

# THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 26 No. 11 • July 2018





# Let us serve God with holy joy.

*-St. Gaspar del Bufalo, founder of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood*

Explore God's calling among the Precious Blood family.

Precious Blood Volunteers • Companions • Sisters • Brothers • Priests

Visit [livepreciousblood.org](http://livepreciousblood.org)



# THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 26 No. 11 • July 2018

## Contents

Beacons, Not Barriers .....	2
Blessed Are the Peacemakers .....	3
Gospel of Nonviolence: the Way of the Church .....	4
Bruised but Brave: Living as a New Creation .....	7
Take Us to the Edge .....	10
Summary of the Discussion on “The New Creation” .....	12
Our Common Humanity.....	16
Sent by the Blood .....	17

*Cover photo: Icon of St. Gaspar that was present during the 2018 Kansas City Provincial Assembly.*

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

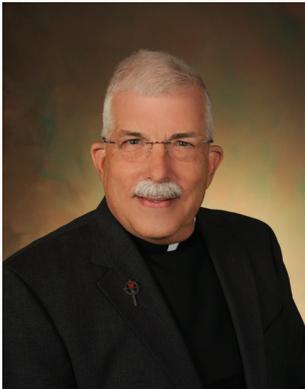
Missionaries of the Precious Blood  
Kansas City Province

Precious Blood Center  
P.O. Box 339  
Liberty, MO 64069-0339  
816.781.4344  
[www.preciousbloodkc.org](http://www.preciousbloodkc.org)

Editor  
Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.  
[rbayukcpps@mac.com](mailto:rbayukcpps@mac.com)

Layout & Design  
Margaret Haik  
[communications@preciousbloodkc.org](mailto:communications@preciousbloodkc.org)

Printed on recycled paper by  
McDonald Business Forms  
Overland Park, Kansas



## Beacons, Not Barriers

by Fr. Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S., Editor

you have to understand,  
that no one puts their children in a boat  
unless the water is safer than the land  
—from *Home*, by Warsan Shire

President Ronald Reagan, in his farewell address to the nation in January 1989, concluded his remarks with these often-quoted words: “The past few days...I've thought a bit of the shining ‘city upon a hill.’ The phrase comes from John Winthrop, who wrote it to describe the America he imagined. What he imagined was important, because he was an early Pilgrim, and early freedom man. He journeyed here on what today we'd call a little wooden boat; and like the other Pilgrims, he was looking for a home that would be free.

I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind, it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity. *And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here....*

And how stands the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure and happier than it was eight years ago. But more than that: after 200 years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm. *And she's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home*” [italics mine].

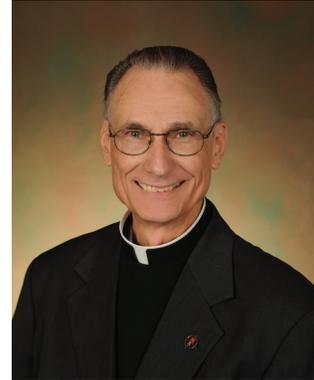
Well...that was then, this is now. In sharp contrast, the current president has used the following dehumanizing terms to describe (non-white) immigrants: rapists, murderers, thieves, invaders, animals, breeders, infestation. His administration initiated a zero-tolerance policy which included forced family separation, meant as a deterrent. A policy that is purposefully cruel and mean—and morally offensive and repugnant. Babies taken from mothers' arms (some of them nursing), sobbing children placed in prison camp-like conditions or loaded on buses under the cover of darkness and shipped around the country. Parents being deported back to the countries they fled without being reunited with their children.

*continued on page 5*

# Blessed Are the Peacemakers

by Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S., Provincial Council

I recently became acquainted with Fr. John Dear, a priest of the Monterey, California Diocese. Only 58 years old, he has already been nominated twice for the Nobel Peace Prize. I think he is a person to whom we as Precious Blood people should pay attention. We are a people called to hear and respond to the “cry of the blood.” He is a good model. He helped draft Pope Francis’ message for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World Day of Peace on January 1, 2017. It is the first statement in the history of the Catholic Church on nonviolence. With this message, Pope Francis has entered the same league as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. in terms of understanding Christianity from the perspective of nonviolence. This is active peacemaking, universal love, working for justice and disarmament.



