards a graduate certificate in writing from Missouri Western, she took part in a Writing Retreat at Conception Abbey in June, during which she wrote this article. Companion Tom Pankiewicz also participated, and he suggested that she submit this to us for publication.

HOPE AND HEALING

Maria Bain

On behalf of Hope and Healing Ministries, I would like to express my joy and gratitude for your generous support of the Rachel's Vineyard retreats we offer. This gift is providing women and men an opportunity to renew their faith in God and heal emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually from the trauma of abortion.

It is difficult to describe the transformation that takes place on these retreats, so I will express my sincere appreciation by sharing my story. I am one of thirteen children, raised by two outstanding parents. I grew up in a strict but loving Catholic family. We went to church every Sunday, prayed the rosary together every night, and went to confession every other Saturday. My mom started a chapter of Right to Life in our area. I can remember as a child praying in front of an abortion clinic that was down the street from my house.

As I grew older I noticed that I wasn't able to do what other kids at school could do. My parents would check the local Catholic newspaper to see what movies were appropriate before I could go with my friends. When I was a senior in high school, I wanted to go to a friend's house after prom to watch movies with other couples. My dad called their parents to see what movie we were watching and to make sure the parents would be there chaperoning. All of this was very embarrassing for me. I can remember feeling like my parents didn't understand.

It wasn't too long after prom that I went away to college. I went to a state school and what I found there I wasn't prepared for: staying out late at night, going to parties and skipping class. I found freedom—or so I thought. It only took one wrong decision and then one sin turned into another and pretty soon I didn't bother going to church anymore. All of this sin turned my soul dark. I was living but my soul was dead.

When I was 21 years old I chose to abort my child. I went from being a kind, outgoing girl to someone I couldn't recognize anymore. I knew right from wrong and I chose wrong! No one forced me, my parents didn't even know.



“It is our desire to go into the dark places of human pain and bring Christ’s light, hope and healing... Each participant has faced the death of their soul, united their pain with Christ’s suffering and shared in his resurrection by being forgiven and starting over.”

The day my baby died I realized I had died too. I was so sorry, but I couldn't take back what I had just done. I went to confession and told God that I was sorry, but somehow I couldn't forgive myself. It took many years after my abortion to start becoming who God had created me to be.

I was asked to go on a Rachel's Vineyard retreat in order to bring post-abortive healing to others. At that time I can remember thinking that I would go but that I didn't really need anything out of it. I would just bring it back for others. God had another plan. “My thoughts” says the Lord, “are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways and thoughts above yours” (Is 55:8-9).

That weekend God healed me in ways I didn't know I needed. The weekend turned out to be a most wonderful gift from God. There is no way I could have imagined the outcome of this retreat. I witnessed broken, wounded women and men transform before my very eyes. They were healed spiritually by the divine physician.

The women and men are your every day nurses, doctors, teachers, anyone—maybe even the mom or dad next door. The Holy Spirit stripped away our social status. It didn't matter what color we were, where we worked, what we looked like, or how much money we made. Each of us was left standing in front of each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. I left the retreat truly knowing what it means to be Christ to one another.

Recently I told my two children about their sister Mary Elizabeth. We cried. It was one of the hardest things I have ever done. I had to answer tough questions like why Mary? Why not me? Why did you do it? I told my children that I was

so sorry and that God had forgiven me. I told them the good news: that there is no unforgivable sin. When you are truly sorry God will always let you start over on a clean piece of paper. We talked about the pain and suffering of losing Mary and uniting that suffering with Jesus on the cross and how Jesus let me share in his resurrection by forgiving me and letting me start over.

Finally I know what it means to have true freedom. To open up and let other people know my sin of abortion and the pain, the guilt, and the grief that it caused. I can also shine light, hope and mercy into the dark night of human pain experienced by parents and families who have lost a child to abortion. This is my deepest darkest secret and yet Jesus makes all things new! I thought I had found freedom in college but what I discovered is that I had become a slave to sin.

I am like the woman who is hemorrhaging and touches Jesus' cloak. I am like the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. These stories in the Bible give me hope, because Jesus loves these women and I know he loves me too!

