



The New Wine Press

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

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Rekindling Relationships
page 3

Fighting the “Good” Fight
page 4

The Gift of Presence
page 5

A Few Words
About Assembly
page 6

Gather and Send
page 9

At Home in Our Mission
page 10

Imagine
page 11

New Jerusalem
page 12



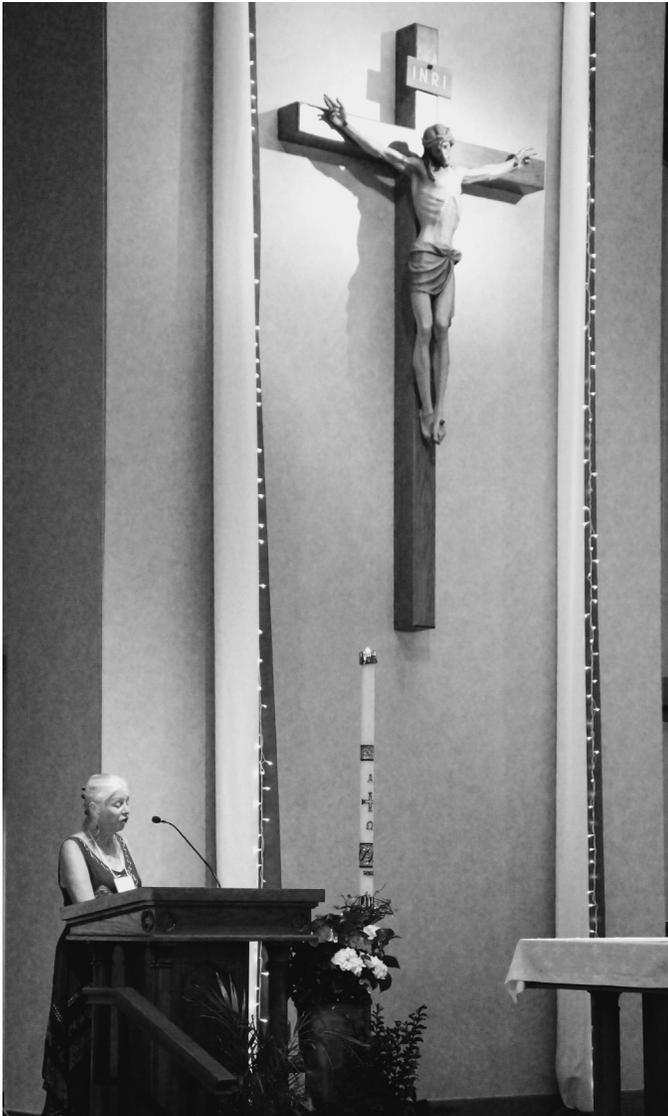
Walk the Way of Precious Blood People

by Gretchen Bailey, Alameda California Companion

To walk the way of Precious Blood people, we release what we are or what we perceive ourselves to be so that Something Greater can take over everything that we hold onto. The titles: mother, father, daughter, son, sister, priest, teacher, doctor. The pathway to freedom is to give it all away. This is what Jesus calls us to do. Yet, how do we do this without being so spent that we cannot function? Just as a smooth, worn tire on a slick road leads to an inevitable crash, we will crash if we do not take time for prayer, contemplation and stillness. If we do not set aside our “self” for the Self of God, we encompass empty words instead of the Word that existed before Light and Life. We let go of the world, even though we are in it, along with all the things, gadgets and constructs. We must take time to look deep within ourselves to find “I Am.”

As Precious Blood people, we are on a path, captives of the Spirit. We are sent without a tabbed, indexed “how-to” manual and without a human resources department. The manual we have is the open book of Christ, the open wounds, the pouring out of the wine of feast, joy, tears, and blood. Paul knew his destination and Christ knew His. As Christ moves out of this world, Paul moves toward Jerusalem, undertaking that journey not knowing what

continued on next page



Companion Gretchen Bailey at the 2014 Provincial Assembly

will happen to him there. The Spirit testifies to Paul that imprisonment and persecution are imminent.

