

The NEW WINE PRESS

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

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CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

Rollie Reznicek

I have heard this advertising slogan often. I have used it myself when I felt someone was not listening to me, especially if I thought my words were possibly of some value. As a Companion of the Precious Blood I believe that it was this remark—which I kept hearing in my heart—that led me to some interesting phases in my life the past ten years.

After I retired from my primary career as a pharmacist I started to be open to whatever moved me: travel, relaxing, fishing and probably annoying Lucy, my wife of 52 years. After several years of a reduced work schedule and fun times I needed more. A bipartisan group contacted me to get involved with city politics here in Centerville, Iowa. There was a chance that three of the five council members could be replaced. Some believed that a new mayor was also needed. Since I had been in business for over thirty years, and involved in community activities, the group asked me to run for mayor so that this group could focus the city in a more positive way to serve the people.

Before I took over as mayor (four of us were elected, myself and three new council members) I was asked to address the high school junior and senior Government class. Many topics were discussed and I was amazed at the intelligent approach and insight these young people had regarding current political and social issues. It seemed when things went wrong in the community, and particularly on the town square, it was always the young people at fault.

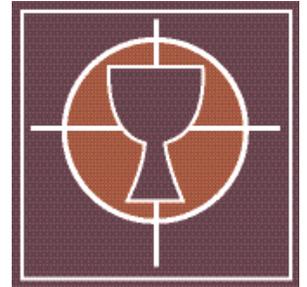
The remarks I heard in that class changed my focus for the next ten years. As a result of their words and insights, I formed a Mayor's Youth Council after I assumed office and began to address the issues of the young people. I invited all the mayors of the county to hear and share so that both sides could be heard.

The #1 concern expressed by representatives of the five county high schools was the lack of activities available outside of school and family. Most young people liked to play sports or just chat, but no place was offered in Centerville. High school athletics represent a small percentage of the

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The Youth Center in Centerville, Iowa.



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CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S.

Are people basically good while sometimes doing not-so-good things, or are they flawed and defective, and in need of being made good? Our answer to this philosophical question influences what we are able to do and how we interact with each other.

If people I am working with in a counseling relationship see themselves as flawed and defective (or “crazy,” as people sometimes put it), they are incapable of making significant changes in their lives. They are like a broken machine, and since no one else can “fix” them, they are stuck. All the counseling in the world will not help those people who maintain this view of themselves.

On the other hand, if the therapist and client believe that the person has what it takes to do what is needed, then great things are possible. In counseling, when I help people identify their strengths, skills, and abilities (their goodness), they recognize that they are not broken or defective, and consequently they are able to make positive changes for themselves and others.

This positive view of human beings is sometimes difficult to hold because our attention is so often drawn only to the negative things people do. We see the harm they do, but rarely do we go beyond that to understand how they see themselves as handicapped, and that they believe they don't have the ability to do something different.

Our church at times tends to support this handicapped view of the human being. Despite Genesis telling us that God's creation is good, traditionally we have been taught that we are born defective (original sin). Then we are to spend our lives wrestling with this sinful flesh trying to control its unholy

desires, especially those related to “unapproved” sexual activity. When the end comes, we are told, it is possible we can merit going to hell, but we can never do enough to merit salvation. That is why Jesus had to come down to deliver us from this “vale of tears” through an undeserved act of redemption. This theology is prominently ritualized at mass when the language, movement, ritual objects, and physical positioning keep the lay people distant and separate from what is considered “holy.”

If we are serious about helping people live the Gospel, we must first of all let them know they have the wherewithal to do it. Valuing and reverencing others is the most powerful way of telling people they are holy. Vatican II said the same thing when it emphasized that we, the assembly gathered for Eucharist, are one of the ways in which the Body of Christ is truly present. When people believe they are good or holy, they tend to act out of that identity.

So how do we do it? First of all, we listen to people and understand their situations and motives before we inform them about how they are mistaken or bad. When people feel understood they are more open to suggestions about making changes in their lives. Also, we approach people with the assumption that their actions do not come from some evil intent, but from some good motivation.

Once we understand the goal people are trying to reach, we can help them reach it in a different way—one that has fewer negative side effects. This does not, however, preclude us from taking immediate action to prevent people from hurting themselves or others. We also must maintain the attitude that we do

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THE NEW WINE PRESS Kansas City Province

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, 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, together with Precious Blood Companions, we strive to serve all people—especially the poor—with care and compassion, hope and hospitality.

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

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population and the athletes benefit from the resources and coaches because high school teams are intended to produce wins.

