



The New Wine Press

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

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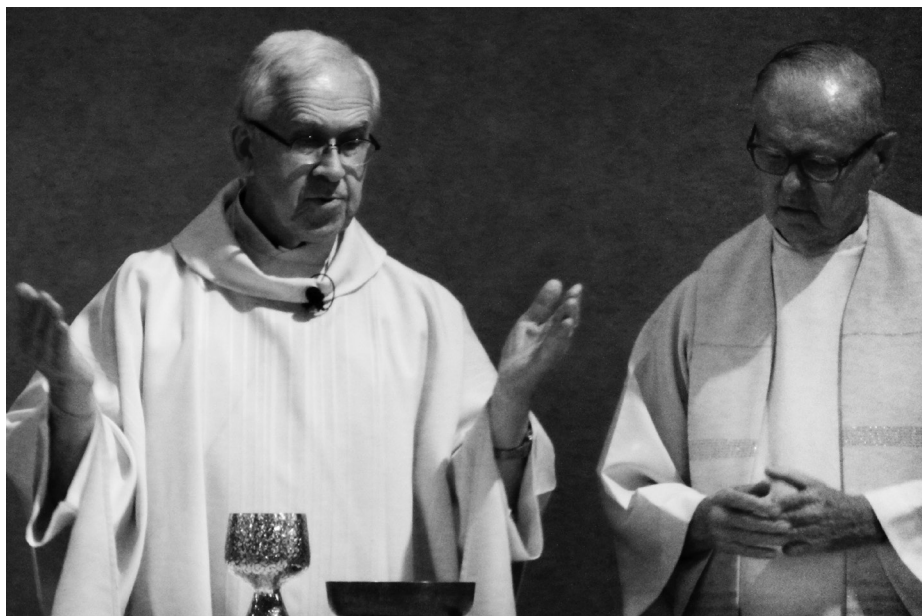
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Fr. Bill Miller and Fr. Bill Delaney during the Jubilarian Mass at the 2013 Assembly.

Reclaiming Our Core Values

Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S., Provincial Director

Father Timothy Radcliffe, former Master General of the Dominicans, has written that members of religious communities “are like blacksmiths in a world of cars, looking for a new role.” He suspects that “this is one reason why religious often eagerly talk of ourselves as prophets. We claim we are the prophetic part of the life of the church. It gives us a role, an identity, a label.” But while he believes “religious life is called to be prophetic,” he does not believe it is the “solution to our identity crisis.”

The Second Vatican Council encouraged religious congregations to return to their sources and reclaim the core values—charisms—upon which the communities were founded. The challenge was to tap the initial inspiration of our founders and apply that spirit to the signs of these times. This work seems never-ending because even though our core values do not change, applying them is always a challenge.

St. Gaspar passed on to us core values as he defined our role as missionaries to be about the renewal of the church through the preaching of the Word

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California companion Ann Nguyen

more, Radcliffe maintains that religious life today “must be an answer to the question: ‘What is the sense of human life today?’”

For Radcliffe, the image of religious life that makes the most sense today is captured in a nun in Venezuela singing the Exultet at an Easter Vigil he attended. Like that nun singing in the dark to the paschal candle, Radcliffe wrote that people must be able to recognize in our lives an “invitation to be human in a new way.” Our role as “people of the spirit,” in Gaspar’s famous phrase, is to invite others to see in us the light of hope, of love, of reconciliation, renewal, and compassion shining forth in dark and dangerous times.

At our 36th Provincial Assembly June 2-6, 2013 at Annunciation Parish in Kearney, Missouri, more than 100 priests, brothers, companions, volunteers, and friends of the province gathered to reflect on the important role we have to play in this renewal of the church and the reconciliation of the world through the blood of Christ. Precious Blood Fathers Robert Schreiter and Jerry Stack of our Cincinnati Province facilitated our gathering. “Renewal can’t retrieve the past,” Father Schreiter told us, “but can bring forth the best from the past, those core values that shaped and informed us.” He noted how “genuine renewal” could be measured by our answer to the question, “Does it give us new energy?” We are to “take the best (of our past) and arrive at a new place, a new creation,” Father Schreiter said.