Pope Francis realizes that there is no *just* war. In this time of permanent war, we must find another way forward or we will destroy ourselves. Violence doesn’t work, war doesn’t work. They only breed further violence and war.

There are countless numbers of cases of how nonviolence can work to end war and conflicts. St. Gaspar gave us an example at Sonnino. He stood in the breach between the authorities who wanted to destroy the town and the banditos. Warfare does not work as a means to end war. Too many people are getting killed, and too many people are getting rich from these wars and killing. It is not the way of Jesus. If we are to become his mature disciples, we must start practicing the nonviolence of Jesus.

Fr. Dear believes that all of Jesus’ teachings are a visionary nonviolence. “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Mt 5:9), “Love your enemies” (Mt 5:44), “Offer no violent resistance to one who is evil” (Mt 5:39). Jesus confronts the Temple authorities and the Roman Empire. He doesn’t hit anybody, hurt anybody, kill anybody, or drop any bombs, but he is *not* passive! He marches to Jerusalem, engages in civil disobedience, and then is arrested, tortured, and killed. But even in his suffering and his death, not only is Jesus nonviolent, he is also not even angry. He forgives people and, when he comes back after his resurrection, he does not lash out at those who hurt and abandoned him.

After centuries of violence, we just presume that is part of what it means to be a human being. We’re wounded people, we’re violent to one another, and then we go off and kill or support killing. Unless we become nonviolent, we will be doomed to our own self-destruction.

*continued on page 6*

# Gospel of Nonviolence: the Way of the Church

*Presented at 2018 Kansas City Provincial Assembly by Gabino Zavala, Peace & Justice Ministry Director*

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) passed a resolution in their annual meeting last August challenging us to live Gospel nonviolence. This resolution commits and calls members to “use both our individual charisms and experience as religious leaders 1) to build up nonviolent practices and a culture of nonviolence; 2) to invite Pope Francis to offer an encyclical on nonviolence, which would include a shift to a just peace approach to transforming conflict.” The resolution reminds us that “Jesus calls us to love our enemies and be peacemakers (Mt. 5:7)... We need a deeper understanding of Gospel nonviolence to better live out our faith, transform our societies, and ‘build bridges’ as well as cultures of just peace.”

As Precious Blood Members, Companions, Volunteers, and Amici, how do we use our charism of renewal and reconciliation to live out, as a community and as individuals, a culture of nonviolence?

Since this resolution was passed overwhelmingly by CMSM we have seen on-going wars in Syria, Afghanistan, and Yemen. Terrorism continues to be an assault on our lives. Shootings have sadly become an almost daily occurrence in our country. There have been 33 school shootings since August 3, 2017—and we can’t forget the horrendous shooting in Las Vegas. Human trafficking is a worldwide tragedy. We continue to have the death penalty as the law of the land in 35 states. Our prisons are violent warehouses in our broken criminal justice system. Violence against women—sexual, emotional and physical—is a daily reality in our society. Our actions and our lifestyle are an assault on our common home not caring for the gift of creation.

Violence is not just a result of guns and weapons of war. There is violence in our words and attitudes. It is evident in racist behavior. We can see violence in the treatment of those that are different as we see the treatment of the LGBTQ community as well as immigrants and refugees. Our policy of separating immigrant children from their parents is a violent policy. We experience bullying and neighborhood and family disputes.

Violence does not bring about peace. In war there are no winners. We don’t need to kill the killers to

show that killing is wrong. The answer to stopping violence in school is not arming the teachers and proliferating the use of guns in our gun culture.

## Precious Blood Spirituality

Our spirituality of the Precious Blood calls us to build community through the inclusion of the marginalized, to walk in solidarity with those who suffer, and to seek reconciliation in a divided world.

