

The NEW WINE PRESS

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

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WHOSE CRY IS IT?

Elizabeth Roller

Listen to the cry of the blood. What does that mean? I was sure I understood the mission of the Precious Blood when I became a companion, and as an inquirer I was drawn to our mission statement and thought I knew what it asked of us. And I was certain I knew what my role in answering the cry was. What I didn't know then was how simply learning to listen would change my life.

Learning to listen in a deeper way is a gift cultivated through my relationship with the Precious Blood community. I value deeply this gift for it has changed my life and my family. In May 2007 I heard my own heart crying out—crying in pain and loss—a pain and loss that I had minimized and tried to ignore for years and years. I finally listened and treated myself the way I was taught as a Christian to treat others. I listened to the cry of the blood inside myself and I responded.

To answer my own pain I had to experience courage, desire, hope and faith in a new and powerful way. It was the bravest thing up to that moment I had ever done. The next was to tell my husband. You see I had heard in the cry of my heart the need for more family, another child. My husband and I have 2 biological children who, at the time, were both finishing their junior year of high school. Now I had to tell my husband my heart was aching to find our 3rd child, a daughter in China. But God is faithful and when I asked my husband how he felt about adoption—I thought I would test the waters first before scaring him with my plans—he told me he always thought he would adopt regardless of how many children he had. Well this was news to me! After 19 years of marriage you think you know a person! Then they respond to the question you were most afraid to ask with the most perfect answer possible!

Was this a good time to pursue another child, especially through adoption? Not really. The kids would soon be in

See *Cry*, page 8...



The Rollers: Katie, Keith, Gabriella, Elizabeth, Jimmy.



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THE NEW WINE PRESS

Missionaries of the Precious Blood
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, incorporated members, covenanted companions, and candidates, united in prayer, service and mutual support, characterized by the tradition of its American predecessors, are missionaries of these times with diverse gifts and ministries.

In a spirit of joy, we strive to serve all people—especially the poor—with care and compassion, hope and hospitality.

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

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LEADERSHIP NOTES

Al Ebach, C.PP.S.

About a month ago one of the staff members at our parish office met with a young Spanish speaking couple, which we often do. However she seemed more troubled than usual by the visit. After telling me about the conversation, she posed a question: “Where can we send people with issues of depression and help them understand that it is a mental condition rather than a demonic possession?” A very challenging question to say the least!

In the Hispanic community where I minister we encounter many people who are depressed—for a variety of reasons. Some of them find their lives empty because they have little contact with family, or because they cannot find jobs, or they are living in fear because of their immigrant status. Many of the people come to the church to seek help because they have nowhere else to go. In fact, about 30% of all people who seek help with a depressive illness reach out to clergy. For the most part, churches are ill equipped to minister to these people. In addition, there are too few Spanish-speaking counselors available in most cities and communities.

I recently attended a workshop here in Kansas City regarding depression among the Hispanic community. I was invited to attend this workshop shortly after the parish staff member had approached me with her question.

The first part of the session was all about information. For example, nineteen million Americans suffer from depression. I am certain that this number has increased in the last year due to the economic climate. Left untreated it can interfere with daily routine functions. Many people feel that it will go away on its own. Depression can be caused by genetics, environment, biochemical and psychological factors.

Most of the people attending wanted to know where to get personal help or send people who need help. The presenters shared that one should probably begin by visiting the family doctor who may be able to rule out anything caused by a medical condition. Most doctors know where to refer someone who may need a mental health professional. It was surprising to hear that many insurance plans cover mental health. It was hopeful to hear that 80% of people with depression can be treated successfully. The presenters shared that there is medication and psychotherapy available, but there may be other things that a person can do to recover, such as a healthy diet, regular exercise, good sleep habits, etc. Becoming involved in social activities and support groups are also important to good mental health.

There still is a tremendous stigma among many people regarding mental health, even though one in five people will experience depression in their lifetime. In the Hispanic community the stigma is greater because many of them feel that the



The symbol of the mental health movement is a three hundred pound cast iron bell made out of the shackles and chains that once restrained people in mental institutions.

The inscription reads, “Cast from the shackles which bound them, this bell shall ring out of hope for the mentally ill and victory over mental illness.”

See *Leadership*, continued on page 14...

TRAYENDO A LOS JOVENES CERCA

Steve Dos Santos, C.P.P.S.

“But it feels like I’m being kicked out of church.” This was one young man’s honest response to new limits that were being put on him as he prepared to graduate from high school. He understood why he couldn’t come back to youth group as a leader as long as he was dating one of the youth members, but that didn’t lessen the feelings for him. This is just one example of the challenges that exist in doing youth ministry, particularly in an ethnic community where turning 18 does not automatically make one an adult.

Here in the United States we place tremendous value on the magical age of 18: now you can vote and die for your country even if you can’t legally buy beer. At 18 you are legally an adult, with all of the rights and responsibilities that are attached to that title. For most of the families here at St. Agnes, an 18 year old is still part of the large and nebulous group called *jovenes* (young people). The classification *joven* covers a wide territory from the onset of puberty roughly until marriage. While Anglo parishes might have separate youth and young adult ministries, it is not uncommon to find 15 year olds and 30 year olds being ministered to as equals in Hispanic youth groups.

Ten years ago, that wasn’t seen as a problem; but in the current climate, with a heightened focus on child protection, we must develop programs that keep the two age groups separate. But even that isn’t enough. Age isn’t the only thing that divides *jovenes* from *jovenes*. Oddly enough, language and style are sources of division as well. And so within each age group there are those who prefer to work in Spanish and those who prefer to work in English.

But even the language preferences aren’t 100%. In our Wednesday night youth group, we may chat in English, read an English Bible and even start praying in English, but by the end of the prayer we’ve switched into Spanish for the *Padre Nuestro*, because most of the kids in the room simply don’t know the *Lord’s Prayer* in English.

While they may know their prayers in Spanish, that doesn’t mean they know their faith in Spanish. Most of the teens in our youth group have Spanish Bibles that they simply can’t read. So they pray in Spanish, and may need to switch between languages while talking about their faith, but when it comes to Mass and most anything else, English is the preferred language.

