

THE New Wine PRESS



Volume 24 No. 5 • January 2016

Reimagining Religious Life

**Kansas City Province Celebrates Ordination
of Members of the Vietnam Mission**



Immigration Reform: Where Are We Going?

2015-16 Peace & Justice Series

Session 2: February 4, 5, 6 & 7

The Faces of Immigration Today

Discussion Panel with Representatives of Immigrant Communities

Session Two Locations*

February 4

6:30 p.m.

St. Mary's Church

Albia, Iowa

February 5

4 p.m.

St. Francis Xavier Parish

St. Joseph, Missouri

February 6

10 a.m.

Sacred Heart Parish

Sedalia, Missouri

February 7

4 p.m.

St. James Parish

Liberty, Missouri

**Session Two presentation will be the same at all locations.*

Contact Br. Daryl Charron, c.P.P.S. for more information: daryl.charron@yahoo.com.

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

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

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

THE New Wine PRESS

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Kansas City Province

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Divine Love

by Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S., Publications Editor

“Anyone who loves deeply (final characteristic of divine love), that is to say intensely, so noble an object as God, is never satisfied with his service to him. Nothing upsets him. Nothing frightens him. Nothing restrains him. His heart is like a torrential river that inundates the surrounding countryside; or similar to a fire when it consumes and reduces all to ashes. It finds its nourishment in no other thing than in love of the Lord; its thirst never says that it has enough. Just as bees feed on nothing other than honey, so also this person is entirely immersed in the nectar of paradise, in that fountain of sweetness, in that holy, divine love...

However, Jesus could have achieved that without undergoing so much suffering, I mean, without the total outpouring of his Blood. Jesus wanted to be the universal master. Jesus wanted to nourish us with his very self; he wanted to die for us! Oh love! Oh love! Oh love! My dear redeemer, grant that I may live only to love you. Amen” (Gaspar del Bufalo to Countess Lucrezia Ginnasi, March 10, 1813 #66).

3. “I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since ‘no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord.’ The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: ‘Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace.’ How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy. Christ, who told us to forgive one another ‘seventy times seven’ (Mt 18:22) has given us his example: he has forgiven us seventy times seven. Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love. With a tenderness, which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew. Let us not flee from the resurrection of Jesus, let us never give up, come what will. May nothing inspire more than his life, which impels us onwards!” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel)).

It’s tough to give ourselves completely to our Savior’s embrace. There’s always something that makes us want to hold back: a reservation, an opinion, a habit we think doesn’t fit. It takes work on our part, us working on ourselves, that lets

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Leading from a Place of Hope

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

On December 11, 2015, the *New York Times* published a poll that reflected “Americans are more fearful about the likelihood of another terrorist attack that at any time since the weeks after September 11, 2001.” Tapping into this fear and fueling it, a presidential candidate proposed denying Muslims from entering the country and increasing surveillance on mosques. The terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists in Paris and San Bernardino certainly increased the fear factor around the country and the world.

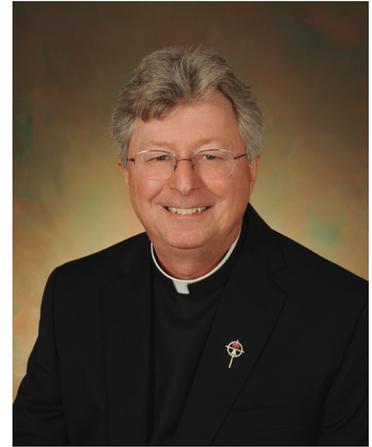
A fascinating feature of the Times/CBS News poll was 40% of Republican primary voters “say the most important quality in a candidate is strong leadership, which eclipses honesty, empathy, experience, and electability.” One would think honesty, empathy, and experience are characteristics of a strong leader. But in this era when bluster is mistaken for bravery and arrogance is construed as boldness, the kind of servant leadership lived by Pope Francis is perceived as naïve at best and dangerous as worst.