We know that to be Precious Blood is to be sent. We are on “the Way” just as Paul, but what does the road to Jerusalem look like in the “now” of our lives? We are in the world. I am no visionary, but the Spirit is testifying through world events that great changes are upon us. We approach a Great Turning. We are on our way to Jerusalem and we are not sure what we are going to find there. We are told of, and have seen climate changes that affect food production throughout the world, especially here in the United States. We see in our cities and towns, economic and environmental refugees. We see the demise of species, forests, and oceans. Just what is our

Jerusalem? If the New Jerusalem is the Kingdom of God, the world reconciled by the Blood of Jesus, we are already there. We are sent to where we stand, now, in this moment. The good news of God’s grace is lived by we who hear the cry of the Blood in our own back yard and who allow ourselves to be led to do something to answer that cry. You hear it right now; the cry of the aged, the homebound, the homeless, immigrant families separated by deportations, the cry of the poor, the working poor, polar bears, elephants, tigers. We hear the cry of 50% of the species that will disappear within our children’s lifetime.

Jesus said to the Father, “But they are in the world and I am coming to you.” We are in the world in this space at this time, right now, occupying a moment within eternal life because we know Him. We know intimately the Blood that is life. We know “I Am.” Yes, we are in the world; a world that can, in its brokenness, rise up the wood of the Cross because we can become all that God hopes for in us as we strive in this broken world to take care of one another and of the stranger. The Cross is alive. The wood runs with the sap of the Precious Blood. People will exhibit the best of what it means to be human, to love, to give all that they have, whether that means sharing water, food, seed, or opening borders. This is building the Kingdom. In this world we as Precious Blood people stand ready to put ourselves aside, allowing the Divine Self, the Precious Blood of “I Am” to flow through us. Together we can build this New Jerusalem, the Kingdom that is right here, right now. Let the Precious Blood pour. There is plenty of wood in the Divine Cross. Hone for yourself a staff for the journey—a staff fashioned from the heartwood of the Cross.

We, as Precious Blood people following the cry, need to lead and show others how to walk with hope in uncertain times. Step into stillness (Lectio Divina, Centering prayer, 20 minutes twice a day to overcome the “reptile brain.”) Out of this time of stillness, the Spirit will surface love, courage and hope. Step out. Stand up. Speak clearly. Glory to the Blood of Jesus...Now and forever.

This reflection was given at the Covenant Eucharist on Tuesday, June 3, 2014 at the 37th Annual Assembly of the Kansas City Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

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

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.

Precious Blood Center

P.O. Box 339

Liberty, MO 64069-0339

816.781.4344

Editor

Keith Branson, C.P.P.S.

kbcpps@gmail.com

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Margaret Haik

communications@kcprovince.org

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Rekindling Relationships

by Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S., Leadership Team Member



As we left St. Joseph, Missouri, I commented to Fr. Dave Matz how beautiful everything looked; the grass was so lush and green. After traveling a distance north on I-29, I commented how brown everything was. We were on our way to visit the Precious Blood Companions in South and North Dakota. It was a shock to my system to wake up to 32 degrees on the first morning, April 29;

but despite the air temperature, we found very warm and welcoming hearts in Aberdeen, Linton, and Bismarck.

We were on a mission to reconnect the Precious Blood Companions in the Dakotas with the larger Precious Blood Family. Although our members no longer serve there and we hadn't seen each other for years, we are still part of one family. Like family separated by many miles, family reunions bring us together, catch us up, and deepen our commitment to one another. We found the Precious Blood spirituality very active in their lives, but in need of rekindling—just like a dying campfire needs stoking. It is easy to get busy about our daily routines and things at hand, and neglect family who live far away, especially if they don't use email. But we are still family, with the same blood flowing through our veins.

My trip to North Dakota reminded me of the need to find ways to stay connected with companion groups where our incorporated members are no longer serving. These Companions are still part of our Precious Blood family. I encourage all who have ever ministered there to stay connected, or re-connect with parishioners living there. The dying flames can be easily stoked into flames again.

I believe that Companions can look around and invite new people to join them through a formation process they run themselves. The Companion Leadership Team will gladly travel to any location to offer an Information Meeting to get the ball rolling. In our conversations, we helped the Dakota Companions name some individuals they know who already are living a Precious Blood spirituality, and who could be invited to explore Companions.

