



THE NEW WINE PRESS

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

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THE THIRD PILLAR

James Schrader, C.P.P.S.

In one of his books, Father Ronald Rolheiser states that there is nothing like community to destroy our fantasies about religious life. To be a member of the community of the Church, our Baptism calls us to go beyond being praying, paying and obeying members. All the Sacraments of Initiation call us to be involved in the life, mission, activities and aspirations of the Body of Christ—incarnated in a particular community or parish.

Those who consider themselves good C.P.P.S. members, personally profess to enter into the joys and pains of membership in the community. They become members by a verbal profession, a covenant. They maintain and foster membership in the community by praying together, celebrating the Eucharist together, eating together, seeking the good of each other in a productive way, sustaining the weak and the sick, and by playing together. (Fr. Dennis Schaab is a persistent advocate of expressing community by playing together.)

The activities mentioned above are only some of the means used by members and companions to sustain and foster our professed community life. When does one become a member or a companion? On the day of incorporation or covenant? Yes, that is the day one legally becomes a member or companion of the Society. But they become active members when they participate in community life. When does one cease to be a member or companion? One ceases to be a member or companion, it would seem logical to say, when one stops being involved in the community of life we all profess.

One of the Lord's blessings in my life came in 1972, when, in response to invitations from couples, I participated in a Marriage Encounter—and was then privileged to assist in directing Marriage Encounter Weekends. I remember the pain and the struggle of some couples to maintain and deepen their matrimonial commitment to a common life together, a community of life. They were painfully honest with each other, stating that after years of marriage, they were experiencing the loss of the dream of a community of life. Feeling the void, they promised to help each other to reduce the time and energy devoted to their business or career, and so restore time and energy needed for a meaningful married life. These couples edified and inspired me by



See Pillar, continued on page 13...

LEADERSHIP NOTES

A Collaborative Approach for a New Creation

Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S.

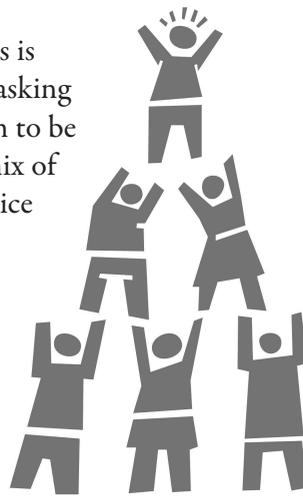
Last year in *The Christian Century*, an article raised the question, “Can Introverts Lead?” The author, Adam S. McHugh, cited a study by psychologist Marti Olsen Laney that asked people if they would prefer their ideal leaders to be introverted or extraverted, and both introverts and extraverts chose an extravert as “their ideal self and ideal leader.”

As we discern future leadership for the province, this is not one of the questions our discernment committee is asking us to consider: would we prefer our next leadership team to be comprised of more extraverts or introverts? A healthy mix of personality types would be preferable, of course, but notice the focus of the question: it is not whether we would prefer our next provincial to be an introvert or an extravert. While our statutes require the election of a provincial followed by members of the council, the impetus from our discernment and election four years ago was for the leadership of the province to model collaboration rather than hierarchy. For the past three and a half years, the present leadership team has tried to follow the direction of the 2007 Electoral Assembly.

Collaboration is one of those words that evoke the famous line by a Supreme Court justice trying to define pornography: “I know it when I see it.” So it is with collaboration. We don’t know exactly what it is or how to define it, but we know it when we see it. A collaborative approach to the ministry of provincial leadership embraces the gifts that each member of the team brings to the table, and delegates tasks to those who are most qualified to carry them out. But as Loughlan Sofield points out, “Closely related to the issue of giftedness is the issue of self-esteem. People who effectively use their gifts in service and ministry usually esteem and value themselves.” When we affirm these gifts in each other, we reinforce each other’s self-esteem. Sofield adds that when “gifts are not affirmed, self-esteem can plummet. The leadership team may then be characterized by competition, the antithesis of collaboration.”

Focus on Mission

The focus of collaboration is always the mission: to further and facilitate the reign of God. Informed and inspired by the gospel of Jesus Christ, the spirituality of the Precious Blood, and the charism of our founder Gaspar, the leadership team animates the incorporated and companion members in the mission of reconci-



“If we spend most of our time on issues of maintenance rather than mission, we are shirking our responsibility as servant leaders and not being faithful to the unfolding vision of God’s realm.”

THE NEW WINE PRESS

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

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

The Kansas City Province—incorporated members, covenanted companions, and candidates—united in prayer, service and mutual support, characterized by the tradition of its American predecessors, are missionaries of these times with diverse gifts and ministries.

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

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

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liation and renewal. If we spend most of our time on issues of maintenance rather than mission, we are shirking our responsibility as servant leaders and not being faithful to the unfolding vision of God's realm.

Collaborative ministry demands that we trust one another and are accountable to one another in carrying out the responsibilities our gifts demand of us. Trusting that each member of the leadership team will carry out his duties avoids the morass of micro-management. As Sofield reminds, "Collaboration does not mean everyone doing everything together, nor does it mean that there is no one designated leader with the authority to make unilateral decisions." In seeking to minister collaboratively, we must never confuse the "ends with the means." The goal of collaboration is always the mission.

A hierarchical model of leadership is much cleaner, leaner, and dare I say it, meaner. In the sixteen years I have served in leadership for the province, the three provincials I have worked with—Tom Albers, Mark Miller, and Jim Urbanic—have all tried to be collaborative. But we live, move and breathe in systems that tend to be hierarchical. If we wish to continue to advance a collaborative model of province leadership, we need to keep in mind that some people have worked in these systems for so long they are hard-wired to be hierarchical in their approach.