At our recent province staff retreat day, our facilitator reminded us of a quote from Paula D’Arcy that is at the heart of the incarnation we celebrate during the Christmas-Epiphany season: “God comes to you disguised as your life.” Peel away the layers of make-up, make believe, and missed opportunities; the masks of ambition and anxiety, regret and resentment we wear, and we will see the face of God. The journey of reconciliation involves recovering the true self, the divine image of God etched upon our very human lives.

In addition to this image of the divine that is within each of us, there is also a place of fear. As Parker Palmer writes in *Let Your Life Speak*, “We have places of fear inside of us, but we have other places as well—places with names like trust and hope and faith. We can choose to lead from one of those places, to stand on ground that is not riddled with fault lines of fear, to move toward others from a place of promise instead of anxiety.” Whether it is local, national, or international politics, or leadership within a parish, province, or universal church, those called to serve as leaders have to choose from which place they will lead.

Pope Francis has chosen to lead from a place of humility and compassion. In calling for a Holy Year of Mercy, Pope Francis is challenging the church to “make more evident its mission of being a witness of mercy.” Pope Francis’ mandate of mercy focuses on the forgiving love of God that

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Reimagining Religious Life

by Fr. Bill Nordenbrock, C.P.P.S., Moderator General

Within the Church there has been much reporting and discussion of the ongoing global demographic shifts. The vitality of the Church, represented by regular participation of baptized Catholics in Church activities and the number of vocations, is growing in the southern (especially Africa) and eastern parts of the world, accompanied by a striking decline in the vitality in the churches of Europe and North America. In the abstract, this trend can be interesting to consider, but in the concrete it is disturbing and requires response and action.

The General Curia has discussed the global trend as reflected in the life of the Congregation. Using our demographic information as a harsh light of truth, we have been reflecting on the vitality and viability of the Congregation around the world. These discussions identified three regions of concern and led us to initiate a discernment process asking: How can we reimagine a model of C.P.P.S. religious life that will have greater vitality and viability?

One region of concern for us is North America (along with Europe and Latin America). We studied the demographic of the three North American provinces and made a future projection if the trends continue. The projection for the future is somewhat speculative because of the uncertainties and the assumptions that need to be made, but in 10 years we see an Atlantic Province that has 21 members with 8 members under the age of 65; a Cincinnati Province of 51 members with 16 members under the age of 65; and a Kansas City Province of 30 members with 5 under the age of 65. These projections exclude the members in Mexico and the units of Latin America and Vietnam.

If the trends continue beyond 10 years the picture is one of virtual extinction. This is not a theoretical possibility but a statistical certainty. So what does this mean for us? How are we to respond and live faithfully?

For a vital and viable future it is essential to attract new members. While the Companions and lay associates have been an immeasurable benefit to the provinces, without men joining us as incorporated members, we have a very serious problem. This is not a new observation and we have all participated in countless discussions about vocations. While we have made efforts to engage in vocation ministry in new ways, we

have not had the results we have desired. I suggest the problem has been that we have tried to fine-tune our vocation ministry without addressing the underlying problem that consecrated life, as we live it today, is not attractive to possible new members. Our vocation discussions have often focused externally, on what is wrong with society and cultural conditions today, the size of families and the reluctance of parents to encourage vocations or the “way young people are today.” What is needed is an honest appraisal of the internal condition of the Congregation. We need to create a model of consecrated life, in our current external milieu, which is attractive to vocations. How do we maintain that which is timeless and sacred—the gift of consecrated life for the Church and the world with our particular charism and spirituality of the Precious Blood—but hold and present it in a wholly new way?

There is a need for us to reimagine religious life. This will require a new way of thinking and it will require personal conversion. It will require a new communal vision of our mission and way of life and most importantly, a willingness of individual members to sacrifice personal preference of ministry and life style to embody and live that new vision of consecrated life. This is no small task. It will be a difficult, but necessary, process. Along with the General Curia, I am asking for this process to begin.

I do not know what this process will look like or if we will be successful, but I believe to begin is a necessary act of faithfulness. Because our response will indeed be an act of faithfulness, I am not discouraged by the demographics or the future. With the grace of God and personal commitment to share in the discernment and work, this is something that we can do.