“Programs typically develop slowly, and we must keep our eyes on the prize, namely that the youth of our parish are not the future of the church, they are the present of the church.”

Language also creates another challenge for youth ministry in a parish like St. Agnes. Since the teens prefer English, it is always a challenge to find adults to volunteer with youth ministry. Even those with perfectly good English are intimidated by the idea of working with teens in English. This lack of volunteers often has negative implications for the effectiveness of our ministry. The DRE at a neighboring parish admits that even though the teens at her parish would prefer Confirmation classes in

English, they offer them exclusively in Spanish because that is the only way they can get enough catechists.

It is quite natural for young people to feel marginalized; feeling marginalized is a central part of the teenage growth experience. But as you can tell from these brief observations, Hispanic youth endure some very real

marginalization. They are bi-cultural, but they often feel like they are not really part of either of the cultures. They are further marginalized from the adult church by language and by adults’ fear of working with them. It is into this sense of marginalization that a youth worker steps when they begin youth ministry at a parish like

See *Jovenes*, continued on page 5...



Fr. Steve Dos Santos (2nd from right) with members of the St. Agnes Youth Group.

IT'S COMING TOGETHER

Jim Betzen, C.P.P.S.

I have been in Sedalia, MO for 4 years now, ministering to the Hispanic community with Sr. Eileen Schieber, C.P.P.S. In this article, I will share what has happened in Hispanic ministry and some reflections from my perspective.

My primary goal in doing Hispanic ministry is to further the growth both spiritually and materially as they adjust to their new life in the United States. My second goal is to help our Hispanic immigrants integrate into the church and wider community in the United States. Obstacles to these goals are language, culture and also prejudice.

In the first years of my work in Sedalia, I could see clearly that the majority of the Parish School of Religion (PSR) students were Hispanic. Since their parents speak predominantly Spanish and I was asked many times to interpret, I could see that we needed a bilingual PSR director in Sedalia to communicate to predominantly Hispanic parents. Fr. Timothy Armbruster and Sr. Eileen agreed. I could also see that ministry to Hispanic youth was being addressed. Even though Sr. Eileen does *quinceañera*

preparation for 15 year old Hispanic girls, she did not have time for Hispanic youth ministry with her many other ministerial tasks.

Therefore, in July of 2007, Fr.

Timothy and I hired

Daniel Suarez to be

part-time Youth

Minister and part-

time Director of PSR.

His wife, Marianela

("Nela") joined her

husband in this

ministry as a full-time

volunteer. Integration in

the PSR program began as did

a greater ministry to the Hispanic youth.

Another ministry, one that which is helping to integrate the Anglo and Hispanic communities in Sedalia, began at Sacred Heart Church on June 10, 2007. On that date, the adoration chapel opened with adorers from both Catholic churches and both racial communities. During six days a week of adoration, Catholics offer one or more hours of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. There are many Hispanic adorers praying side by side one hour a week with Anglo adorers. Many friendships have begun between prayer partners who pray together silently and greet each other coming to and leaving the chapel.

In this academic year, many changes have occurred which foster integration. Last July, I became pastor of St. Patrick's Church, the

parish where the Hispanics worship and meet. In convening the parish council, I asked a representative of the Hispanic community to be on the council. A young Hispanic man who is fluent in English and Spanish agreed and has been attending council meetings as well as joint council meetings with Sacred Heart. He has also agreed to be the representative from St. Patrick's on the Sacred Heart School Board.

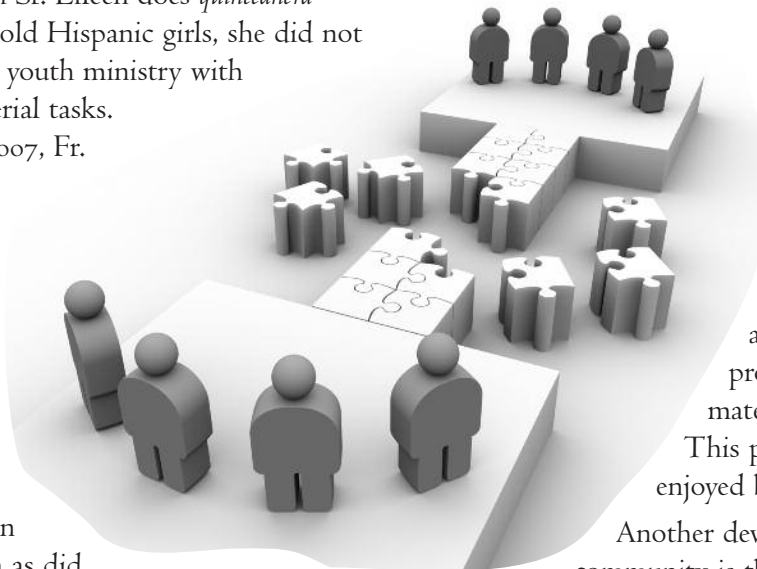
In September, the confirmation program began as usual. The difference was the number of Hispanic candidates, growing to 12 in all. We meet together on Sunday evenings, Anglos and Hispanics together for the opening ritual and closing reflection. After the opening ritual, the Hispanic teens and their parents meet with Daniel, Nela and Sr. Eileen for a bilingual confirmation class.

Along with the confirmation class, these three are also teaching a program called RESPETO, a Latino youth leadership formation program from the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio. They meet on Sunday evenings in addition to the confirmation program in order to get through the material in the RESPETO program.

This program is well accepted and enjoyed by both teens and their parents.

Another development in the Hispanic community is their willingness to get involved in St. Patrick's parish. In the fall, they sponsored a fundraiser to raise money to improve the sound system in the parish. In November, they joined in the annual Ham and Bean Dinner which raises funds for vocation awareness and seminary support. The Anglos served ham and beans with cornbread while the Hispanics served pozole, a hominy and pork soup. The Hispanic teens were also a great help in serving and carrying items for the cooks in the kitchen. It was a great step forward in integration.

For the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12th, we celebrated the traditional 5:00 A.M.



Mass with mañanitas before and dancing and breakfast afterwards. In the evening, we celebrated Mass in English. In this Mass, the confirmation candidates and their parents acted out and narrated the Guadalupe story. It was well received by all, especially by the Anglo members of the congregation who had never “experienced” the Guadalupe story before.