One term as mayor was all I could enjoy. I did not run again, but by the end of my term the superintendent of schools had contacted the city to let them know a grant had been found that would pay for a Recreation Director. Financing would be 100% the first year, decreasing to zero % after five years. This would be a means to find out if a recreation department would benefit the community. Since I had the time, the Recreation Director asked me to find a suitable meeting place for the ever-increasing number of youth involved. (By the way, in the first two years after hiring the Recreation Director, juvenile crime dropped 25%!) I accepted the challenge and within months we were able to rent the back half of a building owned by the school district. After much effort by many, a total of \$90,000 was raised. With an additional \$35,000 in volunteer labor, Centerville had a Youth Center in what had once been an International Harvest Dealership—and the rent was one dollar a month.

The Youth Center has many uses, with a gathering room, a game room with pool table, table tennis and electronic games, a snack bar and rest rooms. The larger community uses it as well, renting it out to produce income for utilities and improvements. The biggest user is Operation Santa, during which time gifts and clothes are stored and distributed each December to over 300 needy young people in more than 100 families. It is also a distribution point for the SHARE food program each month.

At present more than 50 volunteer adults and young adults serve as coaches for the hundreds of young people. Offerings include volleyball, basketball, soccer, soap box derby and table tennis. Whatever a group of kids like to do is usually available along with a coach to lead them.

The Recreation Director recently contacted me again and said that the temporary field used for soccer and football may no longer be available because a nearby

industry was planning expansion. Economic Development owns that land, therefore no rest rooms, seating or storage building could be on the site. Proof that families strongly support the young players is the fact over 6000 parents, grandparents and friends showed up as spectators on one weekend alone.

Outside of the school fields, little league and girls softball, Centerville has no playing field for youth or adults (older or younger) to have fun individually or as a family. It was important to determine if the Recreation Department was reaching the area youth who could very much use good mentoring and leadership. Winning would be secondary to participation and having fun. The school district discovered that 48% of the 583 youth involved just from Centerville were from low income families and were eligible for the school free-lunch program.

Appanoose County also ranked high in child abuse cases. Getting young people away from TV, video games and eating junk food after school and getting them involved in outdoor activities with good leadership is the goal. Some kids are now playing multiple sports. There are over 1500 active participants this year.

A permanent set of fields and lots of opportunities for the whole family obviously was needed. Since we had none, we needed four softball fields, four soccer fields, four volleyball courts, three basketball courts, an office and rest rooms. The fields should be capable of tournament style sports and lots of paths for strollers and walkers. A plot of forty acres was needed. With the help of the local community, the school district as well as the county and city over \$500,000 has been raised. A fine site at a fair price has been found and the hope is to start construction in the spring.

This has become my missionary venture and I am trying to "Hear ME now." Evangelist Matthew strengthens my resolve: ...whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me. Matt 18:5. 🙏



One of the major functions of the Youth Center is the organization and distribution of food, clothes, and gifts at Christmas to over 300 young people in more than 100 families.

Companion Rollie Reznicek is a member of St. Mary Church in Centerville, IA

COMMUNITY GATHERING IN CENTERVILLE

The Province Leadership Team met in Centerville, IA November 5-7, thanks to the gracious hospitality of Fr. Timothy Guthridge and the Centerville Companions. In addition to the business meeting, the council gathered with the local Companions on Monday for dinner and a listening session. On Tuesday the members of the district gathered for lunch and a listening session which followed.



Joe Nassal, Al Ebach, Timothy Guthridge, Richard Bayuk, Garry Richmeier, Jim Urbanic.

Both of these gatherings were intended as part of the ongoing follow-up to the Visioning Meeting held in September. The council hopes to hold future meetings in other districts in order to engage both members and companions in the process, as well as to provide opportunities to hear one another.

Companions who participated were Rollie and Lucy Reznicek, Joyce Moore, Sharon Crall, Dewey McConville, Joan Mattingly, Lorraine Ramos, Kathryn Baughman, Leona Kiedrowski, Phyllis Tracy, Karla Freese, Sandy Conn, Jackie Maddy, and Marlene Beadle.

All members of the district were present: Bill Miller, Jack McClure, Ron Will, Bill Walter, Mike Volkmer, Ed Oen, and Timothy Guthridge.



Joan Mattingly, Richard Bayuk, Joe Nassal, Al Ebach, Lorraine Ramos, Leona Kiedrowski, Phyllis Tracy, Sandy Conn, Garry Richmeier, Dewey McConville.