In November I met with the three North American Provincials to share the concern of the General Curia and to examine the demographic data. They shared our concern and supported our belief that for us to do nothing, to only continue as we are, is not a faithful option. To do nothing is to die from indifference or a lack of creativity and courage. They agreed to take this to the members of the Provinces and asked me to write this article introducing the start of that process. As a first step, individually each province will look at

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the demographic data and begin to discern how to respond. Each Province will be asked to honestly assess the vitality and viability of their province and to consider possible next steps. As part of that discernment, we ask that you consider if the task of reimagining a new model of C.P.P.S. religious life in North America can best be done together.

Consecrated life is an essential need of the Church and the world. We live in times when the future of that gift in North America is very uncertain. We are part of a bigger cultural phenomenon that can seem overwhelming and impossible to counter. But it is shortsighted to not recognize that this has often been the situation of consecrated life. In fact, that is precisely the place and purpose of consecrated life. Some would say that we have lived in a time when consecrated life has been co-opted by the World and what we are tempted to view as a threat, can in fact be a call to reclaim a more radical and faithful identity as a religious congregation. That is my hope and prayer for us. ♦

Divine Love, continued from page 2
us surrender to our Savior's embrace. It takes letting go and losing control, which is difficult.

Here are two witnesses that assure us of God's unconditional love and mercy. Taking these words into our hearts can help us with what we need to do.

Originally posted on the Gaspar Virtual Spirituality Center, December 4, 2013. ♦

Leadership, continued from page 3

practices compassion rather than condemnation, pardon rather than punishment, inclusion not exclusion.

The members of the Kansas City Province will gather at Marillac Center in Leavenworth, Kansas, January 25-27, 2016 to discern, dialogue, and dream together. My prayer for this gathering is we will be led by a spirit of hope residing in that place within called trust. If we trust in God and in one another, then, as Parker Palmer writes, "fear may remain close at hand and our spirits may tremble. But now we stand on ground that will support us, ground from which we can lead others toward a more trustworthy, more hopeful, more faithful way of being in the world."

In an article from *America* magazine members are encouraged to read in preparation for our gathering, Brother Sean Sammons reminds that "sisters, religious priests and brothers are meant to be the church's living memory of what it can be, longs to be and must be. Their job is to continually remind the larger body about its true nature."

We often suffer from amnesia in our community. We forget who we are and why we are here. Many of us find a cozy place and make it our home. In the ministry of Reconciliation, we often talk about establishing a "safe place" where people can speak and listen to each one's truth, where wounds and scars can surface, and healing can begin through dialogue. But a safe place can also be misconstrued and become a cell, an isolation chamber: "Leave me alone. I'm fine where I am. I really don't want to move." While we may profess our belief that our charism and spirituality call us to the margins, we are content to find our comfort zone and let someone else go to the edge. We become comfortable and resist change.

Our comfort zone can become a danger zone when we become so comfortable that complacency settles into our collective soul. To paraphrase what Pope Francis wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "If a religious community or province or parish stays wrapped up in itself, it will age. If I had to choose between a wounded religious community that goes out on to the streets and a sick, withdrawn community, I would definitely choose the first."

When we lead from a place of fear rather than a place of trust and hope, we tend to demonize those we are in conflict with. But when we lead from a place of hope, we will recognize in those with whom we disagree the dignity that allows us to be called "children of God." At our gathering in January, forged by the Bond of Charity, I pray we will tend to the wounds that need to be healed but not allow our scars to keep us from embracing our truth—the charism and spirituality that shapes our very existence. In the face of real fears, I believe we can move forward into our future by trusting God and each other enough to take a few risks for the sake of the reign of God.