As a leadership team, we have tried to share the responsibilities of service for the province. Implementing a model we call liaisons, members of the leadership team have tried to keep the channels of communication open with those who serve in various staff positions in the province, with other C.P.P.S. provinces and the larger Precious Blood community, bishops in dioceses where we serve, and individual members and ministries. But liaisons can be dangerous at times, and there have certainly been some miscommunication and missed opportunities in the implementation. We regret any hurt or misunderstanding we may have caused and are grateful the bond of charity and the emphasis on reconciliation our spirituality reveals are lived with such grace by our incorporated and companion members.

There are many signs of life and hope in our province,



worldwide community, and in all the congregations claimed by the blood of Christ that reflect the mission of furthering God's realm. And this is our challenge: to make the realm of God a vibrant and vital reality in our world today. Such a large responsibility for such a small province, some might say. So it is. But this is always the examination of conscience for people

"In the language of the corporate world, we are not looking for a merger; we are advancing the possibility of creating something new. We do this not because we are getting smaller in numbers but because our vision is getting larger."

shaped by the spirituality of the precious blood: can people hear the echoes of Gaspar and see the mission of Jesus in our lives?

Beyond the Numbers

Some of us still like to play the numbers game. But as Joan Chittester said a few years ago at the national assembly for women religious, focusing only on the numbers is "a capitalist answer to a Christian question." Our focus is "not how many people do we have to do the work" of the blood of Christ but rather, "are we willing to do the work of the blood with however many we have?"

Still, one of the best definitions of community is that we gather in community to do together what we cannot do alone. Which is why the next leadership team must re-engage and advance the dialogue that began in the 1990s, picked up steam at the turn of the present century culminating in a gathering at the Cenacle Retreat House in Warrensville, Illinois in September 2003 that envisioned a new North American

See Leadership, continued on page 12...

IN-FORMATION

Joe Bathke, C.P.P.S.

Last summer, as we were making arrangements and worrying if everything we needed to do to obtain student visas for John Vianney, Peter Tam and Joseph would be completed in time for them to begin their studies, I could never have imagined what I was to about to learn in the coming months. It would be easy to focus solely on the Vietnamese candidates and their specific experiences, but these past four months have been a time of learning for all of us at the Gaspar House of Initial Formation.

The obvious learning has been the work John, Peter and Joseph have done in learning English. John Vianney, Peter Tam, and Joseph have completed the fall quarter at the De Paul University English Language Academy and began the Winter Quarter on January 10th. Each of them has made significant strides in their command of English, especially in the number of words they have learned. They have been most successful in their grammar studies, which is reflected when they read during community prayer and at the Eucharist. Even in the areas of listening and writing—customarily two of the most challenging areas for students of English to master—the candidates are making real progress.

A number of people who have had regular contact with the guys throughout the fall have commented on the noticeable development of their conversational skills. Given that they have been in the United States only four months and have completed just a single quarter of English study, I am very confident that John, Peter and Joseph will be able to achieve a level of skill in English that will take them to the next step and pursue theological study at CTU. Their progress is a direct result of their commitment to learning English and to their willingness to put in long hours of study.

As important as learning English is in achieving the goal of



John Vianney, Peter and Joseph (l to r) during their Christmas break visit to Kansas City

studying theology at CTU—and returning to their homeland with a solid theological background which they can share with the community and the Vietnamese Church—we

“In our rush through daily activities, we in a single language community often neglect to take the time to really listen to what is being said and, on the other hand, checking out if what we have said has been understood.”

also place emphasis on cultural learning. Of course, it is important that the candidates learn as quickly as possible the basic “rules” of U.S. culture. I should have known that feeling comfortable in a large city like Chicago wasn’t really going to be a huge issue, because Ho Chi Minh City is even larger. If anything, the men found Chicago easier to get around in (mass transit is more reliable, direct and faster), and in an interesting observation noted that Chicago is quieter than Ho Chi Minh City.

For the most part the transition has been smooth. Most of the daily activities are of course carried out in English. However, being aware that personal communication is essential in certain things, we have arranged for the candidates to have a doctor who speaks Vietnamese—as well as the office staff—and we are fortunate to have a connection with the S.V.D. community, which enabled us to provide John, Peter and Joseph with a Vietnamese spiritual director. The candidates also have been able to make a connection with the Vietnamese community of St. Henry’s

See Formation, continued on page 14...

VOCATIONS OFFICE

Sharon Crall

In my vocation ministry I have had many opportunities to attend special events that truly enrich my faith. Through me, I hope these learning opportunities also enrich the lives of those to whom I minister. The National Religious Vocation Conference presents a gathering every two years for vocation ministers. This year Fr. Joe Miller and I traveled in November to Cleveland, Ohio where we represented the Kansas City Province and joined about 375 other vocation ministers in four days of education, sharing and celebrating vocation ministry. The theme of the Convocation was, "Casting the Net, Vocation Ministry in a Global Church and World."

As I prepared to share with you some of the highlights of this convocation, I was first led to the dictionary for the definition of a convocation. According to Webster's, a convocation is "a number of persons meet in answer to a summons; an assembly." This immediately brought two images to mind: the high school assemblies of my youth and our own Precious Blood Assemblies. Prior to the school assemblies, an announcement was made over the intercom, and we marched into the gym knowing one of two things: 1) either there would be a celebration of some academic achievement or sporting event, or 2) we were about to hear some really important news. The same might be said of our Precious Blood Assemblies, as we annually come together in celebration of prayer, fellowship and

friendship and also hear reports and speakers.