In our conversations around the table, many ideas surfaced to reflect practical ways to make our core values visible and vibrant in our ministries. For example, the inclusive vision of the blood of Christ calls us to be people of hospitality. Our parishes could be an extension of our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) ministry in the province by prominently displaying in bulletins or

on the parish grounds that this Precious Blood parish is a welcoming community. Companions involved in prison ministry asked how are we reaching out to those in prison or those recently paroled? Others invited reflection on how to walk with those who are mentally ill and their families. Still others suggested we expand our ministry with the immigrant population by setting up after school programs, houses of refuge, and sanctuary.

These populations often marginalized by society and the church were very much at the center of our founder’s concern. Father Jerry Stack traced the life and influences of St. Gaspar who “intended to be a Jesuit but was dissuaded by the pope and his spiritual director, so he became an apostolic missionary.” In reflecting on how we might embrace the charism of St. Gaspar today, Father Stack relied on the Community Rule of 1841, which “most accurately reflected Gaspar’s vision and charism.” Father Stack said that “availability, flexibility, and hospitality” were key values for the first Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Father Stack’s presentations inspired many questions, reflection, and insights on how we might embody Gaspar’s charism for our church today. For example, “Spiritual direction was an important part of the rule,” Father Stack said. Missions and retreats were seen “as a group form of spiritual direction.” In addition to encouraging all members, companions, and volunteers to have a spiritual companion, we could embrace Gaspar’s vision today by providing opportunities for training in spiritual direction and other ministries for our companions and volunteers.

In recent years, our province has sought to re-establish the vision of the Mission House which Father Stack called St. Gaspar’s “unique contribution to the history of religious life.” The Mission House, according to Father



Volunteer Michael D'Netto

Stack, “wasn’t just a place to live but part of the mission.” As we continue to develop our Mission Houses in Liberty, Kansas City, and Berkeley, we are encouraged to see them as “open missions” that seek to advance the spirituality of the blood and the charism of our founder in practical and prophetic ways.

We were also about some important business during our Assembly as we responded to the signs of these times. In the wake of the epidemic of gun violence, especially the horrific shootings in Sandy Hook Elementary last December, the members, companions, and volunteers signed a Corporate Statement against Gun Violence. The members also voted unanimously to help our Precious Blood brothers and sisters in Croatia build a Center for Reconciliation in their part of the world that bears the scars of war. And the members continued their ongoing education in responding to the sexual abuse crisis in the church with a workshop on the last day of the Assembly.

In his homily for feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, Pope Francis asked, “Do I let myself be transformed (by the Body and Blood of Christ)? Do I let the Lord who gives Himself to me, guide me to come out more and more from my little fence to get out and be not afraid to give, to share, to love Him and others?” As we are transformed by the Eucharist, Pope Francis said, we are “to be instruments of communion” for our world. Through the prayers, liturgies, speakers, dialogue, and celebrations of our Assembly—and the extraordinary hospitality of Father John Wolf and the parishioners of Annunciation Parish—we experienced such a communion. May we now be instruments of communion as we seek to live our core values as “people of the Spirit,” sisters and brothers in the blood of Christ.



Fr. Jerry Stack, C.P.P.S.

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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Some of the participants of the 2013 Assembly

The Grace of Community

Dennis & Carolyn Keller, Amici

We're back home in North Carolina, after our 2300-mile odyssey to the 2013 Kansas City Provincial Assembly. The readings for the Sunday beginning our pilgrimage were of the Body and Blood of Christ. The services and liturgies of the Assembly used those readings and themes in their songs and prayer. In the context of the Assembly, those Scriptures took on expanded meaning and relevance. This was our second trip to Kearney. We have only gratitude for being included and no regret for the investment of time and expense.

After breakfast each morning we gathered in Annunciation Parish's worship space for Morning Prayer. The order seems backwards. Wouldn't it have been more appropriate to begin with prayer followed by breakfast? Should we not have attended to the things of God first? This sequence is prophetic—it's difficult to raise one's hearts and minds to God in dialogue when the stomach is growling. Fr. Bill Delaney's narrative of parish life at St. Agnes, with liturgy first and food and community building following, is truly a lesson that springs from the Assembly's achievements. Community comes to worship as fellowship and becomes community in prayer. Our prayer included songs, readings, reflection and more songs. The Assembly's rendering of prayer came not from technical skill, but from an understanding of the treasure conveyed in those words. That understanding came from a shared vision for living influenced and directed

by those words. Some words carried deeply experienced personal meaning for us. It is hard to sing with a lump in one's throat.