Leading from a place of hope, we will reclaim our role as a "living memory" for our Church. ♦



1

Kansas City Province Celebrates Ordination of Members of the Vietnam Mission

On December 12, 2015, St. Henry Church in Chicago was filled with prayer and joy as Fr. Nanh Anh Bui, C.P.P.S. and Fr. Loi Huu Nguyen, C.P.P.S. were ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Joseph Charron, C.P.P.S. Gathered to witness and celebrate were Precious Blood priests and brothers, along with many priests, brothers, sisters and lay people from the Vietnamese community in Chicago and from as far away as Wichita. Frs. Nanh and Loi will be returning to Vietnam after the first of the year, to join Tam Hoang, C.P.P.S. and Frs. Dien Truong, C.P.P.S. and Truc Vu, C.P.P.S., in service to the Vietnam Mission and the Church. ♦

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Images

1. Bishop Joseph Charron Nhan Bui and Loi Nguyen during the Promise of the Elect
2. Litany of Supplication
3. The choir was made up of members of St. Henry Parish, Chicago, and members of the Vietnamese community from Wichita, Kansas.
4. Br. Ton Sison, C.P.P.S. proclaims the first reading
5. Promise of Obedience
6. Fr. Lac Pham congratulates Fr. Nhan Bui
7. Frs. Nhan Bui and Loi Nguyen bless Fr. Joe Nassal
8. Fr. Nhan blesses his cousins
9. First Mass celebration on December 13th
10. Receiving flowers from children from St. Henry's

The Importance of Dignity

by Fr. Al Ebach, C.P.P.S., Church of the Annunciation Pastor, Kearney, Missouri

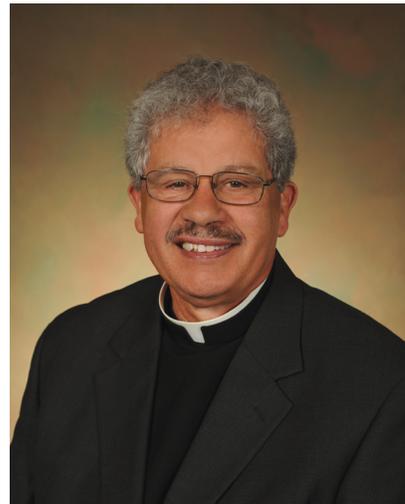
A few years ago in Vietnam, I was invited to speak to people from North Vietnam who migrated south for refuge and job opportunities. At the time I made this trip, I was ministering at Sacred Heart–Guadalupe Parish and figured I had experience with migration, only to discover how inexperienced I was. After a discussion with the immigrants in Ho Chi Minh City, I realized immigrants around the world seem to have similar experiences. Most, if not all of them, do not want to be separated from their homelands and families, and want their dignity to stay intact. I realized after listening to immigrants in Vietnam and participating in the lives of immigrants on the West Side of Kansas City, having one's dignity threatened leaves a person empty, defenseless and vulnerable.

A month ago I heard an NPR interview with Donna Hicks, the author of *Dignity*, which helped me understand what many immigrants and migrants experience when they are stripped of their dignity. She shared they are very vulnerable to losing that which gives them meaning and hope; without dignity one easily loses one's sense of self-worth.

Immigrants are very vulnerable once they leave the environments where they were born and raised. We have recently observed people from Syria who fled their homelands, some leaving respectable positions and loving families. Now they are at the mercy of people who know nothing of their past lives, steering and sometimes pushing them into the unknown. Suddenly, their lives are uprooted and their securities shattered.

When at Sacred Heart–Guadalupe Parish, I got to know a family who left Mexico to flee government suppression in Mexico City. The father and mother had secure jobs in Mexico, and a four-year-old child. When they came here twenty-five years ago it was much easier to enter the States and resettle. All was well until the events of September 11, 2001. Until then, those in the States illegally felt no urgency to become citizens. They had another child after they settled in the Kansas City area. They felt comfortable and were assimilating into their neighborhood and church community. The father had a factory job in Kansas City, Missouri with an income that provided for all their needs and more. His wife was able to remain at home to care for the family. Then one day after 9/11 when he

arrived at work, he found himself unemployed. He was an excellent worker, but the owner felt the pressure of losing the factory if he did not terminate undocumented workers. Fear and uncertainty now entered their lives, similar to those what they remembered in Mexico City.