At present, both parishes, our mission and the Hispanic community are planning to launch a program called “Why Catholic.” It is a 4 year program of evangelization creating small communities to study the catechism and share faith. An advantage to this program is the fact that all materials are in both English and Spanish. Anglo and Hispanic Catholics will follow the same format and have the same materials and retreats in their respective languages. Fr. Linus is coordinating the program with leaders from all churches and the Hispanic community. I am grateful for any good religious education material in Spanish.

Allow me to share some reflections on Hispanic ministry. First of all, in my experience, integration in the parish does not begin with adults, but with children and youth. The children are bilingual and bicultural, and more often already integrated in school, PSR and confirmation class. Their parents will come together, Anglo and Hispanic, to support their children. Bonds of friendship are

nourished around care and concern for children and youth.

Secondly, the Hispanic immigrant community is marginalized in the wider community. Leaders in the church should work to include them into the church community and not marginalize them further, intentionally or unintentionally. Hispanics, like all people, want to be welcomed, have a voice, and contribute to community. The church should be the most likely place for this to happen.

Leaders in the church need to be “bridges,” working to foster community between nationalities. Also, I hope that we can recognize that Hispanic immigrants are an asset to our parish communities. They come to us with deep faith, family values and a strong work ethic. They hunger for the Word of God and greater knowledge of their Catholic tradition. We should nourish in them a sense of stewardship and vocations. Above all, we should recognize that the Holy Spirit is active in their lives.

Of course all of us should be open to the movement of the Spirit in the lives of those we serve. I have experienced that movement in the Hispanic community and I thank God for the many ways that they have witnessed and ministered to me. 🙏

“The Hispanic immigrant community is marginalized in the wider community. Leaders in the church should work to include them into the church community and not marginalize them further. . . . Hispanics, like all people, want to be welcomed, have a voice, and contribute to community. The church should be the most likely place for this to happen.”

Jovenes, continued from page 3...

St. Agnes. It truly is an opportunity to bring near those who are far off and to wash them in the blood of Jesus.

Youth ministry is always a challenging and slow going ministry, but with all of these challenges facing anyone doing youth ministry in an ethnic community, I often wonder how we make any progress. Programs typically develop slowly, and we must keep our eyes on the prize, namely that the youth of our parish are not the future of the church, they are the *present* of the church. As difficult as the ministry may be, we must give them our best. Failure to do so risks losing this generation for the church, a loss we can sorely afford.

[Reader’s note: The young man from the beginning of the article is still dating the same girl, and now that they are both in college they are two of the core members of a new youth choir that has started playing at the 1:30 P.M. Mass.] 🙏

Fr. Steve Dos Santos, a member of the Cincinnati Province, is associate pastor at St. Agnes Church in Los Angeles, where he serves along with Frs. Bill Delaney and John Franck.

+REMEMBERING COMPANION RALPH BARDGETT

Ralph was a man who never forgot his friends, truly interested in people and respectful of their opinions. He lived by example and faith in God.

He liked to work behind the scenes with his great organizational skills. For example, he was so afraid of Catholic Charities closing their office in Warrensburg that he went to the Bishop and pleaded their case. He then became a member of the board. Later he served on the board of the food pantry board and helped start the clothes closet. He was always on the lookout for ways to improve their services.

When he became a Companion, it was a perfect fit for him. He told me a few times, “God is always leading me on to something new. My covenant can never be rewritten as I fulfill those promises and continue growing and reaching for something new.” Ralph loved being a Companion of the Precious Blood, and he was always looking for new companions to invite.

Despite his many physical problems, Ralph never complained, He was always willing to help others by visiting and sharing his experiences when someone asked. His children and grandchildren were important to him, and were the topic of many of our conversations. Ralph was a friend who taught me how to grow and change and not lose my values on the way. I will miss him as will all the people whom he touched. 🌹

Companion Wynona Wildeman

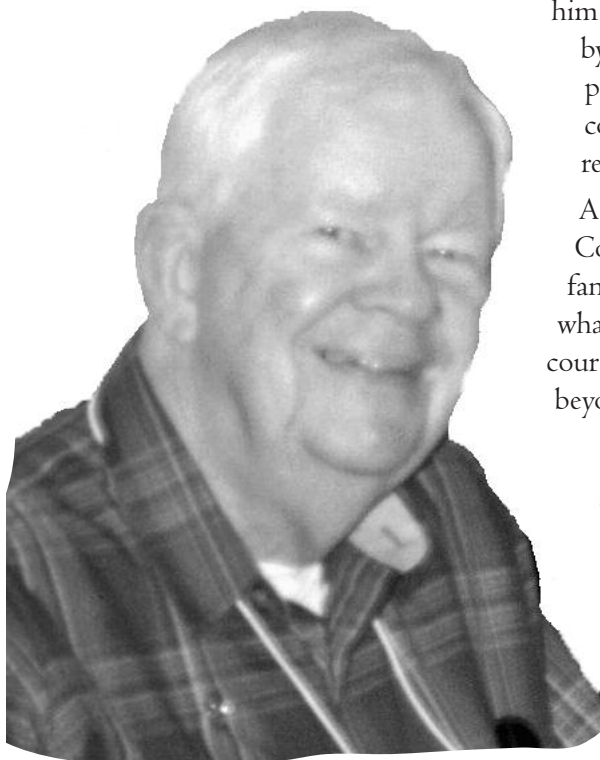
I have a terrible sense of direction, stopping often to ask directions, frequently turning around and backtracking. My earliest memory of Ralph is of him riding “shotgun,” calmly maneuvering me through heavy traffic (with semis on both sides) on our way to a New Wine class in Kansas City. We arrived intact that evening—and on all the other evenings over our three years of meetings in the program.

Ralph always got me there—to Rensselaer, IN; to Dayton, OH; to St. Loui, MO; to the many local Precious Blood events in Liberty. We always arrived by the most direct route, on-time, refreshed by good company and conversation.

His sense of direction alone made Ralph an esteemed and valued friend, but there is more. Ralph was one of those people who always “fit in.” I invited him without hesitation to my daughter’s baby shower which was attended by 15 women—and Ralph. He played the silly games, brought a practical gift, and joined in our laughter over his dry quips and comments. He was truly a friend, accompanying me to various plays, restaurants and events which I did not wish to attend alone.