While we were in North Dakota, the grass greened up from recent rains. It was a metaphor of what happened in the hearts of the Companions while we visited with them. As we approached the Missouri border on our return home, the grass began to look lush and beautiful again. Things are always more comfortable and beautiful at home, but we are not called to stay comfortable, as Pope Francis reminds us so often. We are called by the Blood of Christ to minister to the edges of society.

Fighting the “Good” Fight

by Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S., Kansas City, Missouri

“I entrust this charge to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophetic words once spoken about you. Through them may you fight the good fight by having faith and a good conscience” 1 Tm. 1:18.

St. Paul gives this encouragement to Timothy in a passage instructing Timothy to fight against blasphemers, transgressors, and others who teach something different than Paul. With these words and others which express the same sentiment, Paul helped to establish “battle between opposites” as a main focus/activity of Christianity.

Examples of battle imagery in our tradition are everywhere. We have Michael the Archangel fighting for us against Satan. We have the Blue Army and other such groups. The Church Militant and the Church Triumphant are traditional titles for our church. We tell our young people that they are “soldiers of Christ” at Confirmation.

This militaristic self-image is accompanied by corresponding actions, of course. In all areas of life—religion, politics, economics, human relations, nature, human qualities, etc.—we are required to identify what/who is good and what/who is bad. Then we must try to eliminate (fight against) the bad. Of course it is a losing battle because the “bad” is part and parcel of ourselves and the world, and it can never be completely eliminated. So we sentence ourselves to a life of perpetual battle, fighting against an enemy that can’t be defeated, having to endure all the collateral damage. In this view, our only hope for finding peace and rest is the end of the world when Christ comes. This is the hope of some fundamentalist movements who look forward to the day that humans destroy themselves.

Is this the life humanity is destined to live till the end of time? Are the battles between religions, races, nations, sexes just the way it is and always will be? Is there no way out; no possibility of a different reality?

In her book *The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three*, Cynthia Bourgeault attempts to describe how humanity can find a way out of perpetual battle. She expands and adapts G. I. Gurdjieff’s theory of the Law of Three to this end. Very simply put, the Law of Three proposes that any creation of something new in the cosmos is always a result of three interacting forces. A simple example is the art of sailing. The wind is one force that pushes, the sail boat is the second force that resists the wind. Nothing really happens until the third force is introduced, the person at the helm. What is then created that didn’t exist before is the movement of the boat in a desired direction. Many other common examples

can be cited. In a rather complicated theological/philosophical treatise, Bourgeault proposes that the cosmos itself came into being as a result of the three forces of the Trinity.

At our Provincial Assembly, Joyce Rupp spoke of Compassion as it relates to Reconciliation. She described true compassion as a necessary ingredient in bridging the gaps that separate us as human beings. In the language of the Law of Three, reconciliation (a new relationship) is what is created when the three forces of you, me, and compassion come together. It is the third force of compassion that enables the two, sometimes conflicting forces/people, to create a new reality, a new relationship—something besides battle.

Also at the Assembly, David Kelly described the work of reconciliation using examples from his ministry in Chicago. A number of times he said that reconciliation requires us to “stand in the breach” between perpetrators and victims in order to facilitate restorative justice and healing. It is this “third force” of standing with the victim and perpetrator with compassion that creates something new, something other than pain, anger, hurt, and retribution.

David also explained why the justice system in our country doesn’t work well. At first glance, it would seem that it follows the Law of Three and should create something new. There is the victim of violence, the perpetrator of violence, and the court system. But the court system simply adds doses of violence to the situation through incarceration or capital punishment. It adds nothing new to the equation and continues to mire society in the same old embattled “Law of Two.”

Part of our mission as Precious Blood Missionaries is to renew the Church. This implies creating something new. According to the Law of Three, we are able to create something that hasn’t existed before in the Church and the world, and eliminate the need to fight against ourselves. This is possible only if we are able to resist joining in the popular move toward polarization (the Law of Two) and somehow provide a third energy. As David Kelly and Joyce Rupp said, this third force/energy is nothing new to us, but it is often forgotten. It is Compassion, which leads to reconciliation, which can create a new world.