We are united by the bond of charity and rooted in the spirituality of the Blood of Christ. We are called to participate in the renewal of the Church, collaborating as incorporated members and Companions to promote conversion and reconciliation, pursuing justice and peace. You can say that Gospel nonviolence is not only the way of the Church, it is the way of the Precious Blood Missionary.

## Pope Francis—World Day of Prayer 2017

In his annual statement on the occasion of the World Day of Prayer for Peace Pope Francis wrote:

“True followers of Jesus embrace his teachings about nonviolence. May charity and non-violence govern how we treat each other within society and international life. May nonviolence become the hallmark of our decisions, our relationships and our actions. The last century we experienced two World Wars, the threat of nuclear war, and other wars. Now we fight war throughout the world piecemeal. We fight war on different kinds of levels: abuses suffered by migrants, devastation of the environment, terrorism, all kinds of acts of violence. Violence is not the cure for our broken world!”

The CMSM Resolution calls us to:

- Pray for conversion to Gospel nonviolence, confront violence in our own lives, and reach out to those we find difficult to love or consider enemies
- Educate ourselves about the Gospel of nonviolence and a just peace approach to conflict resolution

- Significantly build up nonviolent practices in skills training, advocating for nonviolence and the investment of resources
- Offer accompaniment and protection to vulnerable populations and other marginalized persons along with all of God’s creation
- Build up alternatives to war and to other forms of direct violence and to move away from justifying war

## Questions

Let us pray and reflect on the following questions:

How do I intentionally practice nonviolence in my life at home and in the work place?

How have we, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, used both our charism and experience as religious leaders, to significantly build up practices and a culture of nonviolence?

In what specific ways have we responded and can we respond to this resolution as individual members and Companions and leaders of faith communities? †

---

*Editor, continued from page 2*

Permanently separated. Workers who are not allowed to touch or hug the children under their care. In one shelter, the children are required each morning to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance in a language they don’t know.

Some parents are now being told that they can have their child back if they sign a document forgoing a court appearance. Children as hostages.

President Trump has now explicitly advocated depriving undocumented immigrants of their due-process rights, arguing that people who cross the border into the United States illegally were invaders and must immediately be deported without trial or an appearance before a judge in violation of the Fifth Amendment.

This policy is traumatizing children and families, many of them fleeing violence and danger in their homelands. No mercy, no compassion, no nuance.

A seeming aversion to new people coming into the country—from an administration which is almost all white, wealthy, and male. Racist and nationalist policies which seek to limit even legal immigration—and make it “merit based,” which is code for people from the “right countries.” To quote the president: “Why can’t we have more people from Norway?” (Worldwide there are about 13 million displaced Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance. In the first three months of this year, the United States has accepted 11.)

Racism is racism and needs to be called out. Taking children away from their parents and using them as pawns is reprehensible and evil. Sometimes right is right and wrong is wrong, and there is no hiding spot in between. As Precious Blood people, we are called to speak out against these evils. We are called to act—whether it is speaking out when we hear our neighbors echo the administration’s hate, contacting our representatives to encourage change, or providing comfort and aid to refugees. As our province leadership said in a recent statement: “The soul of our nation is at stake. When we treat refugees with contempt rather than compassion, our souls are at risk.” We can help make our families and parishes, our states and our country, beacons instead of barriers. Shining places on the hill where “the doors are open to anyone with the will and the heart to get there.” †

**Find Us on the Web!**  
**preciousbloodkc.org**



Go there for:  
 Province Events  
*The Weekly Wine Press*  
*The New Wine Press*

and more!

*Leadership, continued from page 3*

Violent words have come into our vocabulary, too. Violent behaviors and attitudes have become common and out of control. Are these in line with the footsteps of the one we claim to follow?