One of the decisions to come out of the council meeting was to invite all members who serve in parishes to come together to talk about this important aspect of ministry in the province. Subsequently, the following invitation was extended:

“In this season of giving thanks, we are most grateful for your ministry of servant leadership! Thank you for making the spirituality of the Precious Blood and the charism of our founder St. Gaspar such an important dimension of your ministry that marks the parishes where Precious Blood priests, brothers, and companions serve as places of hospitality and hope, of renewal and reconciliation.

To gather strength, wisdom, and insight from one another as we look to our future, we invite you to a Parish Ministry Summit January 21-22, 2008. We hope to dialogue about how we envision our future in parish ministry. Where do we want to be? In which parishes and dioceses do we see ourselves serving in the future? What



Joyce Moore, Marlene Beadle, Jackie Maddy, Timothy Guthridge, Sharon Crall, Jim Urbanic.

spiritual, geographical, socio-economic, and cultural considerations impact our future? What are our individual intentions, hopes, and dreams? In light of alternative ministries and pending retirements, what is the future of pastoral ministry in the province? From our collective wisdom, we hope to develop criteria that will help to determine which parishes we will continue to serve in the future and which parishes we will need to return to the care of dioceses.” 🙏

The Parish Ministry Summit will be held January 21-22, 2 p.m.-2 p.m., at the Ramada Inn in St. Joseph, MO.

IT'S ABOUT RESPECT

Mike Donovan

In October, I received a desperate call from Lonnie asking for help. He wanted to make changes in his life because the violence, drugs, and negative influences were dragging him down—again. His call was followed by a call from his Mom, who was fed up and frustrated with Lonnie's drug usage, drug selling, and bad behavior at home. She too asked for help from the Precious Blood Center.

I said yes to the requests for assistance, but I certainly had my doubts. It's not that I didn't know Lonnie. It's that I did know Lonnie, serving as his mentor for the last three years. Amazingly, he graduated from high school, not an insignificant achievement for a teenage boy from his neighborhood. Although he had plans to get a job and start community college in the fall, he got sidetracked and spent most of the summer on the streets, using and selling drugs. He missed several meetings that I had set up for him at college and with potential employers. I was very frustrated.

First, Lonnie set out to get a job, by meeting with Ian Wilson from our staff, who helped him refresh his resume and provide him with leads. The next day, I dropped him off in downtown Chicago for four job interviews. That night, he was hired at a sandwich shop located two blocks from where he will go to college part-time in January. You should have seen his smile. I was immediately reminded of lines from the movie "Dave," starring Kevin Kline, who played the owner of a temp job agency. He said:

"If you've ever seen the look on somebody's face the day they finally get a job, they look like they could fly. And it's not about the paycheck. It's about respect, it's about looking in the mirror and knowing that you've done something valuable with your day. And if one person could start to feel this way, and then another person, and then another person, soon all these other problems may not seem so impossible. You don't really know how much you can do until you stand up and decide to try."

Well, so far, Lonnie loves his job and his co-workers, and he commutes each day on the subway. He has opened a bank account. He sees the possibilities. He has decided to try.

As an added dividend, Lonnie inspired his best friend, Antonio, another of my mentorees, who was in the same rut. Antonio has begun searching for a job and applying

to community college. He is also looking for a permanent place to stay outside the neighborhood. A little positive peer pressure works a lot better than hearing the same message from a parent, guardian, or adult mentor.

Lots of challenges lie ahead for Lonnie. Although he hasn't smoked weed in four weeks, he's finding out that drugs are available everywhere, even in the high-priced financial district of downtown Chicago. He will also soon face the difficulty of balancing his work, school, and personal schedules. However, he has learned the lesson articulated by Bill Cosby and Alvin Poussaint in their latest book, *Come On People*. They remind their readers that "all work is honorable and makes a contribution to society" and that "an unpleasant job usually leads to a better job as young people develop working skills that are useful on any job, including the ability to work with others and be punctual. Kids would see that one job leads to another as the worker gains experience and basic workplace skills such as cooperating with others and keeping regular hours."

As usual, the gifts that I received from Lonnie were far greater than any help that I provided him. Before Thanksgiving, he wrote me the following note:

"Thank you Mike, for everything you did in the last three weeks! You've been a very great person and I am thankful for everything you have done for me! I hope you have a great Thanksgiving. I will continue the good work while you are gone and can't wait to see you again. Love, Lonnie."

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation. 🙏

Mike Donovan is a staff member of the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago, IL.