The Gift of Presence

by Kathy Keary, Kearney, Missouri Companion

A couple of years ago, I attended Peace Circle training in Chicago facilitated by Fr. Dave Kelly and Fr. Bill Nordenbrock. I was looking forward to Fr. Dave's presentation at the Assembly because I find his work both fascinating and inspiring. My reflection is in response to Fr. Bill's invitation to bring Fr. Dave's message to our own context.

Fr. Dave grabbed my attention early on when he discussed how most of our lives are spent in the tension between brokenness and the hope that is our faith—the joy of the Resurrection. Within this tension, we witness to the possibilities that Resurrection offers; however, we are not in denial in regard to the reality of life. It's tough. There are crosses to bear. Ministers of reconciliation are all about the “muddled mess.”

It was encouraging to hear Fr. Dave say the most important gift he offers is faithfully showing up, often clueless to what will unfold or the words that will flow from his mouth—words only God knows needs to be heard. I am drawn like a magnet to ministries serving people marginalized by life circumstances. For the past several years, I ministered with those challenged by severe and persistent mental illness. Any hardship I have encountered significantly pales in the face of the hurdles and struggles mentally ill people cope with on a daily basis. I am an ambassador of hope; placing God's message of love, peace, and compassion into the “muddled mess” every day. By faithfully showing up, my presence offers a space for them to talk about God and to remember once again He is with them. I have no degrees in psychology; I am simply responding to God's call with the Spirit and the Word of God. It's a privilege to accompany those I serve—to be a part of and a witness to their courageous story. I am just getting my feet wet in prison ministry, but it is clear God is asking me to create space for inmates to be touched by Christ bringing hope.

The story of the Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42) is about the ministry of presence. The passage opens with Jesus resting at the well, tired from his journey. Despite his fatigue, he focuses his total attention on the Samaritan woman when she arrives. An amazing transformation follows. At the Samaritans' request, Jesus stays a couple more days. The lives He touched were changed as they came to believe He was truly the savior



Companion Kathy Keary at the 2014 Provincial Assembly

of the world. Because of His presence, they were able to shift from a worldly philosophy to one centered in Christ. Let us also be bearers of hope, beacons of reconciliation by faithfully showing up to the ministry God is calling us to, extending the gift of our presence to those longing for a sacred encounter.

Days of Prayer & Reflection

Precious Blood Center

2130 Saint Gaspar Way
Liberty, MO 64068

Second Saturday of the Month

Next dates: July 12th and August 9th
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

July 12th Presentation:

Embracing the Wisdom of Henri Nouwen, S.J.

by Kathy Keary

Kearney, Missouri Companion



Questions?

Contact Br. Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S.

816-781-4344 x126

816-835-0344, cell

A Few Words About Assembly

by Maureen Lahiff, Alameda, California Companion

“The third time’s a charm,” or, in Spanish, “A la tercera va la vencida.” After being able to attend the Kansas City Province Assembly in 2012, 2013 and 2014, I feel fully connected; I have a future with the Precious Blood Family.

The last time I participated in a Province of the Pacific Assembly was 2004; the announcement of that province’s suppression came in November 2004. The Alameda Companion Group learned about the end of our province three weeks after the Missionaries returned St. Barnabas Parish to the Diocese of Oakland with scarcely a weekend’s notice, so it was a double loss.

We didn’t make covenant with the Kansas City Province until spring 2007, and even after we did, it still felt very lonely out here with so few incorporated C.P.S. members in the Bay Area. One of the lowest moments was when one of our temporary administrators at St. Barnabas told me that I “had to stop pretending that the Precious Blood were still here.” Although he permitted our Companion group to meet at the parish, he certainly wasn’t a supporter!