I want to end my story in thanksgiving to God—for loving me, for treating me like the prodigal son (daughter). When I was sorry you didn't yell at me or shame me. You ran down the road, hugged me, and lifted me up.

In 2001 Pope John Paul II told the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, "Your congregation from the beginning understood the importance of the Lord's words: *Duc in altum!* ("Set out in deep water" Lk 5:4)... Go where others cannot or will not go and undertake missions which seem to hold little hope of success. I ask you to continue your efforts to build a civilization of life..."

This statement embodies the mission of Hope and Healing Ministries. It is our desire to go into the dark places of human pain and bring Christ's light, hope and healing. We experience the Pascal Mystery where in dying we are born to eternal life. Each participant has faced the death of their soul, united their pain with Christ's suffering and shared in his resurrection by being forgiven and starting over. It is our ultimate goal to build a civilization of life by reclaiming each person's dignity.

Thank you for planting a "seed of new life" into human soil. Thank you for being an instrument of the holy Spirit in the growth of this seed to bear the fruit of "wholeness" in the women and men we serve.

Maria Bain is the Founder and Executive Director of Hope and Healing Ministries in Davenport IA. This ministry was one of the recipients of the 2009 Human Development Fund Grants from the Kansas City Province.



HEALTH CARE REFORM: DEBATING THE OBAMA PLAN

Thomas A. Welk, C.P.P.S.

The only item that is true in the above is the author attributed to this article. I am the source for the following article. After that, things are up for grabs.

First, the discussion going on at present is not about Health Care Reform as such, but Health Care Reimbursement Reform. Second, this discussion is definitely not a debate, but in many instances a shouting match. And, finally, there is no “Obama Plan.” The only plans on the table are the ones being proposed by the Congress (three in the House and two in the Senate), with input from the Obama administration.

Reform of the entire health care system, both in the way services are delivered and how these services are reimbursed, is definitely needed. As is readily acknowledged, neither our economy nor many of our fellow women and men who are being denied care can survive with continuing the status quo.

The two key aspects that must be addressed are affordability and accessibility. These two elements are two heads on the same beast. Many in our society (almost invariably due to circumstances beyond their control) do not have access to even basic health care because they simply can't afford it. These individuals either do not have insurance or are underinsured. More often than not they are fully employed at workplaces that do not offer health care benefits.

Acknowledging the need for reform is one thing; accomplishing it is getting to be quite a challenge. Private, for-profit insurance companies stand to lose significant dollars with any reimbursement reform which would include a public option—such as is available to a majority in this country through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and other government run programs.

Since most people have not read HR 3200, those who are opposed to any reform have been having a field day disseminating distortions of this bill, which has been joined to two other versions passed in July. Reform opponents are using various scare tactics. The most well known is the misrepresentation of Sec. 1233, which addresses Advance Care Planning Consultation.

There is nothing in this section which is complicated or

difficult to understand. It is straightforward: doctors will get paid for having a conversation regarding advance directives, end-of-life decision-making and hospice services. There is no mention of death panels, euthanasia or pulling the plug on grandma.

The 1990 Patient Self-Determination Act already requires health care facilities and professionals to have conversations about advance directives. Doctors objected to being included in this requirement because there was no opportunity for them to get paid for having this conversation. Those involved in hospice

“I believe Jesus had a word for those who take advantage of the “little ones.” A millstone should be tied around their necks and they be thrown into the sea. The “little ones” are not just those young in age or short in stature. They include all those who are vulnerable, be that due to lack of information, age (young or old), illness or economic conditions. Too many of our “little ones” are being left behind when it comes to health care. Reform can't come soon enough for them.”



care have long advocated strongly for doctors to have this conversation.

Another scare tactic being employed is on the question of abortion. Much of the discussion centers around the issue of funding in the

proposed reform plans. The difficult question to resolve is: Which will reduce the number of abortions? The present system which limits healthcare access to 48 million generally poor, uninsured people? Or reform which will enable them to get the care needed to carry a pregnancy to term and the ability to get good care for the child after birth?