Celebration and news. Both of these happened during the four days at the NRVC in November. The hundreds of vocation ministers "celebrated" the successes and joys of vocation ministry.



Pictured (l to r) are members of the Precious Blood Congregations who attended the Banquet at the Convocation in Cleveland: Sr. Maria Hughes, A.S.C.; Sr. Jan Lane, A.S.C.; Sr. Carolyn Hoying, C.P.P.S.; Br. Nick Renner, C.P.P.S. Sr. Rita Schilling, A.S.C.; Fr. Joe Miller, C.P.P.S., Fr. Tom Bohman, C.P.P.S.; and Fr. Vince Wirtner, C.P.P.S. (Photo by Sharon Crall)

"Participants heard that vocation ministry is alive, necessary and more successful than some might be led to believe. We were encouraged to "cast our nets" wider to a new generation and a global world full of future hope and possibilities."

Among them is renewed interest in religious vocations from our young generation. Other causes for celebration are the many ways we have to communicate with discerners in this global Church due to the technology now possible. Participants heard that vocation ministry is alive, necessary and more successful than some might be led to believe. We were encouraged to "cast our nets" wider to a new generation and a global world full of future hope and possibilities.

As to the important and "good news," the keynote speakers and workshop presenters brought many thought provoking images which led to hearty discussion among attendees. In his introduction, Br. Paul Bednarczyk, C.S.C., Executive Director of the NRVC, said, "Based on the NRVC's *Study on Recent Vocations*, we know that globalization, the convocation's theme, is the hope and challenge of religious life today. We must cast the net wide but make sure we offer depth, strength, and wholeness to those considering a religious vocation."

There were three keynote speakers. The first, Br. David Andrews, C.S.C., voiced the need for a spirituality of globalization.

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He noted that globalization is not just an economic phenomena; it is a transformation of space and time, which can resemble a whirlwind that never allows grounding. Discerners are caught up in a world of extensity of globalization that can only be balanced by an intensity of spirituality. That is the grounding needed so badly in this fast paced world.

Discerners and all people in general need the process of steeping their faith (as in the image of steeping of tea). The more the steeping, the richer their faith life becomes. In a time when we can spread out in many directions, we also must remember to go deep and to invite others to that place of depth.

The second keynoter, Sr. Angela Zukowski, M.H.S.H., spoke on new technologies of globalization and the digital culture they create, which she described as mission territory to the Church. There is a completely new culture being formed with new language, new psychology and new techniques.

The new global cultural context uses words such as open, transparent, non-hierarchical, interactive, real time, and facts. These words can be very much countercultural to how a young generation views the Church. Yet, especially the younger generation, is searching for meaning in the midst of it all. We must get their attention in a fast paced culture of distractions in this cyber-world. In their search for meaning in general, our “robust presence” and new creativity must capture a piece of their world and then help ground them in another way of life.

Fr. Bryan Massingale, the third keynoter, explored the theology of globalization. His dynamic presentation included ramifications of globalization in fields of Catholic Social Teaching, such as affirmative action, racial justice, religious ethics, environmental justice and peacemaking (in an age of terrorism). Fr. Massingale challenged us to look at our communities to see if we really are open to all people—race and ecclesiology. Our church is changing in its complexion. Are we open to changing accordingly?

The workshops offered dealt with subjects such as working from abundance, African American men and women in the Church, campus ministries, romance and religion on American’s college campuses, and theological reflection.

Archbishop Gregory Aymond of New Orleans, the NRVS’s Episcopal Liaison to the USCCB, presided at the Friday evening liturgy. At the concluding Prayer Breakfast, the Most Reverend Pietro Sambì, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, reminded participants that “the Church wants you to be successful in your catch”. We should be assured of the support of our congregations in both personnel and

resources, and most especially in the important Christian witness of our members. The Nuncio made a special point of noting that candidates are seeking the experience and witness of a strong sense of community. He encouraged our congregations to first build community and then extend outreach. He said when congregations scatter themselves in various ministries first, it is difficult to build and strengthen the Community.

It was a joyous celebration and by the time we left my mind was swirling with the new and affirming information received. Another opportunity afforded by this Convocation was the gathering of our vocation ministers from other Precious Blood men/women congregations to share in this event.

Convocation—Celebration and Information-Assembly. The event was all of that and even more!

“The new global cultural context uses words such as open, transparent, non-hierarchical, interactive, real time, and facts. These words can be very much countercultural to how a young generation views the Church. Yet, especially the younger generation, is searching for meaning in the midst of it all.”

A BROTHER'S ADMIRATION

Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S.

In St. Gaspar's *Circular Letters* to the brothers he encourages us to look into ourselves and "if you admire virtue as it exists in others, then you too should practice it incessantly." I admired many virtues in Br. Robert Herman—among them being an incredible contemplative prayer life, compassionate outreach to the sick and homebound, and treating his body like a temple of the Holy Spirit. I cried at his bedside as I cared for him as a hospice chaplain for Catholic Community Hospice. It was a whole new challenge to minister to someone you are especially close to in life.

I was humbled as I reflected on how he cared for countless people in a similar fashion, including his own father. I wept in gratitude for the example he showed me and told him how much I admired him and learned from him. It took

me back over twenty plus years, cherishing memories of working together in the soup kitchen or sharing stories of doing emergency assistance in social services ministry. Anyone who knew Robert knows that he had the gift of gab, for he was both curious and inquisitive. He had no problem asking questions, and had a tendency towards exaggeration—for which I grew to love him, no matter how aggravating. He was easy to engage in conversation, because he genuinely cared.