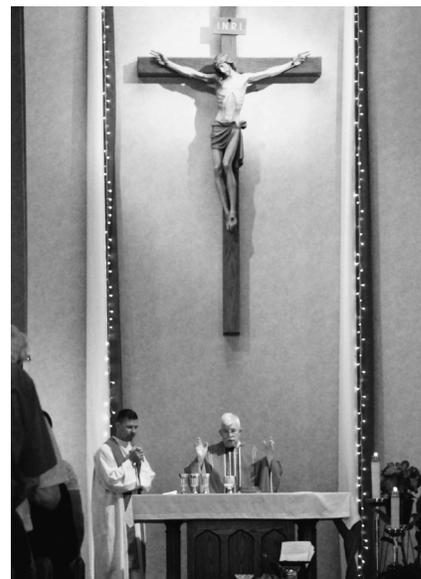
The presentations at the Assemblies have been excellent, but they haven’t mattered as much as all the other components of the Assemblies. Participation in the liturgies has been affirming and nourishing. There are no words to capture what it means to hear the names of all the Pacific Companions who have gone ahead of us chanted on Monday night. Celebrating covenants and Jubilees have forged new bonds for me. Most of all, the wonderful welcome and all the conversations have built new connections. Having met people makes a big difference when we get news and prayer requests.

So it’s been a long ten years, but I now am a Kansas City Province Companion. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who’s made this possible!



*Moderator General
Fr. Bill
Nordenbrock
addresses the
assembly*

*Fr. Dave Kelly
during his
presentation*



*Frs. Dan Torson
and Dick Bayuk
during the Tues-
day evening Mass*



Frs. Vince Hoying and Vince Wirtner



Jubilarians: Frs. Dick Bayuk, Dan Torson, Ed Oen, Al Ebach, Lac Pham, and Alan Hartway



Fr. Joe Uecker and Nahn Bui



Fr. Joe Nassal leads a blessing for Frs. Jim Betzen, Deo Mulokozi, Matt Link, and Jack McClure—all moving to new ministries



Companions answering the call to covenant

Congratulations to Renewing and Newly Covenanted Companions!



Albia, Iowa Companions



Kansas City, Missouri Companions



Alameda and Sonoma, California Companions



Kearney, Missouri Companions



Centerville, Iowa Companions



Central Missouri Companions



Saint Joseph, Missouri Companions



Liberty, Missouri Companions

Gather and Send

by Fr. David Matz, C.P.P.S., Interim Director of Companions

Gather and Send is the new Vision Statement introduced at the 2014 Assemblies of the Cincinnati and Kansas City Provinces. The goal of the Appreciative Discernment process was to write a vision for the Companion Movement and ask ourselves, “What kind of leadership do we need to achieve that vision?” Then we asked ourselves, “Who in our community, members and Companions, are called to this leadership?”

By the end of June, the Companions Council will have developed job descriptions for two full-time lay co-directors and one part-time Incorporated Member for the Companions Leadership Team. In July, the job descriptions will be mailed to Incorporated Members and Companions for reflection and deliberation, with resumes submitted to the Companions Office in Berkeley in August. We hope a new leadership team will be in place by October and transition can take place during the months of November and December.

So I ask all Companions and Incorporated Members to pray and reflect on the Vision Statement. Please keep the Companions Council in your prayers over the next few months as we look for new leadership.

Gather & Send: Precious Blood Companions Vision Statement

- Called by the cry of the Blood, companions are sealed with their covenants as an integral, living part of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Through that covenant relationship, we gather, then are sent to bring hope and reconciliation to a wounded world.
- We are accepted for who we are, in the diversity of God’s creation, and we know that we belong to the Precious Blood family around the world. We have an intentional, evolving relationship with the Community, praying and working together as Missionaries, as St. Gaspar inspires us to do.

Proclaiming that all blood is precious, we are ambassadors of Christ to the edges of society.

- The Blood of Christ empowers us in our own ministries, and encourages us into ministry with the priests and brothers of the Community.
- Out of the sacred space of our gatherings, we draw strength and hope. From those gatherings, our time spent in Community, and our mission houses, we are sent. We are called to share the gifts we have been given with the rest of the world.
- We bring the cup of our spirituality to ever-widening circles, to people of all generations, races and cultures. We seek out those who are yearning for this message, and invite them, the way that we were invited. Especially, we pass it to younger generations, as it was passed to us.
- Precious Blood spirituality has taken root in our hearts. We step out, stand up and speak clearly about the Precious Blood of Jesus.