Our experience at Assembly tied us in with the Scripture for the Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Sunday following the Assembly. After the return to life of two only-sons, the widow of Zarephath and the whole town of Naim knew that God had visited his people and that His word would be effective among them. From the mouths of those who live the Way of Christ come words that heal, that unite, that create, that comfort. However, words in the mouths of those without love, without God's presence—those words sicken, kill, divide, wound and diminish. The scriptures for the Tenth Sunday explain how God's Word(s) give life, life that is abundantly lived within family. The only-sons are "returned" to family, to share, to work, to enjoy, to expand, to embrace and include. They are returned to community. That was our experience at Assembly—that we had returned to family.

Each evening we gathered in the worship space to hear God's word, broken open to our time and place. We brought to the table our efforts, our successes, our failures, our hopes and dreams, our nightmares and despair. What we brought to the table was transformed by the Spirit. The palpability of the transformation into the Blood and the Body of the Risen Christ was easily felt.

The work sessions in the parish hall spoke of the blood of Christ. Two aspects were highlighted. The “Cry of the Blood” is first spoken of in the story of the blood of Abel crying out from the earth. It had been violently spilt. That blood cries through the centuries in the blood of all humankind spilt in violence, by starvation, by disrespect, by theft of dignity and by denial of a place at table. The Assembly spoke also of the “Call of the Blood.” This is the urgent call to our hearts and our minds to follow Jesus. Jesus tells us to accept suffering, as He did, for the sake of humankind and creation. The “cup” that Jesus looked into at Gethsemane is also the cup we look into as we anticipate the joys and the struggles of living. As Fr. Bob Schreiter observed of Jesus looking at the contents of the cup, “This could kill me.”

A central element of the mission of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood is reconciliation. Reconciliation includes the sacrament of confession, but is significantly more than a “me and God” project. Reconciliation first requires hospitality. Hospitality guarantees everyone a place at the table, but most certainly the marginalized, who understand the wonder at being invited. Reconciliation is most often initiated by victims who invite to “table” those who have done them wrong. Those who do wrong are rarely able to discern evil in what they have done. Even the most mature among us tend to view all our actions, thoughts and intentions as always appropriate and correct. Those who differ from us are misdirected, misguided, self-serving. It’s only after a victim forgives that the wrong doer even considers the goodness or evil of his actions. Thus Jesus in his post Resurrection appearances reconciles Himself, the Victim, with those who denied or abandoned him. His greeting was, “Peace be with you.” It is interesting to note how very many of the Resurrection appearances include eating, a coming to table together.



Fr. Dien Truong, C.P.P.S.



Fr. Dan Torson, C.P.P.S. & Fr. Bob Schreiter, C.P.P.S.

As children, we thought of the world as civilized. The evil and murder of our parents’ and grandparents’ world had been conquered in the Great Wars of the first half of the twentieth century. But evil has not been banished. In the name of order and economic progress our generation has discriminated against those on the margins of society. In our own time and in our own place, have we not stolen the dignity of the poor, those who see no opportunity, those who are allowed no opportunity, and those whose daily struggle is sub-human survival? We blame them for their plight, rushing to judgment instead of to compassion.

Fr. Bob Schreiter’s presentation on Tuesday convinced us there is value in devotion. Coming from a church culture where personal devotion was everything, we had discounted devotion as “folded hands folly,” an affectation of sanctity without spiritual growth. Fr. Bob convinced us that devotion has a place and provides consistency and endurance to spiritual life. His history of the change from Precious Blood devotion to Precious Blood spirituality was most helpful. The transition is a change from adoration of a past event to an application of that past event to current needs of human life. He pointed out that witnesses to the blood of Jesus are more impactful than those who teach it. It is the witnesses who make the energy and effectiveness of the Blood-poured-out a reality and thus heal, renew and transform the world.

Fr. Jerry Stack’s historical presentation of Gaspar was news to us. Perhaps because we were formed in the age of devotion, Gaspar had been perceived as a quiet, pious man who had patiently endured imprisonment for the sake of the Papal States. Fr. Jerry made Gaspar real, a person we’d like to have met. He was energetic, intense and unafraid to go where others feared for their safety.

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A Communal Cup

Kathy Keary, Kearney, MO Companion

In reflecting on the meaning of covenant and companionship in the Blood of Christ, my focus turns to the cup. The question Jesus addressed not only to his disciples but also directs to each of us today, "Can you drink the cup?" is a difficult one. I would think one might wonder, "Well, what's in it?" As I explore what I see in the cup, I invite you to ponder what you find there.