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops state in *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*: “The

“The first right of the human person, the right to life, entails a right to means for the proper development of life, such as adequate health care.”

first right of the human person, the right to life, entails a right to means for the proper development of life, such as adequate health care.” In my opening comments I stated that the present discussion is not really about health care reform. “Katie bar the door” when we begin the debate about actually reforming health care. How do we even begin to control health care costs? Our present system is geared toward quantity, not quality. Medical practitioners by and large get paid for the number of procedures performed, rather than good outcomes. Be forewarned about what will happen when we do get around to this discussion.

As I sum up my thoughts about the furor surrounding this national “debate,” I find there are three categories of people involved: 1) The simply ignorant. They don’t know the facts, and are genuinely confused. Getting good, sound information serves them well. 2) The willfully ignorant. These are individuals who don’t know, and they really don’t want to know. “My mind is made up, don’t try to confuse me with any facts,” sums up their attitude. “Stupid” is the word that describes this category. 3) The maliciously involved. This group is comprised of those who have vested interests in the present system. They know what needs to be done and what is being proposed. Changes will dramatically affect their greedy bottom line. To keep changes from happening they are willing to distort, misrepresent and simply lie. What is especially malicious about this latter group is their taking advantage of the first group, the simply ignorant.

I believe Jesus had a word for those who take advantage of the “little ones.” A millstone should be tied around their necks and they be thrown into the sea. The “little ones” are not just those young in age or short in stature. They include all those who are vulnerable, be that due to lack of information, age (young or old), illness or economic conditions. Too many of our “little ones” are being left behind when it comes to health care. Reform can’t come soon enough for them.

Fr. Tom Welk is the director of pastoral care and professional education at Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice in Wichita, KS.

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We invite you to visit our website where you will find back issues of *The New Wine Press* as well as our weekly newsletter, *The Weekly Wine Press*, and the latest issue of *The Wine Cellar*.

VOCATIONS OFFICE

Growing up in Northern Ohio on a small 40 acre farm has left me many memories that I will always treasure. We had a dog, many cats, a few cows, lots of chickens, ducks, and occasionally other animals or birds throughout my growing up years. One thing we had every year was a big garden. Being the youngest of 13 children had some advantages and some disadvantages, but I now thank God for all that happened during those years. It has helped me to be who I am today.

As the summer comes to an end, I think back to that garden. It had to be planted every year, fertilized, watered some years, and weeded continuously. We sowed abundantly. I think of this today in relation to vocation ministry. We are called to sow abundantly even though we may not see the harvest as quickly as we do in a garden.

Many times people do not act on their vocation until they are young adults and even older. The first inclination about a vocation may be traced back to their childhood or adolescence. One may or may not know when the seed was first planted, but one can usually remember one's first inclination about a vocation.

For a vocation to grow, it needs things similar to what a garden needs: good soil, water, and sun. When a garden receives these, not only do the seeds that one planted grow, but weeds also grow in the garden. The seeds and the weeds are both after the same things in the garden: the nutrients in the soil, the water and the sun.

I thought of this especially on the weekend of August 9—the 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time—when I read the 2nd reading in preparation for preaching. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians states: "Get rid of all bitterness, fury, anger, harsh words, slander, and malice of every kind. In place of these be kind to one another, compassionate, and mutually forgiving just as God has forgiven you in Christ" (Eph. 4:31-32). We are called to get rid of the weeds so that we can allow the plant to produce good fruit.

Apply this to our vocation ministry. How do we nourish a vocation seed, and what are some of

the weeds that can discourage a vocation? Encouraging and nourishing can include:

- Living a joy-filled existence
- Serving God and the people of God
- Caring for the poor, needy and marginalized
- Caring and praying for each other
- Sharing meals, movies, ballgames, or other things together
- Having a reverence and love for the Eucharist
- Being people of prayer
- Trying to do God's will by living the Gospel message
- Having a sense of welcome and hospitality
- Being open and willing to listen to people
- Being in contact with the "real" life



How Does Your Garden Grow?

Fr. Joe Miller, C.P.P.S.

A candidate will ideally see many of these qualities in our community. This can lead to a desire to be a part of that community, which can help them grow and help us become a better community.