Please join us!

The 199th Birthday of the
Missionaries of the Precious Blood

Sunday, August 17th
4pm
Sacred Heart Church
Warrensburg, Missouri

Hosted by the Central Missouri Companions

Register with Debbie Bolin at 660-827-2081
or dbolin@gogremlins.com.

Interrupting the Darkness with Laughter

by Fr. Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S.

“You look lost,” Jonathan said to me.

“Just pensive,” I responded. “I’m in my head.”

“That’s me all the time,” another said, “I am always thinking, always in my head.”

It had been a particularly stressful day, the kind of stress and strain that takes its toll. Sr. Donna asked some of our youth to join her as she welcomed a group of seniors coming for a visit. We often have groups from schools coming to the Center to learn about our work and restorative justice. In welcoming what she thought was a group of high school seniors to Precious Blood Center, she and the youth noticed there were no young people. They thought: “How many adults are needed to chaperone a group of youth?” Then they realized the group was not high school seniors, but seniors—senior citizens. It was cause for laughter from both sides and the heaviness of the day was lifted.

This work can be hard. Trauma work, which is much of what we do, takes its toll. Humor and laughter are gifts in the midst of the stress and strain.

A young man facing 50 years in prison at the age of 15 does the “D-LOW shuffle”: a dance move that, along with the lyrics, is just silly enough to bring laughter to the whole group. A group of young men in a peacemaking circle at Cook County Juvenile Detention Center find their pain interrupted.

Humor is salve for the open wounds of suffering. I am often asked how I maintain my health in the midst of so much violence—so many tough stories. “How is it that you do not burn out?” I cling to a spirituality that makes sense in this environment; the spirituality of the Precious Blood enables us to place the story of hurt and disappointment in the midst of a larger story that does not gloss over the pain, but offers a story of hope.

It is not the joke telling humor, nor the humor at the expense of another, but the humor that brings us up out of the darkness—if but for a moment. Seniors who are truly seniors—senior citizens, a young man who does a dance step in the midst of an impending 50 years in prison—these are the joyous outbursts of laughter that interrupt the pain. I have often heard the mothers gathered together to support one another burst out in laughter. They have not forgotten the pain of having a child

incarcerated; it is that, just for that moment, they realize they are not alone and can see beyond the darkness to light, hope, and joy!

Our offices at the PBM Center are in small open cubicles; laughter and humor often interrupt the strain of walking alongside those who suffer so greatly. We often gather around the table for lunch where we celebrate the joy that is so much a part of this ministry—a joy that comes as we embrace a spirituality of the Blood. That joy and humor is shared; how often people who come to the Center remark that there is “joy in this place.”

As all of us work to live out the call to be ambassadors of reconciliation, let us remember that our spirituality also calls us to be ambassadors of joy and hope!

“I have seen what
a *laugh* can do.
It can **transform**
almost unbearable
tears into something
bearable,
even *hopeful*.”
-Bob Hope

Imagine

by Vicki Otto, Sonoma California Companion, LGBT Ministry Board Member

During my commute a few weeks ago, I heard a lovely classical music rendition of John Lennon's song, "Imagine." As I reflect on the beginning of Gay Pride Month, I can't help but wonder if there was a reason why that song stayed in my memory. One of the definitions for the word pride is, "satisfaction with achievements." Looking back on the changes of the last few years in our Church and in the LGBT community, there have been many moments that are sources of pride for us. Through his actions and words, Pope Francis has given us a new sense of pride in being Catholic. In the LGBT community, there is also a renewed sense of pride and affirmation stemming from support of different groups and individuals throughout the world.

Pope Francis has made being Catholic "cool" again. In our recent troubling times, people felt a sense of shame regarding the Church; some did not acknowledge publicly they were Catholic. Over the last year, Pope Francis has offered a new understanding of the Church, not by changing doctrine, but rather through his actions. The Pope's ability to welcome people and offer hospitality has been a welcome change. While the moments that we have witnessed this have been a source of pride, offering hospitality in our own parishes and communities continues to be one of the biggest challenges we face as Church today.