The New Creation
REFLECTIONS FROM THE
PRECIOUS BLOOD MINISTRY
OF RECONCILIATION

This past May, thousands of Jews, Muslims and Christians, people of good will and others from around the world gathered for a Big Hug around the Old City of Jerusalem. People came and gathered to encircle the city in a blessing of love, and to witness together how a common love for Jerusalem can help us celebrate our differences and live in harmony. Shira Tamir wrote in an article in the October 2007 issue of *Sacred Journey* about her experience of the Big Hug. She said, “It was a time of making music, drumming, singing, dancing, meditating, laughing—and oh yes, hugging, lots of spontaneous hugging. Love was in the air and so was peace and enlightenment, along with a truly passionate hope for a better world.”

This fall I spent a week on retreat in the mountains of Colorado at a Yoga Ashram (community). Shoshoni (named after the mountain) Yoga Retreat invites her guests to slow down and move with the flow of the communal schedule, practicing yoga up to four hours a day, taking time to meditate, to rest, to honor the rhythm of the body, to eat well and to just breath. Breathing in the Spirit and the beauty of the place, allowing this humble little community—where most people stay in a dormitory or simple semi-private cabins—to embrace and bring peace to those who walk along her rocky paths. A retreat can become a frame of mind, a place we can take with us, and revisit often, no matter where we are in life.

I spend much of my time in parish life. The parish is the primary experience of church for most Catholics. It is the place where we live out our sacramental lives. The parish church is a place we go to celebrate the beauty and the giftedness of life and of God’s love. It is a place of refuge when the storms of life are fierce and we seek answers or direction, or solace, comfort and peace. It is a place we are drawn home to when we are in need of healing and of knowing the power of God’s love and forgiveness. It is also a place from which we are sent to take some of the goodness we experience wherever we go and to whomever we meet. Paul would call us, “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20), appealing to all people to be reconciled with God, to be at peace

with God and with all peoples. Peacemaking, prayer, reflection, study, acts of charity, self-discipline, and self-care all help us to become more a part of the Church’s mission to be the Body of Christ, active and alive. Our embrace of this mission, both individually and as members of the Precious Blood family, gives us the grace of living more simply, more lovingly, more joyfully, more peacefully—as a people who stop often to simply pray, “Thanks.”

It is healthy, no matter where we are, to take moments away to quiet ourselves, feel the big hug of God, and let ourselves be at peace. A retreat can be a state of mind into which we can enter at any time, but it is also great, if we are able, to take a little time away.

I have been blessed to be able to get away on a number of retreats in my life. Spending a few days (or a week) in a remote setting, living in community or in solitude,

being given opportunities to stretch and grow and be challenged, I have always left these experiences on a real “high,” a kind of a mountaintop experience, feeling ready to take on the world.

Then Monday comes.

The “mountaintop” experiences of life are often followed by some sort of valley—sometimes just a little dip, and at other times a very deep chasm. Inevitably, the excitement of the time away is replaced by the preoccupations of life, juggling, working and worrying, socializing, “to do” lists that go on and on, the general busyness of life. All too

quickly, the “high” fades. My mountaintop becomes more of a roof top.

Given these realities, this time I decided to take an inventory of what has “stuck” following a mountaintop retreat experience.

There is always something—sometimes it’s a subtle shift, sometimes it’s a lifestyle change, but it’s always significant in my life. So in the midst of jumping back into the busyness of life and entering into the holiday season, what have I managed to retain?

First of all—and most significantly for me—I’ve made contact with a number of extraordinary people I may never have met if it weren’t for being on this retreat. These people have each contributed in a brief, but



MOUNTAINS AND ROOFTOPS

Matt Link, C.P.P.S.

meaningful way to my life—by their kindness and openness, their example of seeking holiness and meaning in life, their correspondence, their company, and so much more. The sense of acceptance and warmth of my fellow retreatants is still there, even though distance (and work and life) separate us.

Another good thing that has stuck is that I have reconnected with my yoga practice (this retreat center has wonderful yoga teachers in residence and several classes each day). I have also reconnected with the importance of stress management and self care. It has been such a good experience, and humbling too, to start from zero and take one asana (posture) at a time, knowing that every day brings a new opportunity to grow. It has also been gratifying to take my time and enjoy the subtle changes from practice to practice. I am more in touch now with my body, and while I haven't been going as often as I would like, I have been consistent and regular in my daily prayer and meditation practice, and in my practice of yoga.