There are also things that can discourage someone from considering our community as a way of life for them. These might include:

- Public unhappiness with the community and the Church
- Acting or looking tired and frustrated most of the time with life
- Being too busy to visit with people or listen to people
- Living in isolation with little or nothing to do with community
- Speaking in a negative way about others in community
- Seemingly not to value prayer and the Eucharist
- Making fun of people especially the poor and marginalized

I share these with you to help us realize that others are watching us. To be the community that God calls us to be takes continuous work—just like a garden. In a garden, the weeds can overshadow the produce of the garden, or the produce fails to do

See Garden, continued on page 18...

ANCESTRAL GRACE—PART II

Mark Miller, C.P.P.S.

As I was reading this book *Ancestral Grace*, I could not help but think of one of our great missionaries, Fr. Don Green. He had a great admiration and appreciation for Teilhard de Chardin and he spoke with great enthusiasm about the theology of mathematics, of numbers. For Fr. Don, there was no contradiction between our Christian beliefs and the scientific theory of evolution. Everything was leading to the Omega Point.

The second part of *Ancestral Grace* speaks of Jesus as the disciple of Ancestral Grace and the archetypal human who reclaims the dream of the original blessing. Author Diarmuid O’Murchu enumerates a series of prayerful statements to describe the reclaiming of this dream in the person of Jesus:

- Blessed are we as cherished earthlings of God’s wonderful creation.
- Blessed are we whose incarnational humanity has been affirmed from the beginning of our evolutionary story.
- Blessed are we who have been graced to embrace the unfolding paradox of creation in the unceasing process of birth-death-rebirth.
- Blessed are we with creativity and an enormous capacity for innovation, contributing to the building up of God’s reign on earth.
- Blessed are we who are forgiven by our large-hearted God for the times when we got things badly wrong.
- Blessed are we because in the fullness of time Jesus evolves as the one who affirms and confirms all we have achieved in our evolutionary story.
- Blessed are we as co-creators, called to build up on earth the New Reign of God, committed to right relating in the name of love and justice.
- Blessed are we because Jesus shares our sufferings, affirms our hopes, and liberates our potential for future growth.
- Blessed are we who have inherited open-ended parables, stories of a dangerously empowering memory of inclusive liberation.
- Blessed are we as custodians of the open table, symbol of



creation’s abundant resources, from which no one is ever to be excluded.

- Blessed are we because Jesus models life as a Spirit-filled being, the evolutionary destiny to which we are all called.
- Blessed are we as the body of Christ today, challenged never to betray the great story and to tell it afresh in each successive generation.

This relationship between humankind and nature is one which has also been addressed in Pope Benedict’s encyclical, *Caritas et Veritate*. Here the Pope speaks of our relationship to the natural environment: “At the same time we must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they

“Children and young people grow toward that which they desire to become, that which life wishes them to become. The future is their primary driving force. And where the future is weak due to poverty, illness, etc., then growth and lethargy sets in more forcefully.”

too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it. This means being committed to making joint decisions ‘after pondering responsibly the road to be taken, decisions aimed at strengthening that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying.’”

This past July, Pope Benedict, in his reflection on the *Letter of St. Paul to the Romans*, described the world itself as becoming a form of living worship: “It’s the great vision that the late Teilhard de Chardin also had: At the end we will have a true cosmic liturgy, where the cosmos becomes a living host.”

See *Grace*, continued on page 18...



Artisans for Peace

Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S.

“Be careful and don’t let them kids go on the other side, they’ll shoot them over there.” That was the warning from a resident on one side of the viaduct, the place we had chosen to paint a mural of peace. By his warning, the need was obvious. In fact, the evening before, there had been a “shoot out” between some of the rival gangs at that very spot.



We speak about peace and non-violence all the time, yet violence is present all around us. It is not just the obvious violence—shootings and gang activity—it is the violence of racism and poverty as well. Gandhi said that the greatest form of violence is poverty. A report recently came out that said that virtually no child in our community, even those doing fairly well in high school, is ready for college. Most of these youth do not graduate from high school.

This summer we decided to paint murals of peace in our community. The youth and the families involved have taken on the name “Artisans for Peace.” There are two groups involved, the youth themselves who come from a number of gangs and ethnicities and some of the mothers from the community who have formed their own group, “Mothers for Peace.” These mothers have been gathering at Precious Blood Center for over a year now. The goal of the “Mothers for Peace” is to support one another as mothers and grandmothers in the community and to work to make a difference for the children—that they have a safe place in which to grow up.