Fr. Dear says that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches a practical way of life through nonviolence. “Love your enemies and then you are really the sons and daughters of the God who lets the sun rise on the good and the bad and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust” (Mt 5:44-45). “Love your enemies.” You don’t kill your enemies, you love them nonviolently. Jesus describes God as a God of nonviolence. The reign of God is the reign of total nonviolence. If we want to live in the life of God as followers of the nonviolent Jesus, we must recognize every human being as a sister or brother and work untiringly for a new culture of peace and nonviolence. One of our Precious Blood foundresses [Maria de Mattias] taught: “Every person is precious, as precious as the blood of Christ.”



We had hundreds of years of terrible violence through the Middle Ages. Then St. Francis of Assisi enters the scene, and states, “You can’t carry weapons. We are people of prayer, penance, poverty, service to the poor, oneness with the earth, and non-violence.” And he proves it by walking through the war zone during the Crusades to meet the hated enemy—the sultan of Egypt—practicing the non-violence of Jesus, loving his enemies, armed only with conversation.

Fr. Dear teaches that violence is not the way of Jesus, and that it is *not* working. Our nuclear

weapons did not protect us on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and our war on terrorism is just turning the whole world against us. We are going to have more September 11<sup>th</sup>s and large-scale shootings until we wake up, stop bombing the world, and start getting at the roots of terrorism and violence. Instead, let’s end hunger, end oppression, end unjust occupations, end far-reaching disease.

As a Province, motivated by the Blood of Christ and called to be ministers of reconciliation, we have taken the following corporate stances:

*Corporate Stance Against the Death Penalty* (in which we reaffirm our belief in the sacredness of life and which encourages us to engage in activities which will end the death penalty)

*Corporate Stance for Comprehensive Reform of the Immigration System* (in which we affirm the rights of all immigrants to be treated with dignity and respect)

*Corporate Stance Against Gun Violence* (which asks us to confront the evil manifested

by the culture of violence). Do you know where your copy is? Let us incorporate these values into our way of thinking and living.

Years ago, Carey Landry wrote the song, “There’s a Time for Building Bridges,” which says in part: “There’s a time for loving and a time for embracing. There’s a time for throwing all past stones away. There’s a time for healing and a time for forgiving. There’s a time for building bridges, and that time is now.” I, too, believe that time is now! ✠



# Bruised but Brave: Living as a New Creation

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

*See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. Be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create...Isaiah 65, 17-18*

On the long flights to and from Vietnam in April, I caught up on some of the movies that I missed at the theaters during the year. On the way over, I watched *The Darkest Hour* for which Gary Oldman won the Oscar for Best Actor for his portrayal of Winston Churchill. On the return flight from visiting our mission in Vietnam, I watched a film that I had no desire to see when it was in theaters, *The Greatest Showman*. But, if you want a soundtrack for the New Creation, listen to the lyrics of several of the songs from this movie musical.

For those not familiar with the film, it tells the story of P.T. Barnum and how the Barnum and Bailey Circus, the so-called “greatest show on earth,” began. Though I suspect the screenplay took some liberties with history and only really scanned the highlights of Barnum’s life, the lyrics of several songs spoke volumes about dreaming big dreams and having the energy and imagination to make the dream come true.

But the song saturated with the spirituality of the Precious Blood is, “This is Me.” In the film, it is sung by the Bearded Lady who is joined by all the

other misfits and freaks that Barnum has brought together to form the greatest show on earth. He sought out the most unusual acts, people who were locked out of sight because of their deformities. People like the World’s Tallest Man, the Dog Boy, Tom Thumb, and the Bearded Lady. When Barnum first invites them to join his show, they resist because they have been ridiculed their entire lives for how they look. But Barnum convinces them that people will come to see them, not to laugh at them but to celebrate their uniqueness.

The song, “This Is Me,” occurs after Barnum has become a success and has been invited to entertain the Queen of England. He meets an opera singer who he believes will bring in the sophisticated, educated, high-brow audience to see his show. So, he sponsors the first performance of the “Swedish Nightingale” and invites all the elite members of New York society. They are spellbound by her voice and compelling performance. It is a smashing success and Barnum believes he has widened the circle of the greatest show on earth.