A deeply Christian man, he was to me the embodiment of a Companion. He was one of the Precious Blood community’s biggest fans, always searching for ways in which to make known to the public what a fine group they are. I will miss his humor, his common sense, his courage, his faith, and above all his sense of direction—which extended far beyond just the road. 🌹

Companion Linda Garza



*Central Missouri Companion Ralph Bardgett
died on January 25th at the age of 77.*

My Uncle Ralph influenced more lives, in a profound way, than any other individual I personally know. There are hundred's of close family and friends whose lives have been intertwined with Ralph's for his 77 years.

But if we widen the circle farther to include those whose lives have been influenced and altered by his contributions and service, it would include thousands who have been his students, have been helped at the food pantries or by his ministries in the church.

The circle is even wider and may number in the hundreds of thousands of those who have been informed with the news or touched by the stories that Ralph made the decisions to air as he directed the nightly news for 20 years at KOTV.

As a kid, I would always watch the end of the Channel 6 newscast as the credits rolled up the screen to see the words "Directed by Ralph Bardgett." I can recall times when I was with friends and the news happened to be on, that I would proudly say "that's my Uncle" and point to his name as it rolled up the screen.

No summary of Uncle Ralph's life would be complete without the church. He was a deeply religious man who shared his talents. In whatever community he found himself, Uncle Ralph became deeply involved with the church. For many years he offered his services to coordinate the community food banks and community clothes closet in Warrensburg, MO—which helped nourish and sustain thousands of needy people. His strong beliefs and reverence for the Eucharist and the corporal works of mercy is most evident in his membership as a Precious Blood Companion.

One of the roles of a news director is to make adjustments when things don't go according to plan. The director takes charge and sets a new direction and keeps going, because the show must go on. Many times during Uncle Ralph's life he faced tremendous obstacles when life didn't go according to plan and he handled these situations with grace. He battled lung cancer, lived with diabetes, and survived two heart attacks. Most recently he dealt with prostate cancer and eventually bone cancer.

The characteristic I admire most was his courage in facing these obstacles, and the determination to return to a productive life, continuing his service to others. He demonstrated that he would take charge, change his life as needed, and not let these events keep the show from going on.

As this story comes to a close, we all remember the life of a special man. He understood that his temporary life on earth was coming to an end and he was prepared for this eventuality. Every newscast must come to an end. All of the news to be told has been told. The microphones are turned off now, the studio lights dim, and the cameras fade to black. As we remember this man's life, we can't help but notice the final closing credit as it rolls up the screen: "Directed by...Ralph Bardgett." 🍷

*Excerpted from the eulogy given by nephew Ron Spanke
at the Funeral Mass on January 30th in Tulsa, OK.*

Cry, continued from page 1...

college, money was a big issue, we were getting older, the partnership my husband was affiliated with was failing. But it was also our last opportunity and I didn't want this to pass us by simply because we were afraid. My hope was to bring home this child we didn't yet know before our kids graduated from high school so we could be a family. So we went forward, afraid.

Six days later we were sitting at an adoption agency attending an informational meeting and within a month we found a 6 year old girl with dwarfism to adopt. But things did not go smoothly. After paying \$1,700 in non-refundable fees we were dropped by the agency and told it would be unethical for us to pursue adoption with another agency.

I was devastated. I couldn't understand what had happened. After a few weeks of retreating and consoling from friends whom I trusted, I got on the phone and contacted over 20 agencies and learned over and over again that the reasons we were dropped, as cited by our adoption agency, were not issues which would cause China to reject us. Within a month we contracted with a new agency and within 3 months another special needs child was referred to us.


It was 5 months before we traveled to China and met our daughter—such an amazing and overwhelming experience. And every day has been a good day filled with the peace of the Lord concerning our adoption. We have been given many gifts, our daughter was home before my kids graduated from high school (by 3 days) just as we hoped and my husband was offered a wonderful new job. Is life a bowl full of cherries? No, of course not. We still have disappointments, frustrations, failures and family arguments, but not about adopting Gabbie. On that we are all in agreement. God knew what he was doing.

I think about the cry of the blood inside myself often. The cry was egocentric but yet had a profound effect on the life of another human being. I have come to believe we need to address the

I think about the cry of the blood inside myself often. The cry was egocentric but yet had a profound effect on the life of another human being. I have come to believe we need to address the suffering in our own lives, for through managing our own pain we can have a positive effect on the world.

suffering in our own lives, for through managing our own pain we can have a positive effect on the world. Most 12-step programs work off this model of helping oneself which leads to helping others. We can't help anyone if we are in too much pain to function properly.

Or is it possible that I was truly living the mission of the Precious Blood? Was I really listening? Did I really hear the cry of the blood? One little twist in this story: on May 12, 2007, I was listening to an interview on the radio concerning the plight of orphans in China. The interviewee reported that while China was telling the world that their orphans were being absorbed in-country through adoption and foster care, this was not as successful as China would like the world to believe. It was then that I heard the cry referred to earlier, which I thought came from within, as my heart swelled with pain and the desire for a larger family. We later learned that our daughter was returned to the orphanage from foster care during the first week of May 2007, just before I heard the interview.

No reason for her return to the orphanage was ever given. After Gabbie had been home with us for 5 months she told me about her foster family. She had a very loving foster father who was gentle and kind and told her about Jesus. Unfortunately, her foster mother was not so kind. One day she threw Gabbie and she landed on her head. There was a lot of blood and a trip to the hospital—followed by Gabbie living in the orphanage again. I wonder now, in the cry of the blood that heard I then, whose cry was I hearing? And if we are all one body, does it really matter—for isn't every cry our own? 

Elizabeth Roller is a Precious Blood Companion from Sedalia, MO.

FORMATION NEWS

Joe Bathke, C.P.P.S.

The Kansas City Formation Team, Fr. Joe Miller, Sharon Crall, Fr. Dan Torson, and Fr. Joe Bathke, thought it a good idea to share what has been happening in formation over the last six months. As we reported at our 2008 Assembly, the Kansas City and Cincinnati Province Formation Teams have been meeting and talking about issues critical to formation for both our provinces. Those discussions began early in 2008 and as they have continued we believe they have been productive in creating a spirit of understanding and cooperation.