The mural is a symbol of what we are about and who we hope to become. In the midst of violence, we seek to build peace. It is that simple, yet that difficult. Some say that it will never happen. Others grow tired of the struggle and opt to live with it or move away. Many of us continue to try to find ways to make a difference.

The problem is immense. How do we work for reconciliation in a community that sees and experiences so much violence? How do we encourage our youth to work hard for a better life, when they question whether they will live beyond their teenage years?

“Our families are torn by violence. Our communities are destroyed by violence. Our faith is tested by violence. We have an obligation to respond.” That is what the U.S. Catholic Bishops said in a pastoral letter in 1994. They went on to say that “violence—in our homes, our schools and streets, our nation and world—is destroying the lives, dignity, and hopes of millions of our sisters and brothers. Fear of violence is paralyzing and polarizing our communities.”

“Our mural is more than just a painting; it is an act of coming together—African American and Latino, rival gang members, young and old—all in an effort to mark our community with symbols of peace, and then to live that peace.”

I recently took a class in ritual and peacebuilding. Some of the reading for the class spoke of the need to have symbols that speak to real lived experience of the people. Within a community plagued by violence and by symbols of violence and distrust, gang graffiti, physical

See *Artisans*, continued on page 19...

The Amici Circle: A Call to More

Denny Kinderman, C.P.P.S.

Not all the circles we keep are with at-risk youth. Yet each circle has an element of risk. In the gathering of any group, a circle has the potential to bring about deeper insight or more satisfying results or a call to something new. And circles aren't just for the incarcerated. Some people have told me they thought that circles are only for youth in trouble or in the juvenile detention center.

Yesterday a group of adults gathered in circle here at Precious Blood Center to share parting words of wisdom and tell stories as a fitting way to wish a co-worker well as she leaves soon to begin living in Australia. Circles are for any group willing to so gather, even when they don't know what a circle is.

A circle was held July 31st at the Maria Stein Spiritual Center with Amici ordinandi and their wives and three C.P.P.S.

The PBMR was pleased to accept an invitation to keep a circle with some of the Amici. Again, for some it wasn't clear just what they were consenting to do. Joe Hanish and Dennis Keller invited Amici who had been ordained to sit in a circle for a few hours. Twenty, including wives, decided to give it a try.

Because of the confidentiality of the circle all agreed at the end on what it would be good to report as general knowledge for everyone. So the Amici circle would like to say: "we have re-discovered that the community is part of us and that can't be undone."

A common thread in circles is relationship. Relationships come with a seal, not unlike a stamp on one's hand to guarantee reentry when leaving a paid event. We reenter relationships at reunions or casual encounters or out of necessity or need. Reentry can pick up where it left off, for better or for worse.

An experience common in every circle is our coming together in a good way as human beings. This Amici circle proved to be "a time to be who we are and to be proud of it, and to continue to live who we are." In his book *The Moral Imagination*, John Paul Lederach speaks of "voicewalkers" who are "dwellers on the threshold." A voicewalker walks through life in touch with his or her voice. We would say one who walks one's talk, and from that place he or she gives voice to others. It is hoped future circles will continue giving voice to further clarify what happens when a bond of community "can't be undone."

"Pride in our previous experiences in community," the Amici

circle agreed to make known, "and gratitude for what that has done for us and what that evolved into now and will in the future. We are hopeful for the future because of it." The circle surfaced the synergetic belief in the working together of community and Amici bringing about something greater than the sum of their individual capabilities or results. But that working together is complicated by physical distance and structural indecision. The synergetic reality is yet to be tapped in a spirit of collaboration.

After many years of living and working together in the seminary and in ministry, relationships were being formed in the manner of living a bond of charity, the basis for community. And now, years later, something more than mere biennial reunions is stirring. Coming back to a place that was for a while home, where lessons were learned in the C.P.P.S. style, is about something more than what once was.

"Amici is not just a reunion of former members. Amici are because they need to be and because the community needs Amici to be."

In *Amistad* we read that if one can summon the wisdom and strength of one's ancestors, then they have never left. And the strength and wisdom they fathered and mothered, inspired and nurtured will come into play, and come to one's aid. So then we might say, who we are is who they were.