When I look into the cup of his Most Precious Blood, I see the personal struggles that have challenged me. To name but a few, I see abuse, shattered dreams, destruction, good byes, and deaths of loved ones. The cup is looking pretty bitter. Do I really want to drink of it?

The cup also contains all the things that helped us during times of distress. For me, it includes having a close friend in Jesus, unconditional love of family, support of friends, outreach of total strangers, resilience, and drive. The cup becomes even sweeter when the fruits of truly embracing the crosses in our lives are added, among which for me are forgiveness, reconciliation, compassion, empowerment, new dreams, and a deep passion for Christ and those on the margins.

Now let's look at where those fruits have led us. These are also in the cup. For me, it has included: the inner city; under bridges; homeless camps; Catholic Worker Houses; to JustFaith; to the slums of Kenya and Uganda; to Kearney, MO; to an orphanage in Honduras; to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood; to Washington DC; to Jefferson City. These are the places where I have not only found myself but also where I have grown in communion with my Maker and his people. These places have brought to the cup poverty, homelessness, injustice,

and struggle to name just a few, but they have also added solidarity, over-the-top hospitality, advocacy, courage and a sense of oneness with all of God's creation.

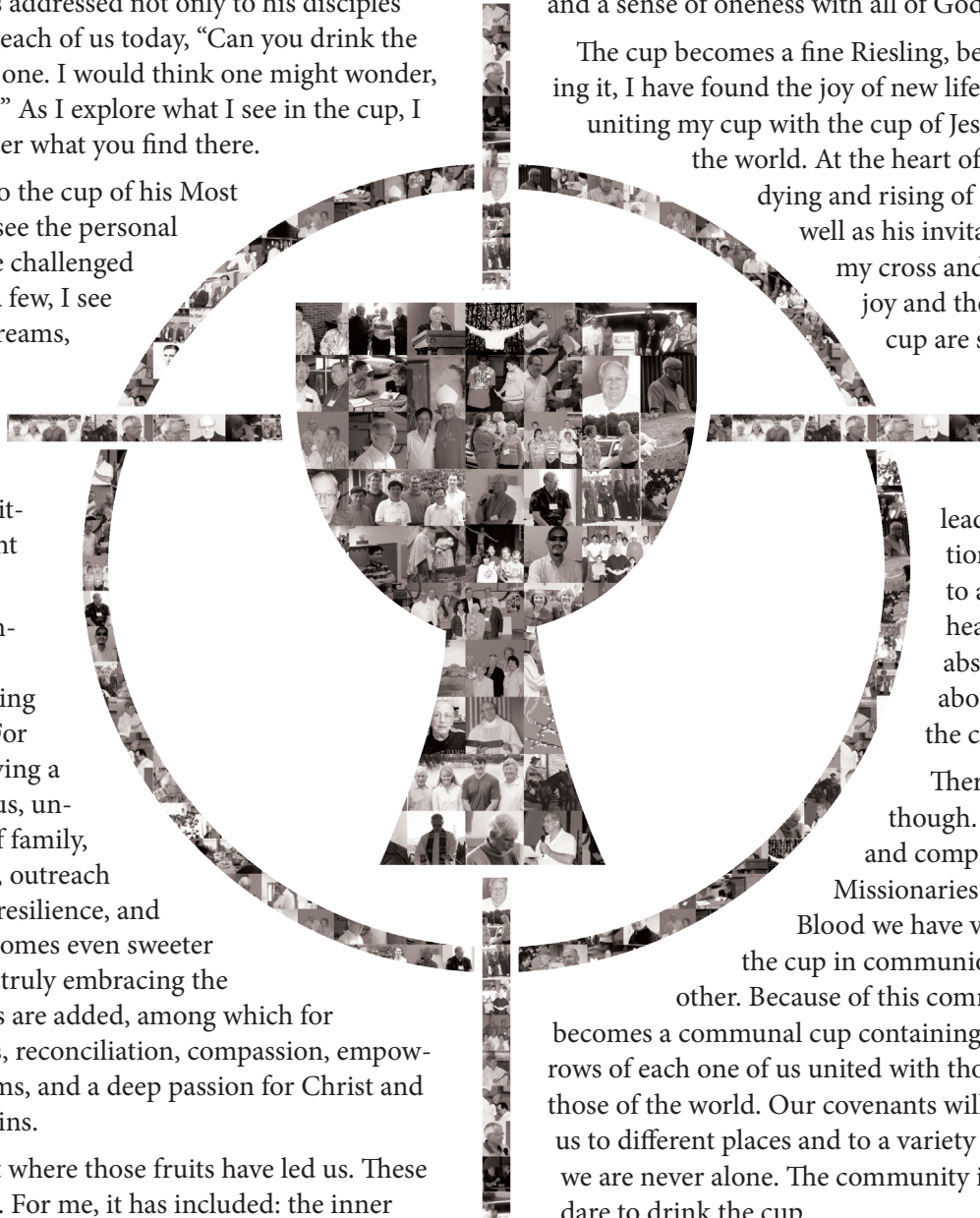
The cup becomes a fine Riesling, because in savoring it, I have found the joy of new life that comes from uniting my cup with the cup of Jesus and the cup of the world. At the heart of the cup, I see the dying and rising of Jesus Christ as well as his invitation to pick up my cross and follow him. The joy and the sorrow of this cup are so intermingled that the elements cannot be separated. Consuming it