I miss our conversations and our reminiscing about our childhoods. We both loved talking about our brothers and our fathers. Our fathers loved cars and keeping them in top condition. We shared stories of father and son activities growing up. We had a lot in common. We loved going to the health club and exercising. He praised my uncle [Bishop Joe Charron] for making health club membership an official expense back in the 80s. Robert was a picture of health for many years. He attributed this to the advice of his father who told him and his brothers, "Boys, you are what you eat." I heard Robert say this numerous times knowing that he took it to heart and lived it.

In the last months of his life, Robert asked me several times to let our religious community know that he was concerned about the health of our members. He truly felt that some members' struggles were leading them down a road to what he called "silent suicide." He wanted to do his part in promoting healthy living and



he did it by example. He stayed true to a pretty strict diet and exercised regularly to keep his weight regulated. Robert, like anyone working in healthcare, knew too much after so many hours of working in the hospital. The effects of obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes leads to heart disease and other problems.

Robert treated his body as if it was a temple of the Holy Spirit. He was good at practicing moderation and portion control in his eating habits. St. Gaspar would be proud of him as we consider some of the advice he gave on the matter to people he held dear to him in his life: "So be of help to your humanness, let your choice of the quality and quantity of food be such as to bring about restoration of health. Take good care of your health. I have heard that you have put on a bit of weight. Do whatever you can to avoid a too sedentary life. You know very well that we must conserve our health for the glory of the Lord. We are to be custodians of our health so that we, in all things, can do the will of God."

Robert asked me to be the messenger—and that is hard to do after many of us have probably engaged in some festive feasting over the holidays. I believe he has raised an important question to our community. How healthy do we want to be?





I read about a group of fundamental Christians whose members gathered on a mountain somewhere, sure from their biblical reading that the world was going to end at midnight on that day. They read the signs that the bible spoke of, and they determined that the world was to come to an end on that particular day and that particular hour. When the end didn't come, they had to come down off that mountain disheartened, and go back to their former places of employment to see if they could get their jobs back and put their children back into school.

On November 4, 2010 the message heard by a gathering of families and community members was not that the world ended due to the violence of their lives, nor that all was well because of the resurrection, but rather that with the cross clearly in mind, the resurrection of Christ is our hope. For those who suffer from trauma, the scriptures offer hope and consolation that God has not forgotten his people, that God is not deaf to the cries of his own. It is in this middle ground that we journey. It is in this middle place that we witness to the resurrection, while still embracing and lifting the cross.

Mothers and fathers, grandparents and brothers and sisters and cousins and friends—all gathered clutching pictures and little white crosses with the names of their loved ones written on them. We gathered for our annual Mass for victims of violence, not to claim our place as defeated people, but rather to recognize that even in the midst of our struggles, our pains and our anger, God had not abandoned us. The overwhelming message was that it was OK to be angry, OK to feel desolation and OK to feel the numbness of a child's life being taken away violently. But in the midst of that pain and emptiness, God is very present.



A Spirituality of Presence

Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S.

At the Mass, we read the scripture passage about Thomas, who said he wouldn't believe in the risen Lord until he touched the wounds—placing his fingers in the nail holes and his hand in the side of Jesus. As Jesus appeared again the following week, Thomas did touch the wounds of the crucifixion and, in doing so he recognized Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

What gets us through when we have been a victim of violence or deep harm? What reassurances do we have? What gets us through the hard times when everything seems to crumble around us? What gets us through when we lose a son or daughter to violence? Somehow the words—even the words of Jesus found in the gospel, words of reassurance—don't quite do it. And that is when Jesus, using very few words, invites us to probe the wounds that mark his body. It is not so much what Jesus says that makes a difference; it is that he is present, that he knows.

I was talking to a group of parents who had lost a child to violence about how inadequate I felt when I was called recently to the hospital in the middle of the night. A young girl of 17 or 18 had been shot. They

had called earlier in the week and asked me to come and anoint her. I did. She had been coming home from work—a part time job she had after school—about 9:00 P.M. A car came up and a window rolled down and shots were fired. She lay in the hospital on life support. About 2:30 A.M. they called me and asked me to come. She had died and they wanted to pray. When I got there the family

See Presence, continued on page 13...

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRECIOUS BLOOD MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

“Life beats down and crushes the soul and art reminds you that you have one.”~*Stella Adler*

The therapeutic value that art can produce in the youth that we work with was discussed at this week’s radar meeting. Radar meetings gather a variety of different agencies within our community for collaboration among us in our work with youth. Building self esteem was one of the values that everyone agreed was important, and something that as a group we would like to build upon. I mentioned from my own experience how art was my salvation, and that I know very well the transformative powers that art can have on youth and adults alike.

The meeting further built my excitement as we explored all the possible ways of impacting the youth in our program, because there’s nothing that I enjoy more than seeing the change in our youth as a result of picking up a paint brush. It’s not to say that art is the magical elixir to bring that change over night, but it has the potential to plant the seed of change.

I’ve already witnessed signs of hope in the responses from some of the youth in the three ongoing art programs at our Center. Just the fact that it’s a new experience for them and that they enjoy it is an indication that we’re breaking ground.

Jovanny, one of our recent referrals, is an example of the infectious effect that our program has had on this youth. Jovanny is a youth who came to us through Project Repay. Project Repay is a restorative approach that is an outcome of the collaboration between the Precious Blood Center and the Juvenile Courts. The courts refer the youth to our Center to perform service hours. The “salary” earned by their service is paid to the victims of their case in order to repay or make restitution. It is designed to offer them a chance to restore the harm done rather than simply placing them in a youth detention facility.