There was a noticeable change in their lives both physically and emotionally: they began drawing all the shades in their home; they added an extra lock on their front door; there were noticeable signs of depression in the father; and there seemed to be many more arguments among family members. The children did not understand the change in their diets because there was little money available for food, or the overly protectiveness that seemed to shadow their activities at home and with friends. If it had not been for their tremendous faith in God, they would have lost all hope. Both mother and father began looking for employment, which was not easy in the political climate of the beginning of the new millennium. They were very industrious people willing to do any job, but at times became depressed about working menial jobs since they were from proud and dignified families in Mexico City. Again, due to their faith they continue to adjust and do all they can do for a child who is a “Dream Act” child, privileged to be in college because of the program established in 2008 for children born in the United States.

After being angry and frightened for them, I realized how much they trusted God to be their driving force. I learned so much about faith through their willingness to adapt and trust. While journeying through all this with them, I wondered how I would respond if I ever had to live as a migrant. Observing them, I realized

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Meet Matt Perez

by Matt Perez, *Inquirer*

Hi, I am Matt Perez, a 45 year-old native of Garden City, Kansas, a former youth director and parish administrator of St. Dominic Parish. I am currently a candidate for the Missionaries of the Precious Blood living the House of Discernment in Chicago, attending classes at St. Xavier University, and beginning the application process for Initial Formation. As an older vocation, the processes one has to go through to pursue a desire to live in religious life can be very challenging. However, I encourage all men to be prayerful and persistent in seeking the call to religious life.

One of the things that drew me to the Precious Blood is the spirituality. When I visited Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S. I could see Precious Blood spirituality was alive in him. His optimistic approach to my vocation made me feel welcome to pursue this desire. Fr. Timothy expressed to me that I was already living out Precious Blood spirituality through my ministry and work in parish life; I just needed to decide whether or not I wanted to deliver the Gospel. Of course the answer was yes, I do want to deliver the Gospel. The other charism I feel strongly called to is reconciliation. After reflecting on my parish ministry service, youth ministry, and my personal life, I knew by sharing my life experience with others, I might be able to help people seek reconciliation with God through the saving power of the Precious Blood.

Through meetings with F. Tom Welk, C.P.P.S., who guided me through the discernment journal, and my spiritual advisor Sr. Mary Kevin Rooney, A.S.C., I was able to see more clearly that I was living Precious Blood spirituality through my parish ministry. My charitable work for those seeking assistance with utility bills was serving the marginalized, my youth ministry work was renewing the Gospel, and by sharing my life experiences I was helping others seek reconciliation.

Today, I continue to live out Precious Blood spirituality by volunteering as a youth director at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Hyde Park, Illinois. I also do this learning how to live community life. The strength of our spirituality comes from our devotion



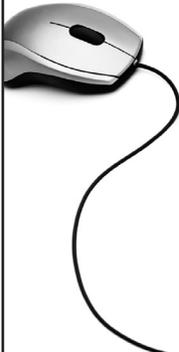
to community life. Learning to live with others, share meals with them, pray with them, and learn to accept others is what strengthens our bond of brotherhood.

I hope to one day become a

priest or brother with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood so that I can continue to live my life seeking God in His fullness through serving others and helping them seek their identity in Christ. ♦

Dignity, continued from page 8

they lived the spirit of Precious Blood more than I ever have or probably ever will. They embodied the Paschal Mystery in their lives, living through many crosses and experiencing the resurrection in many aspects of their lives. I realize I still have a lot to learn from people like this family who truly embody the Precious Blood of Christ. It seems that the more they struggled in their lives, the more spiritual they became and the more they embraced others around them. That is a beautiful understanding of charity and hospitality! ♦



We're Moving!
Find us at our new website address:
preciousbloodkc.org

Go there for:

- Province Events
- The Weekly Wine Press (blog)
- The New Wine Press
- Gaspar Virtual Spirituality Center

and more!