leads to transformation, to new life, to a glimpse of the heavenly realm. So absolutely. No doubt about it. I will drink the cup.

There's much more though. As members and companions of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood we have vowed to drink the cup in communion with one another. Because of this commitment, our cup becomes a communal cup containing the joys and sorrows of each one of us united with those of Christ and those of the world. Our covenants will take each one of us to different places and to a variety of pursuits, but we are never alone. The community is with us as we dare to drink the cup.

Companionship is all about drinking this communal cup, where the dying becomes rising, where the cross becomes resurrection, where the cup of sorrow becomes the finest of wines—the source of our salvation, our liberation, our joy, and our hope.

Kathy gave this reflection during the Companion Covenant liturgy on Tuesday evening of the Assembly.



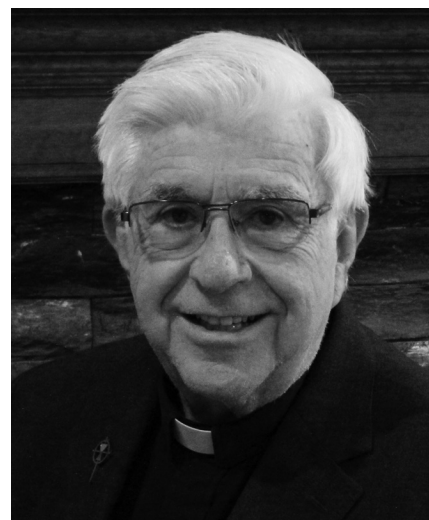
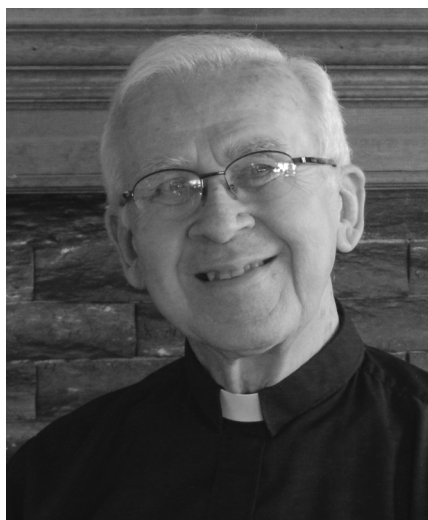
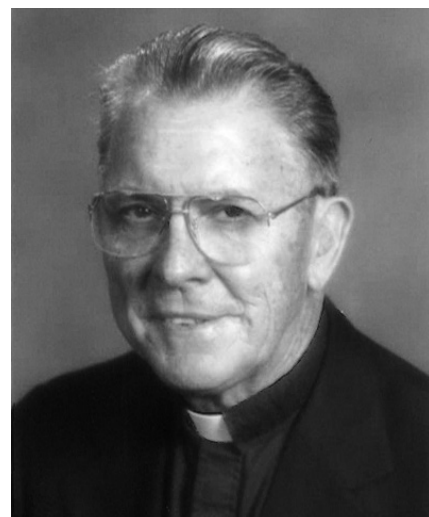
Congratulations, Jubilarians!