Breathe! That was a big challenge for me. Every class I've been to, every instructor I've had, everything I've read has made a point of explaining breath as being foundational to the practice, to managing stress, and to growing into a sense of inner peace. But it wasn't until the retreat (and immediately after) that I was confronted with how essential being mindful of breath is. I tend to be a bit of a high-energy person, always thinking ahead and worrying over the next thing I have to do. Now, I'm more often aware of how shallow and quick my breathing gets as I grow stressed. That awareness has been helpful. It is a simple thing, but I try to focus on making my inhale at least as long as my exhale.

Conscious breathing has helped in so many areas of my life, but one of the most practical for me is while driving. I'm a somewhat nervous driver. Immediately after the retreat, I noticed that when I drove the 10 hours from Colorado, the time flew by. I was singing my heart out

and felt that while I sang, my soul also sang. I had one hand on the steering wheel, one arm resting on the door, and I felt completely relaxed on the road. Now, when I find my breath becoming shallow (or catching in my throat) I remember that I just need to breathe. Count it

out, 1, 2, 3, 4...and exhale...1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. It is amazing in its simplicity, but how hard it can be to make it a natural part of life.

The cumulative effects of a retreat experience are still impacting my life in parish ministry. It helps to keep things fresh, taking me back to a few days in the mountains where I unplugged from my task-lists and plugged into myself. I can't wait to go back, but until I do, the real-life, rooftop experiences of

work, ministry, community, family, friendships can be a pretty great place to be. For now, I'll hold on to the image of the Big Hug. I join my hands and heart to this community, a witness of how a common love for our faith and our Precious Blood spirituality can help us celebrate our differences and live in harmony.

Reflecting upon the busy nature of life, listening to the telling of the story of the Big Hug, reflecting upon the embrace of a beautiful retreat, can all be images that invite us to look deeper into our Catholic experience at home in the parish. A hug can be healing. An embrace can be a very powerful sign or offering of peace, of reconciliation, a silent asking, or extending of forgiveness. So I'll take a deep breath and offer my own Big Hug to this very human, quite messy, but lovely and loving family of sisters and brothers redeemed in the Blood of Christ, all who live in a truly passionate hope for a better world. The beauty of this hope-filled hug, is that this community is always hugging back. 🤗

Matt Link is Parochial Vicar of St. James Parish, Liberty, MO.



On the roof top of St. James Social Hall with parishioner Joe Scassellati covering skylights for a parish event.



Matt in "Tree Pose" on the Buddha Trail, Shosoni Mountain, Rollinsville, Colorado.

FUNDAMENTALISM

Alan Hartway, C.P.P.S.

Creator of the starry skies!
Eternal Light of all who live!
Jesus, Redeemer of mankind!
An ear to Thy poor suppliants give.

When man was sunk in sin and death,
Lost in the depth of Satan's snare,
Love brought Thee down to cure our ills,
By taking of those ills a share.

Thou, for the sake of guilty men,
Causing Thine own pure blood to flow,
Didst issue from Thy virgin shrine
And to the cross a Victim go.

So great the glory of Thy might,
If we but chance Thy name to sound
At once all heaven and hell unite
In bending low with awe profound.

Conditor Almae Siderum

As we enter the season of Advent, we are invited to look up at the stars of a cold winter night and see the vastness of the heavens. Traditionally the season began with *Conditor Almae Siderum*, “Creator of the stars of night.” We begin in darkness and, in an ecology of a divine, not human creation. It is a vast and humbling place. It also communicates not a little fear that draws us up to awe. Advent brings our attention in a way to the beginnings, while at the same time it begins with the end of the world. It is both cosmological and eschatological. Our lens pulls way back from the small and limited human vision to the largest vision of all. We begin to think about those things that matter, the fundamentals.

In 1909, the word “fundamentalism” appeared for the first time in print in the English language—in the United States. I want to stress that this word and what it means first originated in an American landscape. Various U.S. religious thinkers began to express their concerns about certain developments and changes that were occurring around them as threats to their beliefs. At that time communications, transportation (automobile and flight), cosmological theories (Einstein), European immigrations, and psychology (Freud) altered forever the way we understood and lived in our world.

Religious leaders responses were a series of meetings and publications that were to ensure that certain absolutes

were established as fundamentals. Adherence to and acceptance of these basics meant one was a Christian and therefore someone who conformed and belonged. Questioning and disagreement resulted in a suspicion and a shunning by a majority society. Actually a twelve volume work appeared in 1909 about these fundamentals. Soon it became the norm, so that when one spoke or thought outside the boundaries of these fundamentals, a level of civic dialogue necessary to democracy and cultural pluralism ceased. Strangely enough, the fundamentalists viewed the Catholic Church as being outside the parameters of their fundamentalism.