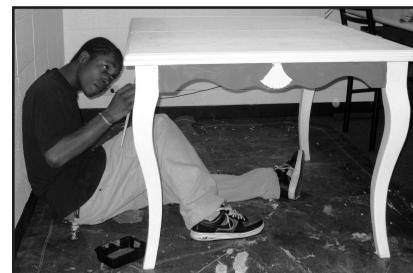
At our radar meeting, Jovanny’s probation officer was telling us how Jovanny was asking

him if he could complete the rest of his service hours at the Precious Blood Center. Jovanny was mandated to perform twenty service hours with us—which he has already completed in our art program. He was to go elsewhere to complete other service hours, but asked his probation officer if he could come back to our program. That was the confirmation of how I feel about what we’re doing here at the Center.

Jovanny needs a lot of help and support in building positive developmental skills. Deeply rooted in the gang culture, his mind is consumed with the streets and the ideology of the gang culture. However, the restorative arts program allows him to share a piece of himself and to tackle the negativity of the streets with the positive and expressive nature of restorative art. It is my hope to redirect his energies, and time, in creating something he can take pride in and, eventually, be filled with an appreciation of art.



Restorative Art Victor Lopez



Beyond the desire to do the rest of his community service hours at the Precious Blood Center, Jovanny, on his own accord, has taken part in our Wednesday night circles—another restorative practice that is voluntary for the youth who come to it.

Am I a dreamer? Of course, I am. I was Jovanny once upon a time. I still bare the scars of having lived a very self destructive life, but I also bare the fruit from a little seed that was planted in me a quarter century ago when someone encouraged me to paint. I am grateful for it, because not only did art help build my self esteem, but today I live as an artist and realize the transformative power that art can produce. Art allows youth to feel a pride that will help build their self esteem; it can rebuild a life. It can repay a harm done.

Victor Lopez is a freelance artist and works part time with the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation.

RESPONDING TO TERROR IN TUCSON

Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S.

Last year at this time it was Haiti. An earthquake caused untold suffering and loss. This January it is Tucson. Once again we are confronted with an act of violence that sears the soul of the nation and will leave yet another scar upon our heartland.

At a supermarket on a Saturday morning, a Congresswoman and her staff set up shop to meet and greet the people of her district, to listen to their concerns and dialogue about the issues. A deeply disturbed young man who, according to reports, once had an exchange with Representative Gabrielle Giffords at a previous event similar to this, brings a semi-automatic weapon he buys at a local sporting goods store, with ammunition he picks up at Walmart, and tries to assassinate the congresswoman. In his attempt, he kills her thirty-year old aide who was engaged to be married; a federal judge who stopped by to say hi to his friend, the congresswoman, after attending Saturday morning Mass; a nine-year-old girl who was born on September 11, 2001, the day that has come to symbolize the terrorism, evil, and violence in the world; and three others in their seventies who came to meet their representative—or perhaps were doing their weekly grocery shopping.

As the nation's eyes are focused on the memorial services, to pray for the victims of this violence, to pray for the recovery of those who were wounded, including Representative Giffords who, according to the surgeon, seems to me making a remarkable recovery, our ears are filled with the rhetoric from the right and

from the left about who we are to blame for yet another horrific act of violence visited upon our nation. Certainly the cross-hairs of a rifle on Sarah Palin's web site identifying those in Congress she and her followers targeted for defeat in last November's election have been the subject of much debate. Such a symbol is despicable in referring to political opponents. It is appropriate only to depict the places where the evil of violence has left scars: Ft. Hood, Virginia Tech, Columbine, Jonesboro, Oklahoma City, Waco, New York City, Washington, and all the places where the people flying that morning of September 11, 2001 left loved ones behind.

But whether we stand on the left or the right, this tragedy in Tucson confronts us once again as people of faith—and especially as people who claim a spirituality of reconciliation in the blood of Christ—with the question of how to respond. Both

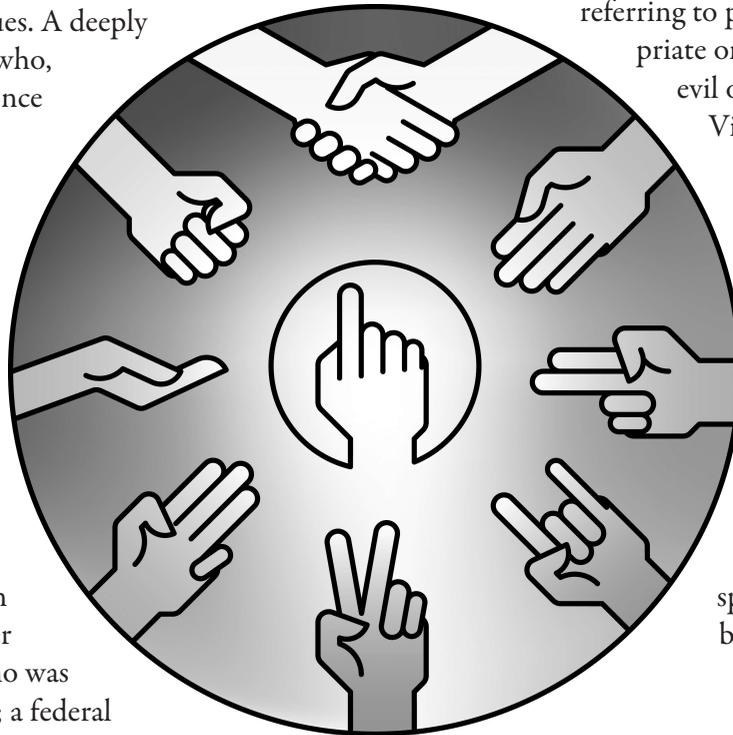
Sojourners (www.sojo.net) and Pax Christi USA

(www.paxchristiusa.org) offer helpful resources and solid Scriptural support to help preachers and teachers engage others in dialogue about this tragedy. The Sojourners community offers a petition to sign that pledges:

“We will strive to create safe and sacred spaces for common prayer and community discussion as we come together to see God's will for our nation and our world” (next page).