The 2013 Jubilarians are:

Top row: Fr. Albert Fey, C.P.P.S. - 75 Years of Incorporation

Middle row (L-R): Fr. William Delaney, C.P.P.S. - 50 Years of Ordination
Fr. William Miller, C.P.P.S. - 50 Years of Ordination
Fr. Richard Colbert, C.P.P.S. - 50 Years of Incorporation

Bottom row (L-R): Fr. Thomas Welk, C.P.P.S. - 50 Years of Incorporation
Fr. John Wolf, C.P.P.S. - 50 Years of Incorporation
Fr. Lac Pham, C.P.P.S. - 25 Years of Incorporation



The Ever-Widening Circle

Fr. John Wolf, C.P.P.S., Pastor at Church of the Annunciation, Kearney, MO



Liberty, MO companion Margie Brown

There are certain events and dates that are etched in our memories and sealed on our hearts. Some have thrilled us, surprised us, bringing tears of joy; others have shocked us, pained us, held us captive, left us vulnerable, even

fearful, with unanswered questions. World events like the assassinations of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King, Jr., the moon landing, 9/11—we remember where we were, what we were doing when the news of those events were first reported. In the Church, certainly Vatican II, John XXIII's bold call to move forward with reform. More recently, the good news of the election of a new pope, taking the name Francis, servant of the poor. More recent events have greatly impacted the lives of some communities: Joplin; Newtown, CT; Boston; and Moore, OK. And we have our own personal signposts too, marking significant movements and changes in our lives, perhaps the birth of a child, maybe your wedding day, the day of ordination or incorporation, or moving into a new home, starting a new job or losing a job, a new assignment, and for some of you this evening, making a covenant promise to stand as a witness to the blood of Christ.

Sometimes the farther we move away from these events, the less we remember; and the less we find ourselves talking about the experience, the less impact it has on our lives. As Christians, Catholics, as people of the Precious Blood and friends of Gaspar and Maria, there is one event of significance that we promise we will never forget. For to forget would be to lose our purpose, our identity, we would lose our mission—that is the Paschal Mystery. The dying and rising of Jesus is so central to who we are and what we are about; it is so central as we look to the future. We keep that memory alive today by doing what Jesus asked us to do: “Eat this bread, drink this cup, do it in memory of me.”

The Jesus event changed history; it has changed us. By his dying and rising he has brought us deliverance, brought us freedom, he has brought us forgiveness, and given us our commission—to be servants of hope and healing, reconciliation and peace, including in an ever-widening circle those whom he wanted to reach with his redemptive, saving love. The earliest gospel narratives continue to tell the story for us. Jesus took the customary Passover and added something radically new: “Now this bread is my body, now this cup is a new covenant in my blood!”

You know, we've become “veterans” of the Eucharist. But as veterans we can't forget the story, we can't forget the sacrifice, the love, the promises, the covenant, the intimate communion—because there's a holy connection here. The relationship that takes us back to Jesus and the shedding of his blood, and even further back to the first covenant with the Hebrew people, sealed with the blood of the lamb. What a messy, messy ritual that must have been. But oh, how real, how life giving, as Moses put stone upon stone and built an altar and took the blood of the animals, splashed some on the altar, and sprinkled some on the people as they renewed their covenant with God. How messy is that!

Just so, our participation in the Eucharist is meant to stain our hearts and our lives with the Precious Blood of Jesus, leaving an indelible mark on us, renewing our covenant relationship in the blood of Christ. Can you imagine how the covenant ritual with our companions might look if we incorporated that Old Testament sprinkling of the blood? We may not have as many! And they would certainly choose their wardrobe differently! And the mess it would make in the sanctuary—we may not get invited back!



California companion Maureen Lahiff

continued on next page

Companion Mary Rose Lucas

Sharon Crall, Albia, IA Companion



Mary Rose Lucas

Soft-spoken, gentle, concerned, and caring. These are just a few of the words that come to my mind as I remember Mary Lucas with much affection. Mary was a widow and former office secretary who lived in a modest home, which was virtually in the shadow of St. Mary Church in Albia. Her story is that of a person who had been away from the Catholic

Church for quite some time for her own personal reasons. She used to tell me that she would look over at the church building in desire of walking back through the doors someday. And in her quiet unimposing way she did just that, one day back in the early 1980s. She would later share her story of return in the hope that it would inspire current parishioners to invite and encourage others to do the same.

Mary was a member of my original adult education class that met on Monday evenings. With her return to the Church she drank up information like a sponge, and was faithful to the group for a good many years. Her faith was a renewed treasure, and she remained active, serving on the parish evangelization team as a charter member. When the first Precious Blood companion group was formed by Fr. Bill Walter in Albia, Mary was a very willing participant. Much about Mary indicated that the Precious Blood charism was already present in her. Mary was able to attend some provincial assemblies and companion retreats and enjoyed the spiritual benefits as well as the social times. Even in later years, when her health began to decline and she could not attend our companion gatherings, she very much wanted to receive the mailings and to remain current with the Missionaries and Companions of the Precious Blood. I will miss Mary's kind smile, little laugh, and gentle spirit, but they will long live on in my memories.