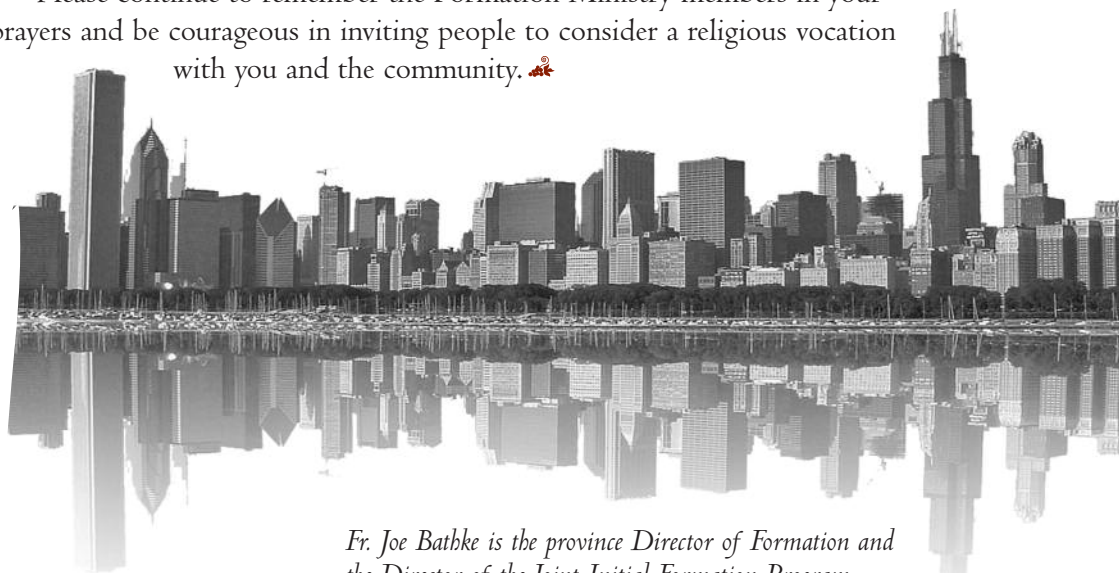
The joint formation committee of the two provinces made two proposals to our Provincial Councils: First, that our Provinces' initial formation be a joint program. As you know, we have jointly shared the Advanced Formation and Special Formation Programs for the last several years. Moving to have initial formation as a joint program, in our view, will complete our cooperation on each level of formation and create a stronger program than either province can coordinate on its own.

Secondly, the Joint Formation Committee proposed the Initial Formation program move to the Hyde Park area of Chicago. This location provides our candidates with excellent spiritual, educational, cultural and community resources. Specifically our candidates will have a greater opportunity to meet and interact with young men and women who are pursuing a religious vocation. Research has clearly demonstrated that having a strong peer support group for candidates in formation is highly desirable and most helpful in giving a candidate a place to share with peers their thoughts and feelings.

The Provincials and the Councils have approved both proposals and recently approved me to be the Joint Initial Formation Director beginning June 1, 2009. The members of the Formation Team are currently working to prepare for the move to Chicago. While there is much to do, the committee is confident we will have everything in place for the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year.

One final note regarding the Vocation Offices of each province. At this point it is the vision of the Formation Committee that both provinces need to continue supporting a province vocation ministry team. While both offices continue to operate independently the goal is for ever increasing cooperation and sharing in resources, information, admission applications, admission team, advertisements and publications, and related activities, such as discernment retreats.

Please continue to remember the Formation Ministry members in your prayers and be courageous in inviting people to consider a religious vocation with you and the community. 🙏



Fr. Joe Bathke is the province Director of Formation and the Director of the Joint Initial Formation Program.

“Felices los que tienen espíritu de pobre, porque de ellos es el Reino de Dios,” Mt 5:3.

“Blessed are those who have the spirit of the poor, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

I start with these words because they were the first words I saw when I entered through the doors of the cathedral in Cuernavaca, Mexico thirteen years ago when I studied Spanish. Through every door I have walked since—whether Mexican, Guatemalan, Honduran, Peruvian, Chilean, or Columbian—I have been profoundly moved and challenged by the Spirit of God, the Kingdom of Heaven in the spirit of the blessed poor.

I walked through another set of doors on the evening of January 18th; there was no sign over the door indicating where I might find the spirit. But as I stood in the hallway looking through an interior set of doors there was a group of Guatemalan immigrants praying, having just finished cleaning up after a day of celebration—“El Cristo Negro de Esquipulas,” a feast day very important to the Guatemalan immigrant on a par with the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe for the Mexican immigrant.

In preparing for the event I asked a young friend about the significance of the black Christ hanging on the cross. He said, “Padre, he’s a Christ we can relate to and identify with because

he’s our color.” The festival day is filled with processions, feasting, traditional music and dance. Many people share about the miracles they or their family members experienced in making the annual pilgrimage to Esquipulas, a town northeast of Guatemala City.

This group of young immigrants, men and women, had formed a circle and were praying, each lifting a prayer as their turn had come. I listened to each of them offer thanks for the miracles of the day. I gleaned from their prayer that just weeks before the event they had nothing, no money or no food. They had only their faith in Christ which brought them together.

Trusting only in that faith, donations started coming. Those who decorate, decorated; those gifted with music sang; those who cook, cooked what was there; those who serve, served; those who clean, cleaned—all using their talents to celebrate Christ and serve the community. We fed 500 persons that day.

The best part of that whole day for me was to be in that dark hallway, listening to this small circle of persons praying and thanking Jesus for his presence in their celebration. Quite honestly, I would have forgone the prayer and went home to bed, but not those who have the spirit of the poor. They began celebrating Cristo Negro; they ended praising Cristo Negro.

Their spirit brought my spirit back to Christ.