This pledge echoes the prayer “for greatness of heart” on the Pax Christi USA website. In our

Continued on next page...



“But whether we stand on the left or the right, this tragedy in Tucson confronts us once again as people of faith—and especially as people who claim a spirituality of reconciliation in the blood of Christ—with the question of how to respond.”

Peace and Civility Pledge

We believe Jesus' teaching that "Blessed are those who make peace" (Matthew 5:9). We acknowledge that most of us have been guilty of violence in our hearts and with our tongues. We hold ourselves to the higher standard to which Christ called us: to refrain from not only physical violence but violence of the heart and tongue. "Do not commit murder. Anyone who murders will be judged for it," and "Do not be angry with your brother or sister" (Matthew 5:22-23).

We commit that our dialogue with each other will reflect the spirit of the Scriptures, which tell us, in relating to each other, to be "quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry" (James 1:19).

We believe that each of us, and our fellow human beings, are created in the image of God. This belief should be reflected in the honor and respect we show to each other, particularly in how we speak. "With the tongue we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God...this ought not to be so" (James 3:9,10).

We pledge that when we disagree, we will do so respectfully, without falsely impugning the other's motives, attacking the other's character, or questioning the other's faith. We will be mindful of our language, being neither arrogant nor boastful in our beliefs as we strive to "be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2).

We recognize that we cannot function together as citizens of the same community, whether local or national, unless we are mindful of how we treat each other. Each of us must therefore "put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body" (Ephesians 4:25).

We commit to pray for our political leaders - those with whom we agree or disagree. "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made—for kings and all who are in high positions" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

We believe that it is more difficult to hate others, even adversaries and enemies, when we are praying for them. We commit to pray for each other, those with whom we agree and those with whom we may disagree, so that we may be faithful witnesses to our Lord, who prayed "that they may be one" (John 17:22).

prayer, we ask God to protect us "from all pettiness" and to "be large in thought, in word, in deed. Let us be done with fault-finding and leave off all self-seeking. May we...meet each other face-to-face, without self-pity and without prejudice."

We don't know what impact the vitriolic language in our politics—and especially in Arizona over immigration and the health care bill—had on Jared L. Loughner, the young man accused of this horrific crime. But what is becoming increasingly clear is that Loughner was showing the symptoms of severe mental illness for some time. His professors and classmates at the community college he attended sounded the alarm some time ago. Some were even fearful for their lives. He evidently was expelled from the college and could not be re-admitted unless he underwent a psychological evaluation. My fear is that this act of violence has made it more difficult to erase the stigma of mental illness that so many who live with brain disorders have to deal with each day.

As we continue to pray for the victims of this violence, please go to the Sojourners web site and prayerfully consider signing the pledge and committing ourselves to a more civil discourse and sacred dialogue.

"But at a time when our discourse has become so sharply polarized...it's important for us to pause for a moment and make sure that we're talking with each other in a way that heals, not in a way that wounds."

"As we discuss these issues, let each of us do so with a good dose of humility. Rather than pointing fingers or assigning blame, let's use this occasion to expand our moral imaginations, to listen to each other more carefully, to sharpen our instincts for empathy and remind ourselves of all the ways that our hopes and dreams are bound together."

"We may not be able to stop all evil in the world, but I know that how we treat one another, that's entirely up to us."

President Barack Obama

January 12, 2011
Tucson, Arizona

Leadership, continued from page 3...

province formed out of (at that time) four provinces—but then for reasons that remain unclear to me, waned and then withered. In the intervening years, we mourned the death of the Province of the Pacific, began again to collaborate with the Cincinnati Province in formation and vocation ministry, and continued our involvement with the Precious Blood Leadership Conference.

Our continued existence as a province is not the issue. But as we look to our future and the most responsible stewardship of our resources—spiritual, personnel, communal and financial—we need to look seriously at rekindling the spirit of the Warrensville gathering. In the language of the corporate world, we are not looking for a merger; we are advancing the possibility of creating something new. We do this not because we are getting smaller in numbers but because our vision is getting larger.

These are exciting times. There is a renewed vision in the congregation that emphasizes renewal and reconciliation for a hierarchical institution scarred by abuses of power and privilege, secrecy and scandal. The vision of Vatican II is alive and well in the Precious Blood family of communities that choose collegiality over control, true dialogue and listening before decisions are made, and circles over ladders. The blood of Christ calls us to stand in the midst of the institutional church and call again for the reforms envisioned by Vatican II—that “new Pentecost” good Pope John XXIII prayed for at the grave of our founder shortly before the beginning of the Ecumenical Council. While the institutional church seems bent on circling the wagons, the blood calls us to widen the circle of our companionship and our compassion. While some in the institutional church want litmus tests to determine orthodoxy, the blood of Christ invites dialogue as we listen to those with whom we disagree, and dreams of a day when all shall be one.

Signs of Life

The litany of the signs of life are energizing—from the reconciliation ministry in Chicago to the mission in Vietnam; from volunteers who hear the call of the blood to vocation ministry that upholds the priesthood of all believers. While the institutional church still practices its version of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” even if the military doesn’t, we are engaged in a ministry of inclusion with those are Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgendered people. As

retreat centers close around the country, we take the risk to dialogue and plan how our present mission houses can be houses of prayer, places of hospitality and community, safe places for solitude for those seeking shelter from the storms of a violent world. Companion and incorporated members are involved in ministries of solidarity, standing with the poor, the young and the old, the undocumented and the excluded, the stranger, the sick and the dying. Our Human Development Fund continues to help organizations that address the causes of poverty, injustice, ignorance and intolerance, even as our

Scholarship Fund gives a hand to students willing to work to make a difference in the world.