Images from the Day of Healing

Mercy

by Sr. Donna Liette, C.P.P.S., PBMR Staff

It is December 8, 2015 and Pope Francis has just opened the Jubilee Door in Rome and proclaimed a year of Mercy! In Chicago, Peace Circles were being formed around the city as a way of participating in a “City-Wide Day of Healing.” Several years ago, PBMR was one of the Chicago groups that initiated this city-wide Day of Healing.

In the early morning we gathered with women in the nearby shelter and listened to their stories of the pain of being forgotten, of being lonely, abused and left with all the responsibilities of parenthood. As they held the talking piece, they shared their struggles of finding jobs and safe housing for their children. They cried for healing, for love, for the comforts of a home. I once read: “People start to heal the moment they feel heard.” We saw this in the faces of the women as we concluded the circle in the backroom of the neighborhood shelter.

Due to the recent events in Chicago, with videos and reports of police brutality, we invited our District

9 police officers to join us at PBMR in a healing circle with the hope of opening doors to more positive relationships between police officers and our youth and their families. So minutes after the Healing Circle at the Women’s Shelter, a circle of fifteen very diverse persons came together with the three police officers: young and older, black and white, men and women, Christian and non-Christian, religious, rich and poor.

After the opening ritual and check-in, it became a safe place where youth could speak of their experiences of racial profiling; where a woman of privilege could speak of her need to sit and listen to the woman next to her suffering from extreme poverty and fear; where police officers spoke openly of their struggles—as one said, “Where do I begin?”

The police officers told of being mothers, wives, daughters, being Black (African-American) before being Blue (police officers). Mothers spoke of the pain of losing a child to gun violence; another losing her son

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Looking Forward in the New Year

by Vicky Otto, Precious Blood Companions Co-director

As I was reflecting upon the past year, a poem from Robert Frost came to mind. His work, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* begins: “Whose woods these are I think I know. /His house is in the village though;/He will not see me stopping here/ to watch his woods fill up with snow.” The ending of the poem has always been one of my favorite mantras. It concludes, “The woods are lovely, dark and deep, /but I have promises to keep, /and miles to go before I sleep, /and miles to go before I sleep.” As Kathy and I conclude our first year together with the Companions, the words of the poem seem fitting not only for us individually but for all us Companions as well.

Over the past year, Kathy and I traveled over 30,000 miles as we crisscrossed the United States visiting Companions. These times were filled with moments of grace and blessing. During our visits, we heard incredible stories of ministry and dedication to service, as well as faithful Companions living

Precious Blood spirituality. We also heard the desire that Companions be faithful to the Covenants they have made as well as gratitude for their relationship with the Community. One of the things we heard loud and clear was the hunger and desire that Companions across the country be re-energized about being Companions, as well as learn more about Precious Blood spirituality.

These hopes and dreams that Companions shared during our visits as well as our vision statement, were the inspiration for our annual Companion Retreats and Days of Reflection: *Living into Gather Send*. Our goal during these retreats and days of reflection was to give Companions a time to pray together as well as reflect about their baptismal call and what Precious Blood spirituality meant to them. We also had great discussions about the charisms of the Precious Blood community and what they meant to each of us as Companions. At the

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to years of incarceration when he was only 14; another spoke of losing her son to the streets and the stories continued of hurt, confusion, and need for healing. After 90 minutes, we asked that each circle participant say a word or two of how they were leaving the circle. We heard: “inspired, honored, heard, thankful, hopeful, relentless determination, healed.”

Several minutes later, we knocked on the barred door at the Corner Store, known for drug activity and recent nearby killings, and it was opened to us and to the corner neighborhood—gang members, mothers, dads and the neighborhood homeless, some in wheelchairs paralyzed from gunshots. We stood in circle around Daniel in his wheelchair, and as the talking piece went round the circle one could feel the group bonding, listening to one another’s fears, frustrations, concerns for peace and healing. This is our neighborhood—as Daniel pleaded, “Lift us up, don’t put us down,” and to the woman who just moved into the neighborhood with her children, he said, “Welcome to hell.” Not sure that was healing, but he kept it real!