Let me as circle keeper make this observation. Though what is said in the circle stays in the circle, the Amici circle voices an insight for us all. Amici is not just a reunion of former members. Amici are because they need to be and because the community needs Amici to be. Let us circle together to find what John Paul Lederach calls "that voice that sustains and makes change possible...the capacity to risk."

Fr. Denny Kinderman is on the staff of Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago.

Garden, continued from page 14...

as well as it could because the nutrients are being taken out of the soil by the weeds. It is important to daily nourish our vocation, even when we do not think people are looking or listening.

A true vocation is a call from God that was heard and responded to by an individual. A vocation grows and deepens with time, just as a garden grows and is cared for. Wouldn't it be great for people who see our community to recognize our charism and say: "See how they love one another"?

I thank God for my experiences growing up on the farm, and would not trade them for anything. I thank God also for the gift of our community and I treasure my experiences as a member of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. I continue to grow, and I continue to pray that I can be a witness who will encourage others to consider our community as an option for them.

May the "Bond of Charity" truly be obvious and grow in our Precious Blood community.

Let us pray for vocations.

Fr. Joe Miller is the Director of Vocations for the Kansas City Province.

Grace, continued from page 15...

The latest issue of *The Wine Cellar* speaks of a new creation. This new creation will not come about by remembering the past but by living the promise in the future. Is this what Jesus was referring to when he said, "unless we become like little children, we cannot enter the Kingdom of God"? Children and young people grow toward that which they desire to become, that which life wishes them to become. The future is their primary driving force. And where the future is weak due to poverty, illness, etc., then growth and lethargy sets in more forcefully.

O'Murchu would say that the future, the Omega Point, is to be our constant driving force. When the future is prominent in our growth process, then death is not seen as something to be avoided at all cost, but something to be welcomed because it becomes the doorway into the future. Death is the doorway into that "new creation," just as childhood yields to adolescence which yields to adulthood which yields to that "new person" in the Reign of God.

O'Murchu ends his book on the topic of hope. Hope for our world and hope for the human community. He quotes the one-time president of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel, who said, "Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out." The promise has been given to us, "now all is new." The question is: is this promise sufficient for us to live in such a way as to make it happen?

Fr. Mark Miller serves in the parishes of St. Joseph and St. Anthony in Odessa, TX.

CIRCUS

When we finally visit the circus in the park,
will you hold my hand if it gets dark?
For dark is when I stop talking,
For dark is when the demons start walking.
That's when you must look for me, look for me,
please, please just stay and look for me
so I'll finally know
He loves me so.
For if I have Him,
I don't have to fear them.

BEFORE AND AFTER

Before, I always looked forward to what came after.
Now I spend my time looking backward,
as if to restore before,
even though before doesn't exist anymore.
Not at least until "that" day, when "time shall be no more,"
when from the day before yesterday
to the doorway just beyond tomorrow
all merges in the Eternal Now
of God's Hereafter.

Artisans, continued from page 16...

barriers that separate a community by race and ethnicity, we seek to build symbols of peace and hope.

Our mural is more than just a painting; it is an act of coming together—African American and Latino, rival gang members, young and old—all in an effort to mark our community with symbols of peace, and then to live that peace. I'll admit that I am built up when people come by the mural of these "unlikely suspects" and ask, "Who are you?" They struggle to understand a group of African American and Hispanic teenagers and mothers, (throw in a couple of middle aged white people)—in an area known to be a border between gangs and race—painting a mural of peace. Sometimes being faithful is just placing yourself in the midst of the tension and messiness of life.

Violence is real, but how we deal with it can be a catalyst for growth and transformation. Past wounds can be transformed into wisdom to live more fully. There can be a return to balance and wholeness, where the person and the community become a new creation. As individuals heal they in turn are able to reach out to their family, neighborhood and the larger community to bring healing and wholeness—reconciliation—to the whole human family.

We cannot allow ourselves to focus only on the end, a community of peace. That is what will happen, maybe not in my lifetime, but it will happen. What I can do is to agree to live peacefully today and do what we can to bring peace tomorrow. Reconciliation is a journey, a way of life, a spirituality that demands that we recognize it is brought forth not by us, but by God. But that does not mean that we can sit back and wait for God to act. God acts within the faithfulness of his people. So today, we will go out and again work on the mural; we will again work to bring forth peace in a community that today defines itself by the daily violence. Hopefully, one day, the scales will tip and this community will be recognized by the transformation that has happened—a peaceful community.