This is only a partial list of how our charism and spirituality are being implemented today in parishes and schools, hospices and hospitals, rectories and reconciliation centers, mission houses and family homes. But we cannot sit on our laurels or become complacent. We cannot allow our fears to dim our view or our vision.

The next four years offer a wonderful opportunity to explore with the other two North American provinces the possibility of creating something new. Yes, there are still scars on the hearts of some members and these scars need to be addressed in circles of listening and truth. Behind every scar there is a story and these stories must be told. But as I look upon the landscape of religious life today and listen to women and men in communities that have created new wineskins, there are remarkable opportunities for growth and grace. We are already collaborating with the Cincinnati Province on so many levels. We are not in competition with them or any other province in the congregation. We are one in the spirit of Gaspar and the spirituality of the blood and it is time we draw near to one another in becoming a new creation.

“The vision of Vatican II is alive and well in the Precious Blood family of communities that choose collegiality over control, true dialogue and listening before decisions are made, and circles over ladders.”



Presence, continued from page 8...

was there; the mother hadn't left her bedside since the incident some two weeks prior. Even the doctors and nurses were amazed by the incredible faithfulness of this mother. I walked in and said some prayers and just stayed there—mostly in silence with the family. I really didn't know what else to say, I never do.

As I was telling this group of mothers and fathers about how inadequate I felt, they interrupted me and said that it didn't matter what I said, but that I was there. They went on to say how so many of their friends and family stay away because they don't know what to say. They stay away because they feel uncomfortable, stumbling over their words. But the power of just being there, of being present, was what they needed.

We will enter into the harshness of winter. In Chicago, we are already looking forward to spring. Jesus reminds us of this new coming to spring—when the sap begins to run, when the leaves begin to sprout, when we know that the summer is about here. This is the time when we know that the harshness of winter is not for ever and a new summer will arrive.

Pillar, continued from page 1...

relinquishing—sometimes at great inconvenience and pain—their former jobs, so as to give their Sacrament of Matrimony the time and effort needed. Radical changes for these couples! Our jobs, our apostolates can be so consuming, that we have only scraps left for community life.

Community is natural to us humans. Only by experiencing life shared with others can we discover our real selves. And self-discovery and union with community grow in the same, not inverse proportion. As social beings we remain partners whom God has chosen in such a way that we must realize our personal uniqueness in the community of and service to

“Community is natural to us humans. Only by experiencing life shared with others can we discover our real selves. And self-discovery and union with community grow in the same, not inverse proportion.”

humankind. Our conversations, our communications, are to be direct, honest and appropriate—especially in times of conflict and division.

My generation was not blessed with a course in effective communications. Rarely, if ever, do I invite someone to evaluate my communications, my quick judgments and assumptions. And how often are our efforts at communicating stifled because we speak to a third party instead of going directly to the person involved.

Ronald Rolheiser claims there are two options to life: delight or depress. That rings bells. But I have added a third option: delight, depress or complain. Our Lord reminds us: “If you have anything against your brother or sister, go and speak to them.” Our temptation is to go to a third party (who will not render us vulnerable), and then rumors, slander, even calumny, spread like wild fire. It is this lack of direct, honest and appropriate communication that often frustrates and eventually kills community.

St. John Chrysostom unequivocally declares: “Slander is even worse than cannibalism.” Community is messy, real and trying, but it remains our vocation. No, we do not have to like everyone, but the call to love is universal. And it is that persevering love that is a sign of the community of the Church (“See how they love one another”) and is also the sign of membership in the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Blood is the symbol of love and life.

For some, community is on the front burner. We have had fruitful workshops and retreats on two of the pillars of our Society of Apostolic Life, namely apostolate and spirituality. But not yet on community, the third and final pillar. It is a tough subject, because it is so personal. Community may be a subject where angels fear to tread. But it is also our vocation and salvation.

Formation, continued from page 4...

Parish on the north side of Chicago. This connection has provided a number of opportunities for the candidates to participate in familiar liturgical and social activities.

Significantly, in my view, what each of us has experienced in living together has been a deeper appreciation of the need to work at communication and understanding. In our rush through daily activities, we in a single language community often neglect to take the time to really listen to what is being said and, on the other hand, checking out if what we have said has been understood. I have discovered how easily people can get dropped from a conversation.

We are learning how to be attentive and to be inclusive in the conversation. Undoubtedly this changes the style of conversation, because if someone doesn't understand what we're discussing, it is necessary to spend time helping establish understanding. Obviously, that means conversation is not always free flowing and wide ranging. On the other hand, those involved are learning first hand the meaning of inclusiveness and reflective listening. I suspect that as the Vietnamese candidates grow in their language and conversational skills, and as we grow in understanding the cultural ideas and understanding of the Vietnamese members, the conversation will become more free flowing. I do hope that we will continue to practice the lessons we have learned.

The first semester has been an interesting journey—one I anticipate will continue to reveal many new and marvelous blessings. I do want to express my thanks to those who have sent messages of good wishes, those who continue to offer their prayers and to those who have been able to visit. Be assured we daily remember the Precious Blood Family in our prayers.

Fr. Joe Bathke is the Province Director of Formation and the Interprovincial Director of Initial Formation at Gaspar House in Chicago.

LOOKING AHEAD

May 2-5, 2011
Provincial Assembly
Annunciation Parish
Kearney MO

June 6-10, 2011
*Installation of Leadership
and Community Retreat*
Savior of the World Center
Kansas City KS



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Reach Out



Continued from page 16...