Mary Rose Lucas, age 86 of Albia, died Monday, June 3, 2013, at Monroe Care Center in Albia.

Mary was born March 25, 1927, in Gary, Indiana, to John and Mary Adams Ostreko. The family returned to Monroe County shortly after her birth. She married William E. Lucas July 28, 1954. He preceded her in death on May 20, 1984.

She is survived by a daughter, Kathleen (Paul) Slofkosky of Knoxville; a son, Terry (Ramona) Lucas of Omaha, NE; a brother, Bill (Martha) Ostreko of Wyoming, MI; and a sister, Louise (Bill) O'Deen of Ft. Collins, CO. She is also survived by two grandsons, Matthew (Amanda) and Graham Jennings, and a great-granddaughter, Ryon Jennings.

Funeral services were held on Friday, June 7, 2013, at Tharp Funeral Home in Albia, with Fr. Michael E. Volkmer, C.P.P.S. officiating. Burial followed in Oak View Cemetery.

The Ever-Widening Circle, continued from page 8

We are happy tonight for those who will be making or renewing their covenants as they seek a closer relationship with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Your presence among us is a continual reminder of the Bond of Charity that unites us. And when our memory starts to slip or when our senses start to get dulled by routines of ministry, and our passion starts to diminish, we look to you, Companions, to bring us back. You help us appreciate the gifts of wonder, and awe, of what is possible. You choose to walk with us and share more deeply in the suffering and pain of others, entering more deeply into the celebration of life.

That's the mission we choose to embrace. That's the church we want to be. That's the community Gaspar envisioned. Thanks be to God we are still living our way into the dreams and the hopes that were held out for us with those words of wisdom in the introduction to that great document of Vatican II, *The Church in the Modern World*, "The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially the poor and afflicted are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well." To which we add, "and the followers of Gaspar, missionaries of our time, in a world that hungers, that cries for peace and reconciliation."

Fr. John Wolf preached this homily at the Companion Covenant liturgy on Tuesday evening of the Assembly.



Intern Dana Rabinowich at PBMR

A Voyage of Discovery

Dana Rabinowitch, Intern, Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation

Approximately nine months ago, I left my hometown in Israel and travelled over 6,800 miles in hope of pursuing my dream of becoming a clinical psychologist. I chose to study at the Adler School of Professional Psychology in Chicago because of the significant emphasis the institution places on issues pertaining to social justice. Alfred Adler, after whom the school is named, promoted the notion that one's ability to care for the welfare of others serves as a hallmark of his or her mental well-being; put differently, the degree to which each and every one of us is capable of looking beyond him- or herself and their immediate environments, is tightly related to one's emotional and psychological health. A project unique to the Adler school is the community service practicum, which exposes the students to various organizations and institutions that actively demonstrate the previously mentioned principles of social interest and social justice in their day-to-day mission.

Having received only minimal information about the city of Chicago and its different neighborhoods, I chose

a practicum site which I believed shared both the values and motives that were most similar to mine; little did I know, I happened to pick a site located in one of the city's most dangerous neighborhoods. So here I was, a petite woman from Israel, making her way by train, bus, and foot to the heart of the Back of the Yards. I still remember my first ride to the Precious Blood Center. Since I had not traveled beforehand to the south side of Chicago and did not know the exact location of the center, I kindly asked one of the gentlemen sitting close to me on the bus if this was South Elizabeth Street. The man replied by saying: "Are you sure you want to get off at this stop? This is a dangerous area you know." Later I came to learn that this man was Christobal, one of the center's gifted art teachers.

Entering the Precious Blood Center requires walking through two automatically locked doors. Passing through these doors, each person arriving to the center transitions to a space that is not only safe physically, but is secure and hospitable emotionally, a space in which each

person—youth and staff alike—is welcomed, cherished, and appreciated for who he or she is. Coming from a country, which for years has been stricken by terror, I found myself able to relate to some of the experiences and feelings shared by many of the adolescents and adults at the center. I too had been forced to balance overwhelming fear, sadness, indifference, and hope for a better future as I watched young children, mothers, and the elderly die for no apparent reason after a bomb exploded in the bus station close to my home. Nevertheless, so many of the circumstances expressed by the people at the center were still foreign to me. I didn't know what gangs were or what "gang banging" and "crossing turfs" even meant; we simply don't have gangs in Israel. I can still recall the shock that consumed me when Sr. Donna first showed me the names written on one of the crosses at the center listing all of the young people from the area who had died in vain due to violence.