*We join with the earth and with each other
With our ancestors and all beings of the future
To bring new life to the land
To recreate the human community
To provide justice and peace
To remember our children
To remember who we are.
We join together as many and diverse expressions
Of community and empowerment,
For healing of the earth and the renewal of all life.*

(From the writings of the U.N. Capacitar Philosophy)

*Fr. Dave Kelly is on the staff of
Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago,
and also serves in jail ministry.*

LOOKING AHEAD

October 3–4

Companion Retreat

with Bishop Joseph Charron, C.P.P.S.

"Our Call to Holiness"

Marillac Center, Leavenworth KS

October 15–18

Precious Blood Leadership Conference

O'Fallon MO

October 24-25

Companion Retreat

with Bishop Joseph Charron, C.P.P.S.

"Our Call to Holiness"

Maria Stein OH

November 4–5

Leadership Team Meeting

Precious Blood Center

January 10–15 2010

International Symposium

"The Spirituality of the Blood:

Our Mission in Defense

of the Earth Community"

Center of Spirituality

Lima, Peru

February 17–21, 2010

Vietnam Candidates' Retreat

with Frs. Richard Bayuk

and Joe Nassal

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

April 12–14, 2010

2010 Provincial Assembly

Church of the Annunciation

Kearney MO

July 26–29, 2010

Precious Blood Convocation

St. Louis University, St. Louis MO

PROVINCE APPOINTMENTS

Fr. Matt Link, in residence at Sonnino House, Berkeley, CA. Pending ministry at Cristo Rey High School, San Francisco, CA; part-time ministry with the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging; effective August 1, 2009.

Fr. Joe Nassal, in residence at Sonnino House, Berkeley, CA; continuing ministry of missions and retreats; effective October 1, 2009.

Fr. Richard Bayuk, Province Director of Communications, effective immediately.

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MY BACK PAGES

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

Afternoon promises tend to succumb to evenings spent licking wounds,
Most dreams finally retreat in disarray, sacrifices on another's altar.
But a few escape to resurrect when visions are shared.

A DREAM REMAINS

Bob McCray

You will have noticed a number of poems with varying themes printed throughout this issue, including the one above. The author of these poems, Bob McCray, is a parishioner at St. James Parish in Liberty, MO—and a reader of this newsletter. He shared with me that he and his wife joined the Church in 2000. He worked as a counselor in the Kearney, MO schools, was in private practice for a time, and also taught at the University of St. Mary in Leavenworth, KS.

Bob is a member of the Secular Franciscan Order, a lay associate group similar to our own Companions. He says that since his retirement in 2002, his major challenge is Parkinson's. He added, "I came to write poetry because it allows me to paint with words the images and moods I observe, experience, or just make up." In my opinion, he does this well, and as a lover of poetry myself I am pleased to share some of his work with our readers.

I especially like the two pieces included in this column. The first one, like all good poetry, captures in just a few words a complex reality—in this case part of the dynamic of visioning that we have been engaged in as a province.

The poem on the right requires some familiarity with

the Book of Jonah, which is so much more than the story of someone who gets swallowed by a fish. It is rather about God—whose compassion is boundless, not limited just to "us," but also available for "them." That speaks to me of our Precious Blood spirituality and its call to take down walls and widen the circle of concern.

Jonah was angry that God was willing to forgive people whom he deemed outside the circle, and thus was reluctant to preach repentance to them. He did it anyway. Not a bad role model for a community dedicated to prophetic apostolate of the Word.

JONAH

Spewed up on shore
where sky and sea
meet each other with uneasy grace,
I rested in seaweed and rotting fish
until feelings became incidental
and raw obedience seized control.

Then dodging dining seabirds,
I pushed eastward toward Ninevah,
and with each successive step
felt His sermon shaping itself
in the pit of my stomach.

With nothing left of my own to tell them,
I entered the city gates,
angry with the prospect of God's pending Mercy,
sickened that Love might trump judgment.