I am grateful I walked through those doors in Cuernavaca 13 years back. I am grateful I walked through those gym doors on January 18th, because in my brother and sister Mexican, Guatemalan, Honduran, Peruvian, Chilean, and Columbian, Christ walks through the door and finds me. “Blessed are those who have the spirit of the poor, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”✠

Fr. Dave Matz lives at Sommino House in Berkeley, CA. He is involved in ministry with the LBGT and Hispanic communities.



DOORWAY TO GRATITUDE

Dave Matz, C.P.P.S.



The New Creation

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRECIOUS BLOOD MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

“Man, all these people are really nice,” David said. “One woman even started crying when she found out I had been shot. It ain’t like that back in the neighborhood.”

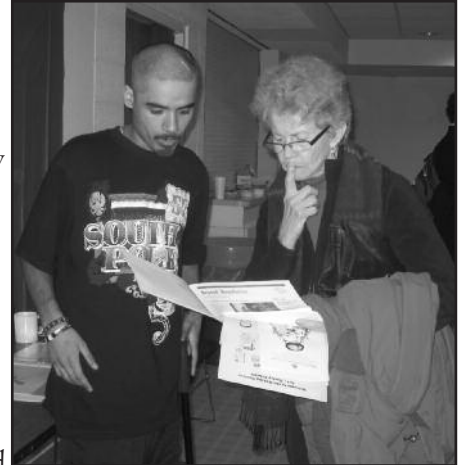
We were in Evanston, Illinois at Northwestern University for the Precious Blood Art and Poetry exhibit. A number of youth, who had spent numerous days painting a mural depicting their struggles and dreams, came along with us to talk about their art and how it helps to share what is going on inside them. Along with the artists came a number of youth to read and share poetry. Their stories came alive in their art and poetry.

At the invitation of the Sheil Center, the Catholic Newman Center at Northwestern, the art and poetry exhibit was set up to allow students, professors and parishioners to experience the art and words of those who are, or have been, locked up.

As our youth moved around the room and explained the art and poetry, there was a noticeable spirit and connection that came alive. People were moved by the art and the faces of these young people who were willing to share their story. The kids were moved by how much people cared and were willing to listen. David, who is recuperating from multiple gunshot wounds, kept saying on the way

home how nice people were to him. “They really seemed to care a lot,” he said. In many ways the youth felt special—that they really meant something. It is a shame that too often the youth we work with feel as though they just don’t matter that much, as though they aren’t good enough.

The art and the poetry is becoming a greater part of the Making Choices program of PBMR. The Making Choices program is our youth outreach effort that invites and welcomes young people who have been incarcerated



to be a part of something positive. The Precious Blood Center offers support and structure for those who are willing to try to make better choices.

Through art and poetry the youth are able to speak about their daily struggles. It allows those feelings to surface and gives a safe place in which they can be shared with others. Too often the rage and the pain is hidden beneath the surface and then explodes without notice.

Victor Lopez is our art “instructor.” He knows both the art and the struggle. He had spent years incarcerated—getting locked up as a juvenile and then spending the next 23 years in the prison system. He openly shares that it is only through his art that he found a way to survive incarceration and express his feelings. He now spends his time at the Precious Blood Center sharing his passion both for art and for the youth who are struggling.

Our goal is to break down some of the barriers and boundaries that often exist between people. The art and poetry is one way barriers are lessened and boundaries blurred.

Fr. Dave Kelly, a member of the Cincinnati Province, is on the staff of the PBMR.

THE ART OF RECONCILIATION

Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S.



AN INAUGURAL EXPERIENCE

Peggy Doherty

My son John and I, both former History majors, had the good fortune to attend the inauguration of Barack Obama on January 20th in Washington, D.C. It was an exciting and exhilarating experience. Along with my daughter Barbara and her husband Ron, who are both employed in the capital city, we braved the crowd and the cold and left Barbara's home by 5:00 A.M. on Inauguration Day.

We were able to park at the Silver Springs Metro station and get on a metro car that was not overly crowded for the trip into D.C. From Union Station, we walked to the building of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters where—because Barbara is a contributing editor to *Carpenters' Magazine*—we were on an approved list to enter the building at 101 Constitution Avenue and proceed to UBC headquarters on the 10th floor. We were in a lounge type room with large windows facing the mall and looking onto the Capital steps where the inauguration would take place. An even better view was available just outside the room on a large balcony, so depending on our ability to manage the 17 degree cold, we found ourselves moving from indoors to outdoors throughout the morning. A large screen television inside kept us informed of what was going on and helped us decide when we wanted to be outside. From time to time throughout the morning we watched the huge crowds that were making their way onto the mall.

Shortly after 11:00 A.M. an honor guard began to assemble and take their places along the far side of Constitution Avenue, in anticipation of the motorcade bringing the President-elect and his entourage to the Capital. We watched, cheered and waved as the motorcade made its way past our building and around the side of the Capital.

The details of the ceremony have been well documented and viewed by most Americans as well as people all over the world. The ceremony moved smoothly leading up to President Obama's Inaugural Address which set a tone of determination and hope in these difficult times. We Californians were happy to see our own Senator Dianne Feinstein playing a key role and to hear the musical selections performed by the San Francisco Boys' chorus and the San Francisco Girls' Chorus. And who doesn't love to listen to the U.S. Marine Band and the U. S. Navy Band "Sea Chanters"?

For me, attending this inauguration was a once in a lifetime event. As someone who many years ago taught high school history and later was a graduate assistant working with foreign students in their required U.S. History class, being present for this very historic event was close to overwhelming. From the election night announcement of President Obama's victory to his taking the oath of office, I constantly thought of my late husband John, also a Precious Blood Companion, and of what all of this would have meant to him—a long-time member of our local naacp and an ardent and tireless advocate for civil rights. How I wished that he were there with us.



January 20, 2009

More than half of all voting Catholics in the November 2008 election voted for Barack Obama. I am saddened that the abortion issue drove many Catholics to abandon their usual Democratic stance in this election. I was further saddened to see the issue cause disunity and division among usually like-minded people. At the same time, I was heartened by the American Bishops' official position which indicated that Catholics must weigh all issues, especially those related to social justice, and vote their conscience even though they may disagree on some aspects of the candidate's platform.