Just a little before this, in 1891, Pope Leo XIII wrote an encyclical called *Rerum Novarum* about these same concerns—but from our unique Catholic perspective. The encyclical reads today with an amazingly prophetic voice and promotes a positive view of the modern world and our human place within it. An alternate response, less than positive but arising out of the same human fears at the time, were ecclesial statements about “modernism” as a heresy and as a problem.

In times of stress, confusion, and increased violence, it is very easy to lose one’s way, identity, and sense of place. Our footing feels less than sure. It is not an easy thing to find our way to the manger in the dark, guided only by one star. So, there is a huge comfort in knowing that some things never change. When those things are our most basic relationships and ways of knowing and understanding the world around us, then we feel secure.

But it is not so with us and the world today. Everything is changing—from an industrial economy to an information economy, from a world in which the United States briefly “won” a cold war to a world in which a housing market and credit debt load devalue the dollar, from an education that could prepare people to enter the work force to a world in which we experience all sorts of new jobs hardly imagined a decade ago, from a spiritual world where hierarchy and dogmatic answers sufficed to a spiritual world with a whole new vocabulary and practices. There is even a nostalgic retreat to the perceived more comforting world of religion before Vatican II. However, while helping us to remember deeply our tradition and way, the Holy Spirit always renews. Even God the Father from the throne speaks in Revelation, “Behold, I am making all things new” (Rev. 21, 5).

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CONGRATULATIONS

Fr. Tom Welk, C.P.P.S., of the Kansas City Province, was awarded the Kansas Health Ethics Award of Honor at a dinner and awards ceremony on Thursday, November 15 in Wichita. Fr. Tom serves as the director of pastoral care and professional education for Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice in Wichita. According to the press release, “The award is given to individuals or organizations deserving of special recognition because of their outstanding contributions to the knowledge and practice of ethics in health care. Evaluation criteria are based on the total impact an individual’s work has had on the present state of understanding and applying healthcare ethics.

Welk has been an early and consistent supporter, worker and ‘evangelist’ on end-of-life issues over the years. He was a member of the original committee that helped started a hospice program in the Wichita community in 1982. His contribution to our community and state as an individual is recognized in his one-on-one counseling with individuals and families and teaching of medical ethics issues to professionals and the lay community.”



Fr. Tom Welk, C.P.P.S.

ATLANTIC PROVINCE NEWS

Greetings to all!

The Atlantic Province in its last assembly voted unanimously to raise the Mexican Mission *Ad Experimentum* to the status of a Mission.

The Moderator General and his Council gave their blessing and voted in favor of raising Mexico to the status of an official Mission of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Atlantic Province. This will take place on Monday, December 3, the Feast of St. Francis Xavier.

The Moderator General, Fr. Francesco Bartoloni, and Fr. Bill Nordenbrock from the General Council will be present for the celebration. Fr. Mario Cafarelli, the Provincial of the Atlantic Province, along with Fr. Peter Nobili, the Provincial Treasurer will also be present. Also attending the ceremony will be Fr. Edgar Jutte of the Cincinnati Province and Fr. Wilfredo Garcia from the Peruvian Mission.

We invite all of you to join in our joy and to celebrate this day with us, above all with your prayers.

Fraternally,
Ronald P. Wiecek, C.P.P.S.
Rene Cerecedo, C.P.P.S.

Fundamentalism, continued from page 8...

But we Americans are afraid. The American ego is anxious and threatened. So, the original American response of fundamentalism has now been inappropriately and irresponsibly exported to the rest of the world. The very much needed dialogue and harkening to one another as human beings together in a new world essential to peace making and reconciliation, is shut down by our own enormous egos. Fundamentalism is a response of an ego out of control and overstepping the rights of others. It creates social structures which include the unjust uses of power. We have created a world which elicits then this same response of fundamentalism from others. What we have created has come home to haunt us.

A solution would seem to come from the direction given to us by our own Catholic tradition and popes like Leo XIII; this suggests a civic and spiritual dialogue between social and cultural groups. This is aimed at creating and honoring justice founded on an education that does not just service the use of knowledge, but rather that creates understanding and love.