We walked a few more blocks to our PBMR art gallery, and as we opened that door, we saw men and women gathered, all who had experienced the sentencing of their child to life imprisonment. Today the Rice family had a story to tell. On December 1, their son Gerald Rice, who was sentenced to life without parole in 1985 at the age of 17, was now re-sentenced to 60 years, which with good time he has to now serve only 30 years. Gloria Rice, Gerald’s mother, with a smile that stretched from ear to ear, announced Gerald would be coming home on February 18, 2016! Tears flowed, as all of the family members were so overjoyed for Gerald and his family. Gerald is now 47 and will soon be starting his new life outside prison walls. For 30 years Gerald’s family visited him, wrote him, supported him and never gave up hope and faith that someday Gerald would be home. Now Someday is only 69 days away! It was a day of hope as we joined with those in Rome and throughout the city and world, opening doors, offering healing and mercy and tenderness. It is a jubilee year, and as men and women of the Precious Blood, are we not even more challenged to heal and to offer tenderness in our broken world. OPEN DOORS! ♦

conclusion of the retreat, Companions were given follow up sessions over the next year to continue this time of renewal and re-energizing, providing each Companion with texts of the talks that were given at the retreat. The retreats and days of reflection that have been held have truly been times of great blessing for everyone involved. By the end of our time together the spirit that filled the room was palpable. Companions left with renewed pride—pride in the call that they received at baptism, pride in their commitment to be Companions, pride with their relationship with the Precious Blood community and new energy and enthusiasm to embrace the charisms of the community as well as what the future brings for Companions.

In a recent article Fr. Bill Nordenbrock, C.P.P.S. wrote, “While our bicentenary is a time to remember and to celebrate, it is also a time to look forward with hope and determination. When we think of our ancestors and remember their contributions to making the Congregation what it is today, how can we not also ask ourselves: What contribution does faith call me to make?” As we look to this question and to the new year before us, another poet’s words come to mind. Rainer Maria Rilke wrote, “And now we welcome the new year. /Full of things that have never been.” I believe that if St. Gaspar were here today he would celebrate the renewed energy and spirit of our Companions. They have answered Fr. Bill’s question by making the commitment to live with integrity and a renewed sense of fidelity to our Spirituality and to the Community. They are eager to embrace what the New Year holds, new possibilities of ministry, of collaboration, of expanding our circles and faithfully being people of reconciliation and hope. As we finish this year we have seen time and time again stories of violence and terror all over our planet. As we begin this New Year and continue our year of Mercy, I believe that with the commitment of our Companions we truly can bring to life the renewal, reconciliation and healing presence in the world Saint Gaspar worked for in his time and that we work for today. ♦

The Synod on the Family

LGBT Life in the Church

Francis DeBernardo

Executive Director of New Ways Ministry

February 20, 2016

Precious Blood Center ♦ Liberty, Missouri

8:30 a.m. start time

Mass at 4:30 p.m.

Fr. Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S., presider

Lunch & Dinner provided

Registration Limited to 50 Participants

Contact Br. Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S. for more information or to register:
daryl.charron@yahoo.com.

Mercy and the Spirituality of the Precious Blood

A Retreat for Precious Blood Sisters, Priests and Brothers

Fr. Barry Fischer, C.P.P.S., facilitator

June 21-24, 2016

Adorers of the Precious Blood Ruma Center

\$350

More information in the coming months.

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Change Service Requested

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

“What does clowning have to do with the priesthood?” For me it has everything to do with it. Each time that I preach or share my story I’m pulling from my life experience, I’m pulling from scripture and putting it all together to see life in a different way. We are each challenged to reflect on the world around us, and as a community committed to bringing renewal and reconciliation. Sometimes we just need to see things a bit differently. Preaching and clowning in some ways are a lot alike, as we draw on the humor and tragedies of life to find God present and to make God known to others. Some people have the gift to do it with words others have the gift to do it with actions. Either way, we have a story to share.

*Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S.
Regional Vocation Director &
Parochial Vicar, St. James Parish
Liberty, Missouri*