She opened it and began to read. She recounted: “Across the top of the certificate in beautiful calligraphy were the words, ‘YOU NOW BELONG TO GOD.’ I looked further down the paper and read the date of Rick’s baptism—September 11, 1966. And in that moment I knew peace, and I let Rick go. For I realized that I had started to let him go years before when I had carried him into that church and given him to God.”

We all know when our birthday is—as well as the birthdays of many relatives and friends. But few of us know the date of our Baptism, which is just as notable and important—arguably more. The voice that spoke to Jesus as he stood in the Jordan also speaks to us: “This is my beloved.” In other words, “You are mine.” “You belong to me.” And these words must be juxtaposed with those of the prophet Isaiah in the same liturgy (and the week following): “I have grasped you by the hand.” “You are my servant.” “I make you a light to all people.”

We all know that beginnings are usually easier than what comes next, namely, continuing and persevering. Many New Year’s resolutions are by now discarded, for example. The first day of school is quite different from exam week. The birth of a child is a wonderful experience; raising a child is filled with hard work.

Baptism is only a beginning. It needs to be lived out. (In this regard, it is like other sacraments, e.g., First Communion is not “Last” Communion; marriage is lived, not just celebrated once.) We are handed a map and then have to take the trip. As Fr. Jim Schrader says in his article, “Baptism calls us to go beyond praying, paying and obeying... [It calls] us to be involved in the life, mission, activities and aspirations of the Body of Christ.” Belonging to God means being called to service.

Back to words. They call us; they also sustain us. Joe Nassal, writing about leadership in this issue, points out that those who effectively use their gifts in service and ministry usually value themselves, and “when we affirm these gifts in each other, we reinforce each other’s self-esteem.”

Sometimes, however, as Dave Kelly notes, words are not necessary or needed—just caring presence.

Words can also be damaging—as we experience in personal and community relationships, or even on a national and international level. Our Precious Blood spirituality invites us to recall, in the words of President Obama, that “it’s important for us to pause for a moment and make sure that we’re talking with each other in a way that heals, not in a way that wounds.”

Mary Ann Bird, in her memoir entitled *The Whisper Test*, tells of the power of words in her life. She was born with multiple birth defects: deaf in one ear, a cleft palate, a disfigured face, a crooked nose, lopsided feet. As a child, Mary Ann suffered not only these physical impairments but also the emotional damage inflicted by other children. She writes: “I grew up knowing I was different, and I hated it.... When I started school, my classmates made it clear to me how I looked to others: a little girl with a misshapen lip, crooked nose, lopsided teeth, and garbled speech. When schoolmates asked, ‘What happened to your lip?’ I’d tell them I’d fallen and cut it on a piece of glass. Somehow it seemed more acceptable to have suffered an accident than to have been born different. I was convinced that no one outside my family could love me. There was, however, a teacher in the second grade whom we all adored—Mrs. Leonard by name. She was short, round, happy—a sparkling lady. Annually we had a hearing test.... Mrs. Leonard gave the test to everyone in the class, and finally it was my turn. I knew from past years that as we stood against the door and covered one ear, the teacher sitting at her desk would whisper something, and we would have to repeat it back—things like ‘The sky is blue’ or ‘Do you have new shoes?’ I waited there for those words that God must have put into her mouth, those seven words that changed my life. Mrs. Leonard said, in her whisper, ‘I wish you were my little girl.’”

God’s words to us can be our words to others. “You are God’s child.” “You are part of the family.” “God loves you and so do I.” “You are my beloved.” “I am delighted in you.” So many people need to hear this voice today—and might not hear it, except for our saying it. And our acting on it.

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MY BACK PAGES

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

Be careful of words,
even the miraculous ones.
For the miraculous we do our best,
sometimes they swarm like insects
and leave not a sting but a kiss.
They can be as good as fingers.
They can be as trusty as the rock
you stick your bottom on.
But they can be both daisies and bruises.
Yet I am in love with words.
They are doves falling out of the ceiling.
They are six holy oranges sitting in my lap.
They are the trees, the legs of summer,
and the sun, its passionate face.
Yet often they fail me.
I have so much I want to say,
so many stories, images, proverbs, etc.
But the words aren't good enough,
the wrong ones kiss me.
Sometimes I fly like an eagle
but with the wings of a wren.
But I try to take care
and be gentle to them.
Words and eggs must be handled with care.
Once broken they are impossible
things to repair.

Anne Sexton

As the Advent-Christmas season ended recently and we entered once again into so-called Ordinary Time, the liturgy focused on Baptism—and the call that comes to us through this sacrament. This coincided exactly with the killings and attempted murder of a congresswoman in Tucson—which among other things set off a national debate and discussion on the tone of political and personal rhetoric in recent years. Most would agree that it has been characterized by a high amount of vitriol, animosity, hatred and, yes, sometimes implied (or not so implied) violence. These two events can inform each other, and are related through the power of words. And the contributors to this issue speak in different ways to this as well. Let me explain.

About six months after 9-11 someone shared the following experience with me. As a friend of the family, he had recently attended a memorial service in New York for a man who had died in the collapse of one of the Twin Towers. His name was Rick; he was 35 years old when he perished. His mother Joanne spoke at the service. She described and recounted her pain at the loss of her son and her difficulty in letting him go—something she couldn't bring herself to do.

It took several months for the authorities to finally identify Rick's remains, and they called Joanne to request a copy of his birth certificate. She went to the bank and opened her safe deposit box to retrieve it, and in doing so noticed Rick's baptismal certificate.

Continued on page 15...