It is not a simple answer. We must resist our own ego’s need for fundamentalistic answers in a world so richly complex and new. In even this new world, we must find our way together to Bethlehem, which today is symbolic more than ever of a meeting place of three great religions. In that imaginary Bethlehem of our hearts we can welcome the newness of Jesus born among and for us all, kneel in worship together, and listen to all the stories that come together in such a place.

The answer is in the model of Jesus for us in the second verse of our Advent opening song: “Love brought Thee down to cure our ills/By taking of those ills a share.” Our question: how can we share our ills? How can love bring us down? How can we cure our ills? 🙏

Alan Hartway teaches at Naropa University in Boulder, CO.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I think Fr. Ebach is becoming a bit nervous about the “visioning processes.” He probably feels that some of the members are way out in left field and others just don’t want to play ball.

Visioning is, I think, trying to read the signs of the times, and because we are not just in an epoch of many rapid changes, but in a change of epochs, for some this is a frightening experience. They don’t want to cut the old umbilical cord. Others want to throw the baby out with the bath.

Visioning in the sense of reading the signs of the times is a process, and I don’t think it is a question of all of a sudden seeing things with brand new eyes. There are exceptions of course, but basically it is a process that requires a lot of work, a lot of study and a lot of mutual support. Not everyone can make the adjustment, and we must respect and support those that cannot, but at the same time move ahead.

“Practicing the Courtesy of the Heart” is good. My Sunday masses end with a little litany of thanks—like the petitions—and the congregation sings a phrase of thanks. I like it because we sometimes forget that despite the Valley of Tears we live in there is also an awfully lot of things for which we should give thanks to the Lord.

Regarding the article about objecting to war, I wonder if anyone is working for the promotion of the disposal of all nuclear weapons. It seems to me that their use is becoming something the public would accept. None of the candidates for president have taken a position on that, and when they talk about possible “options” they don’t want to take anything “off the table.” One sometime thinks that humanity is going to fry itself off the face of the planet with global warming, or we will blow ourselves off the face of it with the nuclear option.

Gay Dreiling, C.P.P.S.
Lima, Peru

Kudos on the November issue of *New Wine Press*, especially the articles by Joyce Kahle, Mark Miller, Al Ebach and Alan Hartway. A nice variety from different perspectives. Keep up the good work.

Peace,
Harry Allagree, *Amicus*

VOCATION OFFICE

Joe Miller, CPP.S.

When I was in parish ministry, the beginning of Advent was the time when we put out the large wreath, candles, and bluish-violet and pink ribbons. There was always a sense of excitement and anticipation for something new. This was present even though the preparation was quite similar year after year. At the same time, it was always different because we were at a different place in life. Some challenges for the parish included how to help parishioners see this season of preparation and anticipation in a new and exciting way; and how to bring hope and joy to the parish community, the Church, and the world in which we live.

In order for these challenges to become reality for an individual, a community, the Church, and the world we need belief in what we hope for. One needs to believe in the presence of Christ and that there can be peace, that what we prepare for and what we are anticipating can become a reality in our life and well as in the world.

I am beginning to realize that vocation ministry is very similar to an Advent journey. It is a time of preparation and anticipation as someone hears God’s call for them. Exploring that call, the person comes to believe it is for him or her—and there follows a peace and joy that comes with serving God. This usually takes a lot longer than the Advent journey of 4 weeks. It may take 4 years or even a life time. In both journeys we need to look with hope for what is possible with the grace of God.

This Advent could be a time to reawaken within ourselves the desire to journey with the belief that peace is possible and that the presence of Christ is within us as well as the people we meet. Doing this may help us as individuals as well as a community to truly celebrate the joy of Christmas. 🙏

Joe Miller is the province Vocation Director.

THANK YOU

Thank you so much for your contribution [through HDF] to Love INC ["Love in the Name of Christ"]. Through July 2007, we have taken 2797 calls from across the Northland, with Liberty calls up 99% over the same time last year and outside Liberty calls up 55%. Regardless of where a client calls from, we work with them on referrals to agencies who can assist and help. As of July 2007, we assisted 191 adults (up 16% over the same time last year) and 1744 children (up 17%).

Thank you again for your compassion and caring in financially supporting the Love INC ministry. May God bless the Society of the Precious Blood. Your support is so important to this ministry.

Sincerely,
Linda Knouse
Executive Director

I want to sincerely thank you good people who sent up prayers for me while I had lung surgery in October. We are thankful that the prognosis is good and I don't think I would have made it without the support and prayers of so many faithful people. I thank God every day for my good fortune and I ask His Blessings on you all.