As a Companion of the Society of the Precious Blood, what I most admire about President Obama are his strong commitment to issues of social justice and his sense of the need for reconciliation and unity within our country and in the world at large. He is a champion of the marginalized and actively works to break down what St. Paul describes in the Letter to the Ephesians as "the barriers of hostility that kept us apart" (Eph 2:14). Although he might not express it this way, it is apparent that he hears the cry and the call of the Blood and is determined to help us create a society that will address that cry and that call. 🙏

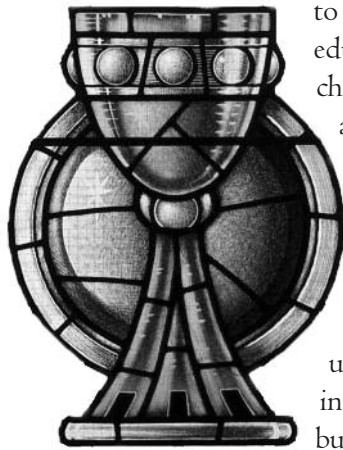
Peggy Doherty is a Companion from Vallejo, CA.

¿QUE SIGNIFICA “CATÓLICO”?

Mark Miller, C.P.P.S.

It hardly seems possible that I am beginning my sixth year here in Odessa, Texas. Much has taken place during this time, and much more still lies ahead as we minister with a mixture of people. We have parishioners primarily of Mexican descent—some are still more Mexican than citizens of the United States even though they have been here for some time. There are those who would maintain that by this time all these people should speak English. But then I recall my mother’s ancestry. We know that in 1836 her ancestors were baptized in Cassella, Ohio and when Mom went to school in 1910, she had to learn English because they only spoke German in her home. (Had there been no war, would the German language still be a part of my heritage?) So, it is difficult to put a time frame on when someone should let go of the language of the motherland and attach oneself to the language of the new country.

The language issue aside, one of the areas of struggle for me, ministering in a primarily Mexican community, is the seeming lack of understanding of what it means to be Catholic. The Mexican people pride themselves on their commitment to family and the extended family. They will constantly talk about their *compadres* and *comadres*, those who are *padrinos* and *padrinas* for their children. All of these people are members of their family. But they seem to have a difficult time in translating this relationship to those who receive the sacraments of initiation. Here it appears that the “reception” of the sacraments is what is important and the “living out” of the sacraments is perhaps more optional.



They fail to understand the relationship that exists between all of us who receive these sacraments and how we are all connected within the Body of Christ. A larger extended family, if you will.

Some of what I consider rather basic truths of our faith have not become part of their experience, for example Mass on Sunday. I recently heard a woman admit that she just now realized that going to Church on Sunday is part of the living out of the Third Commandment. She had no idea that missing Mass on Sunday was considered a sin. This is not an isolated case. As I said, they want their children to receive the sacraments, but it is rather common for parents, after their children have made their first communion to not return to church again or bring their children for religious education until they are ready for Confirmation. We have over 200 children who have made their first communion but who no longer are coming to religious education class—and many of them are no longer coming to Mass. Thus we have older children being prepared for Confirmation who do not know the ordinary prayers or liturgy of our church community.

We are constantly confronted with the tension between culture and liturgy, culture and doctrine, national culture and universal practices of our Church. I understand that culture informs our liturgy and how the truths of our faith are passed on, but many Mexicans put greater emphasis on “family devotions” than on the “sacramental liturgy” of our church. Again, I think it goes back to their understanding, or lack thereof, of the relationship that is established when one receives the sacraments. I suspect this is true in many cultures, but it seems more pronounced here than in other places where I have ministered.

“Our spirituality continues to call us to unite those who are far off” with “those who are near.” I have to constantly remind myself that not everyone has the same access to information or formation regarding faith development. Just as we believe we must educate the whole person, we also believe we must be about the formation of the whole family as we work with our children and their parents in deepening their understanding and appreciation of the faith.”

Our spirituality continues to call us to unite “those who are far off” with “those who are near.” I have to constantly remind myself that not everyone has the same access to information or formation regarding faith development. Just as we believe we must educate the

See *Católico*, continued on page 14...

Leadership, continued from page 2...

demons have taken over a family member's life, or their own lives. For this reason many of them come to the church for healing, and participate in charismatic healing prayer services.

In the Hispanic community education about mental health is very important, as it is for many cultures. It is important for people to learn about mental health in order to avoid misunderstandings about the illness. There is tremendous power in prayer, but if prayer leaders fall into the trap of casting out demons, people will not get the medical attention they need. This means that church leaders need to educate themselves about mental health in order to share the correct information with those who come to them. Parish staff members also need to have mental health service information available to direct people to the proper treatment which is available locally.

As I listened and learned about depression I thought about my own mental health, especially as I reviewed the ten symptoms of depression. I also thought of family members, friends, companions and members of my community who probably are suffering depression—and the subject has been left unspoken. For some reason we are afraid to broach the subject because of our biases and ignorance. One of the speakers spoke about two examples where people shared about their conditions and he asked if they thought they were depressed. In both instances they thanked him for naming it. He shared that it is not until it is named that people can begin looking at life changes or proper treatment.

I learned that depression is probably significantly higher among clergy than the general population. This got my attention because most clergy would never admit they suffer from depression

and most clergy would not want to discuss this subject with a confrere. During the workshop I realized that most of us are wonderful caregivers but cannot admit that we ourselves may be struggling with mental health issues. There is still a tremendous stigma associated with depression among the clergy, although many of us would deny that.

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When we send out notices about health issues of members, we rarely hear about someone who entered treatment because of depression. Until we reconcile this stigma or address it as a real health issue, I am not sure people will be open to admitting the possibility of depression in their lives.

The symbol of mental health movement is a three hundred pound cast iron bell made out of the shackles and chains that once restrained people in mental institutions. We have a long way to go because we may not hold people in iron shackles today, but the chains of ignorance, stigma, lack of information, and lack of funding still bind many people. May is Mental Health Month. Take some time to become informed and support others who experience depression or other mental health issues. 🙏

Fr. Al Ebach is pastor of Sacred Heart-Guadalupe Parish in Kansas City, MO, and serves on the Province Leadership Team.