An adolescent from the center once asked me with trepidation in his voice, "So what do you guys have there in Israel...you got black people there?" I explained that we do not have African Americans or Latinos in Israel. It was then that I realized that it is at these exact moments in our lives, the moments when we dare to ask the simplest and most genuine questions, that we truly open ourselves to learning. Pertaining to this lesson, during my time at the center I tried to ask simple, genuine questions from those who sought my assistance and my impressions. I shared all of my observations, insights, and at times, my anger and frustration for what was so seemingly different between the luxurious "downtown" area of Chicago and the South Side neighborhoods. I wondered about the most trivial things that often go unnoticed, such as the discrepancies between the number of public parks, convenience stores, and schools in the various parts of the city. I wondered about the cleanliness of the streets and the grooming of the yards, and I continuously wondered why I was often the only Caucasian woman walking the neighborhood's streets.

I believe all life experiences—good and bad—are worthwhile as long as we are able to learn and grow from them. The most substantial part of my learning at the Precious Blood Center took place during intimate moments of sharing—sharing one's pain, guilt over improper choices, moments of joy, and our hopes for the future.

From participating in circles and witnessing proud fourteen to sixteen year old mothers during peacemaking circles, I discovered the great miracle of motherhood and the value of making personal sacrifices in order to care

for another. On this continuum, when I participated in the circles for mothers whose children were incarcerated or sentenced to life behind bars without the possibility of parole, I finally comprehended the unbreakable bond between a mother and child, which is capable of transcending any physical and municipal barrier. In those Saturday circles, I learned the healing power of forgiveness and recognized the empowerment that resides within us women and how strikingly powerful it may become when we decide to unite.

The students I worked with and met at PBMR taught me the meaning of courage and perseverance, the capacity for facing significant challenges with spirit and mind. Lastly, from the wonderful staff at the center I learned the values of generosity, respect, and trust, equally sharing spiritual and material means without differentiating between gender, race, or religion. Marcel Proust believed that a "real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." The people, learning experiences, and passion I was exposed to at PBMR granted me a novel way to view the familiar landscape of the human soul; my time spent here has been a true voyage of discoveries that I will surely hold dear to me throughout my graduate education and future career.

The Grace of Community, continued from page 5

He understood the need of the disenfranchised for the benefits of the Blood. He understood the value of a spiritual life in a time when corruption and disorder were much like our current experience. He was a real person, a strong and hard-working man with a vision of what could be. Certainly no milquetoast!

In Community we found what we hunger for. We wonder how we can belong to that Community in a more consistent manner. We relate this Assembly experience to the readings from the 10th Sunday when we heard of sons once dead returned to their mothers, and for this we are grateful.

The New Wine Press

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Change Service Requested

Corporate Statement Against Gun Violence

Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Kansas City Province

June 5, 2013

Motivated by the Blood of Christ and called to be ministers of reconciliation, we, the Missionaries and Companions of the Precious Blood, Kansas City Province, affirm our belief in the sacredness of life. Present laws making it possible for uncontrolled and unlimited access to weapons and ammunition of any amount must pass reasonable laws which will curb the culture of violence tearing apart the fabric of our nation. The “cry of the Blood”(Genesis 4:10) demands we do no less. We come together to confront evil manifested by the culture of violence. Bonded in charity, we seek to create a safe environment for our children by promoting a culture of life and peace. We advocate for measures that reflect our founder St. Gaspar’s message, “try to make every effort to bring everything to a peaceful solution.” Therefore, we will encourage and support the following measures to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to keep weapons out of the hands of those who seek to harm others:

- 1) Require background checks on all gun purchases
- 2) Enforcement of gun trafficking laws
- 3) Pass laws banning assault weapons and high-capacity magazines
- 4) Pass laws to fund violence prevention programs
- 5) Do not support any measures increasing armed guards in schools
- 6) Make gun safety education necessary for owning a gun

This statement was signed on June 5th by members, companions, and volunteers during the 2013 Assembly, held at Church of the Annunciation in Kearney, MO.