Virginia Richmeier
[mother of Fr. Garry Richmeier]

The Human Development Fund (HDF) committee has chosen April 1 as the deadline to request a grant. This earlier date will hopefully make it possible for potential recipients to include the amount of their requests in their annual budgets. People can request forms at any time. Please send all inquiries and requests to Fr. Al Ebach, 5221 Rockbill Road., Kansas City, MO 64110.

WE COMMEND TO GOD

- +Cecilia Denning, mother of Sr. Justine Denning, died November 1, 2007. Sr. Justine was a long-time staff member at St. Mary's Parish in Centerville.
- +Father John Nagele, C.P.P.S., Cincinnati Province. August 16, 1926–November 15, 2007.
- +Bill Mattingly, brother-in-law of Companion Joan Mattingly, died November 22, 2007.
- +Mike Micetich, son of Companion Phyllis Tracy, died November 25, 2007.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

- Companion Joe Heidler, pacemaker surgery.
- Br. Robert Herman, C.P.P.S., recovering from successful back surgery.
- Fr. Vince Hoying, C.P.P.S., after two months of recuperation following heart surgery, has returned to Sacred Heart and St. Patrick parishes in Sedalia to resume a lighter ministry assignment.
- Scott Clevenger (son-in-law of Carmen Wohler of the Precious Blood Center staff) and his three children, Charisma, Dalton and Lake, injured in a car accident. 7 year old Lake was in intensive care following brain surgery as of this writing.

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not have the whole picture, or the whole truth. This allows us to deal with others as important messengers, carrying something that God wants us to hear. Above all, we have to approach others as equals, as brothers and sisters, believing that they have just as much to teach us as we have to teach them.

Needless to say, as a religious community working in a hierarchical religion which holds that not all are "equal," we are likely to be suspect if we publicly minister with people in this way.

As a community we describe our apostolate as the proclamation of the Word for the renewal of the Church. To accomplish this, we need to take up the challenge to let people know that they really are the image and likeness of God. They too can then proclaim this Word, and the Church will continue to be renewed. 🙏

Garry Richmeier has a counseling ministry in Kansas City, MO, and serves on the province leadership team.

*Aren't we forgetting the true meaning of Christmas?
You know, the birth of Santa.
Bart Simpson*

One of my least favorite sayings is “Put Christ back into Christmas.” Maybe it’s the budding curmudgeon in me trying to get out, but I always want to say (loudly), “He never left. Try putting *yourself* back into Christmas.” My most recent encounter with this annoying message was in the back of parish church after Sunday Mass. A large hand-painted sign with these words hung on the wall above a card table piled high with religious-themed Christmas cards. That’s right, buy this kind of Christmas card and put Christ back into Christmas!

That same great philosopher quoted above also said on another occasion, “Christmas is a time when people of all religions come together to worship Jesus Christ.” Poor Bart, means well but so wrong on so many levels. This time of year means many different things to so many different people. We put ourselves into Christmas in various ways, and we hope to meet Christ there. In our excitement, our sadness, our hope, and our connecting with one another. The promise of peace asserts itself.

While walking through the Apple Store here in Kansas City recently, recognizing the desire welling up in me as I played with all the gadgets, I thought of a great slogan for them: “iWant an iPod. iWant an iPhone. iWant an iMac.” Something about this time of year makes us even more aware of what we *wish* we had. But

Advent is also a call to conversion, an invitation to change “i” into “we.” *iWant* becomes *weWish*. As in, “We wish you a Merry Christmas.” We do. And a blessed Advent, a new year of peace—and an iPod too, if that’s what you are really wishing for!

In closing, I want to share with you my favorite Advent poem. It speaks to me powerfully of the call to become “we.” May we all find Christ, and one another, this Advent season. “Come in, come in.” 🎄

Dear Lord, I have swept and I have washed but
still nothing is as shining as it should be
for you. Under the sink, for example, is an
uproar of mice—it is the season of their
many children. What shall I do? And under the eaves
and through the walls the squirrels
have gnawed their ragged entrances—but it is the season
when they need shelter, so what shall I do? And
the racoon limps into the kitchen and opens the cupboard
while the dog snores, the cat hugs the pillow;
what shall I do? Beautiful is the new snow falling
in the yard and the fox who is staring boldly
up the path, to the door. And still I believe you will
come, Lord: you will, when I speak to the fox,
the sparrow, the lost dog, the shivering sea-goose, know
that really I am speaking to you whenever I say,
as I do all morning and afternoon: Come in, Come in.

Making the House Ready for the Lord
Mary Oliver

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