Católico, continued from page 13...

whole person, we also believe we must be about the formation of the whole family as we work with our children and their parents in deepening their understanding and appreciation of the faith. While we certainly do not want to discourage them from their family devotions, we do want them to understand more fully the public worship of our church as we are all members of the one Body of Christ, redeemed in the blood of Jesus, and called to bring about the reign of God in our midst.

Evangelization is a much needed ministry within our community of faith. We have tried to upgrade our sacramental preparation programs for parents as well as children since we have arrived. It has been a rewarding but slow process. Patience is the virtue and listening is the praxis which continues to come into play as we minister to a people who struggle to find their place on a variety of levels within the larger Church and social community. 🙏

Fr. Mark Miller serves the Catholic Community of South Odessa, TX.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The story is told with relevance and relish of a religious community of women having three provinces. Even to an outsider one could deduce the characteristics of each group. Thus, one was obviously in a sense liberal, one was more or less in the mainstream, and one was conservative. To those in the know, one observer gave a capsule description of each group: the go-go girls, the so-so girls, and the no-no girls.

As a Missionary of the Precious Blood I used to think that this could have been said of our then three stateside provinces: the Kansas City Province made up the go-go boys, the Province of the Pacific the so-so boys, the Cincinnati the no-no boys. All, I hope, in good fun.

Last year's presidential campaign of the Democratic nominee emphasized the need for change. But logic tells us that change is not necessarily progress. To my way of thinking, at times the newsletters of the two remaining U.S. provinces have become a springboard for themes not pertinent to that medium. In the past year two articles by a former priest member of the Cincinnati Province argued that Pope John Paul was wrong in not dialoging over the issue of ordaining women to the priesthood. Now the Kansas City Province has joined the fray. Its newsletter, under the column "Leadership Notes," pleads that change in the Church comes from the bottom up, that is, from the people. But the writer explains that this really means it comes from us, us priests.

May I quote: "We are the ones who have the right—the responsibility—to pass on the wisdom of our experience to those in power in the Church." Then taking on the contentious subject of contraception the writer states: "Because the Church refused to take seriously the experience of its membership, Catholics following their own wisdom made the Church's teaching on contraception a moot point." The newsletter writer continues: "The same is probably happening with the issues of married clergy, homosexuality, and the ordination of women. It should be obvious by now that the papal directive forbidding even the discussion of women's ordination was doomed to irrelevancy from the start."

To me these statements in no way present a forward theology of the Church. In fact they were already presented in the sixteenth century by dissidents who began the thousands of Protestant denominations spread worldwide.

The author of these articles has faculties of the Kansas City Diocese, is engaged in parish ministry and counseling, and serves in a Precious Blood leadership role. But there is more. The English language has two words so similar as to cause confusion: flouting and flaunting. Each newsletter article in its own way illustrates examples of these words. The August-September 2008 issue contained the quotations I have used. The writer put himself

outside the teaching authority of the Church. He treated the Magisterium with disdain. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 87, cautions us: "Mindful of Christ's words to his apostles: 'He who hears you, hears me,' the faithful receive with docility the teachings and directives that their pastors give them in different forms."

An earlier paragraph reminds us that the Magisterium is at the service of the Church. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit it listens to this with devotion, "guards it with dedication, and expounds it faithfully." To act otherwise is to scoff at the Church's teaching. To do so is to flout it.

The last issue of *The New Wine Press* takes up again the theme of the earlier issue. The author describes his visit at St. Charles Center, where no one chided him for the original article. Knowing that his earlier presentation carried the seeds of dissension, he was disappointed. He had come prepared to flaunt his position, boldly to entertain discussion with any takers. But he observed that "not one person said anything to me that was not welcoming and friendly."

There comes the day and the hour when one must either take a stand or slip away. At the time of the first article I began a response, but another priest suggested that I should not be concerned. The second article convinced both him and me that something must be done. This is my answer.

Robert L. Conway, C.P.P.S.
Cincinnati Province
St. Charles Center
Carthage, OH

MY BACK PAGES

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

As I write this, I am focused on the Scriptures for the First Sunday of Lent. God's covenant with Noah following the great flood. Peter's assertion that the flood and the ark tell us something about the baptism which saves. Jesus is driven into the desert immediately following his baptism in the Jordan.

Hope and a new life, a different way of living, a better way, hopefully. The deserts that test and tempt us, but ultimately bring us near to God and one another. These themes permeate the stories in this issue, as they do the time of Lent.

I am remembering Josefina and Antonio, a young couple who crossed the Rio Grande and almost drowned—and then traveled two days through the desert to find a new home. She was pregnant with their first child, Jose Antonio, as their journey through the water and the desert brought them to a new life—and as they brought new life with them. At Jose's baptism, the gospel relating Jesus baptism and subsequent time in the desert was heard with great impact, for they had already lived it.


I remember also a homily preached by one of our priests, in which he talked about leaving his country in 1975, one of the so-called boat people. Amid the feelings of terror and hope and powerlessness and smallness in the boats, the water for them represented salvation, knowing it was the only way to freedom, to life.

It is the image of the boat, the ark, that stays with me. Speaking of Noah and the flood, Frederick Buechner points out that the ark is “wherever human beings come together as human beings in such a way that the differences between them stop being barriers.” The ark is where we need each other and know that we do. The ark is “where we have each other and where we have hope.”

Noah of course looked like a fool, but in the end he saved the world itself from drowning. However, as the scriptures remind us this weekend, there is one whom Noah foreshadowed, one who also looked like a fool and who also saved the world from drowning.

It seems that most people who have found a home here came through the water or across the water, or through the desert or wilderness, some more literally than others. Our spirituality reminds us that in Jesus all are brought near. To quote Buechner further, “We must not forget him because he saves the world still, and wherever the ark is, wherever we meet and touch in something like love, it is because he also is there. . . . So into his gracious and puzzling hands we commend ourselves through all the days of our voyaging. . . . We must build our arks with love and ride out the storm with courage and know that the little sprig of green in the dove's mouth betokens a reality beyond the storm more precious than the likes of us can imagine.”

Sometimes we have a boat, and sometimes we cross without one. The journey through the desert is sometimes long and arduous. It's all much easier if we don't try it alone—and if we encourage and welcome those who seek to be brought near, even as they struggle with the current or the barren landscape.

We have each other and we have hope. 

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