As a Precious Blood community, offering hospitality is part of our spirituality: we are called to ensure everyone has a place at the table. The LGBT Ministry Committee has been reflecting and developing a process for parishes and groups in the province to use in helping everyone embrace this tenet of Precious Blood hospitality more fully. Using a talk by Fr. Joe Nassal, the committee identified components of being a welcoming community. They are: providing an open door by defining the boundaries that keep people from being welcomed; seeking the lost by taking an inventory of who is on the outside and go out and look for them; creating a safe space where people can seek and speak their truths; and standing in the breach by holding the contradictions that confront us.

In February, Fr. Dave Matz and I gave a presentation to a California parish as the pilot for the project. Because the parish is not a Precious Blood parish, we discussed Precious Blood spirituality before offering reflections on the four tenets of being a welcoming parish. One of the

most spirited conversations was when they began identifying people "left on the outside." Included in this group were those who are gay, divorced, in the U.S. illegally, and single parents. It was an eye opening experience for each participant as they understood that even though they consider themselves "friendly," there are people who don't feel they have a place at the table. The pastor continued to challenge the community in a subsequent conversation by calling the community to be a place of mercy and love in addition to one of welcoming. The parish continues to discuss our presentation and is striving to find ways to begin bringing down the boundaries that were identified.

As I reflect upon this experience, I hope there will be an opportunity to share this presentation with other parishes and groups in the province. If we believe in the spirituality of the Precious Blood, we are called to ensure everyone is welcome and has a place of the table, including people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered. By talking about what offering hospitality and being a welcoming parish is, we can have a sense of pride in the ways we are welcoming and challenge ourselves to being even more inclusive. John Lennon wrote in his song, "Imagine all the people living life in peace." What if we were more welcoming and more hospitable as a community? What would our community look like? Imagine.



Vicki Otto (center) with Nancy Field and Barbara Giordano (L-R) participate in Mass during the 2014 Provincial Assembly.

The New Wine Press

Precious Blood Center
P.O. Box 339
Liberty MO 64069-0339

Change Service Requested

The New Wine Press is committed to dialogue within the Church and charity toward all. Readers who wish to respond to the ideas shared in any issue is welcome to respond and continue the dialogue via an article or a Letter to the Editor.



Editor's Notes

New Jerusalem

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

What does it mean to be part of a city? As a country boy, the city was a place of wonder and possibilities beyond the boundaries of a small town. When I was a kid, I looked forward to my aunt coming to visit, because she took us on trips into Kansas City to see the museums, stores, and other sights. I have visited many cities since, places of wonder as well, and yet those first journeys of discovery were important not only for the destinations themselves, but how we traveled and what senses we engaged as we went.

Today the word “city” can mean something else: dirtiness, garbage, crime, intimidation, and death. In my lifetime many fled the cities, incited by fears of decay, racism and financial ruin; and many parts of our cities are still framed as places to be avoided. Not only buildings and streets have fallen into neglect, but also family and community life. Pope Francis has this to say about cities in paragraph 75 of *Evangelii Gaudium*:

“...what could be significant places of encounter and solidarity often become places of isolation and mutual distrust. Houses and neighborhoods are more often built

to isolate and protect than to connect and integrate. The proclamation of the Gospel will be a basis for restoring the dignity of human life in these contexts, for Jesus desires to pour out an abundance of life upon our cities (cf. Jn 10:10). The unified and complete sense of human life that the Gospel proposes is the best remedy for the ills of our cities, even though we have to realize that a uniform and rigid program of evangelization is not suited to this complex reality. But to live our human life to the fullest and to meet every challenge as a leaven of Gospel witness in every culture and in every city will make us better Christians and bear fruit in our cities.”

Francis holds up the New Jerusalem as the model for cities today. He isn't proposing a specific economic or social system as a cure, but rather a new awareness and compassion—a place where all are welcome and respected, where people live in harmony and peace. As we explore the Church's mission and our community through the eyes of *Evangelii Gaudium*, we are called to reflect on our journey to the New Jerusalem, which includes helping build that city of peace around us.