*continued on page 8*

The circus family that Barnum recruited initially are also invited to the performance. Though they are given the cheap seats in the far reaches of the balcony, they have dressed up in their best clothes and are deeply moved by this opera singer's stunning voice. But when they go to the reception afterwards, Barnum turns them away at the door. His excuse is that they need to get ready for their own show that night. But the truth is, he does not want his "freaks" to mingle with the "elite." His action of exclusion belies his vision of the circus as an inclusive family of misfits and outcasts where all are welcome.

It is at this point, that the Bearded Lady begins to sing:

*I am not a stranger to the dark,  
Hide away, they say,  
'Cause we don't want your broken parts.*

These are the opening lines of an anthem of inclusivity that could be the theme song for the New Creation. And I don't mean because life in the Society of the Precious Blood is a three-ring circus—though I must admit the last seven years as provincial I've sometimes felt like a ringmaster—but rather because the song reveals how each person's uniqueness contributes to the inclusive vision of a new heavens and a new earth.

At the heart of this song, seeping through every line, is the blood of Christ:

*I've learned to be ashamed of all my scars,  
run away, they say,  
no one'll love you as you are.*

*But I won't let them break me down to dust  
I know that there's a place for us  
For we are glorious.*

*When the sharpest words wanna cut me down  
I'm gonna send a flood, gonna drown 'em out,  
I am brave, I am bruised,  
I am who I'm meant to be, this is me.  
Look out 'cause here I come  
And I'm marchin' on to the beat I drum,  
I'm not scared to be seen,  
I make no apologies, this is me.*

The lyrics of this soundtrack and especially this song capture the "big tent" vision of the kingdom of

God. We heard this vision recently in Mark's gospel when Jesus' family comes to take him away because they believe he is "out of his mind" as he is surrounded by all the misfits, sinners, and lost souls who hunger and thirst for his message of mercy, love, and hope. In a sense his family was right—he was out of his mind: the mind that divides communities, the mind that polarizes between left and right, traditional and progressive, liberal and conservative, the mind the judges on appearance or race or age or creed or gender or sexual orientation. Yes, this is the mind that we must lose in a world where people are crying out for inclusion, acceptance, and reconciliation.

This is our challenge, and this is our call as a New Creation of Precious Blood priests, brothers, Companions, volunteers, Amici—missionaries all—who are called to bridge the gaps and stand in the breach. As people who seek to draw all peoples near through the blood of Christ, we are, as in Paul's letter to the Philippians, to "put on the mind of Christ." To put on a mind that seeks unity, not division; that speaks truth without fear; that lives faithfully the vision of new heavens and a new earth.

We are coming together to begin this New Creation because the spirituality of the Precious Blood and the charism of our founder calls us to re-imagine and rekindle our religious life to meet the signs of these times. It is not about the data of diminishment but the daring to be relevant in a nation and a world that cries out for reconciliation.

At the Cincinnati Provincial Assembly in May, there was great energy around this vision of a New Creation and more than a few questions. I trust there are many questions in our minds and hearts tonight as we begin our 41st Provincial Assembly and we hope to address them and raise even more during the next couple of days. But the one question that kept coming up was, "What will be new about a new creation?"

Part of my answer to that question is to renew our emphasis and underscore our commitment to a ministry of reconciliation. As Paul reminds us in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, echoing the vision of the prophet Isaiah we heard this evening, "Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is

from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5, 17-18).

As missionaries of the Precious Blood and sons and daughters of Gaspar, we have been given the ministry of reconciliation. What will be new is that we will no longer be defined by boundaries or borders but work together in ministries on the margins of the church and edges of society. Members and Companions living together, praying together, and working together in Mission Houses in those places, rural and urban, where there are loud shouts or silent screams for reconciliation.

Maybe it’s a Mission House in California that ministers in a parish, with the LGBTQ community, with the homeless, or with young people who have been abandoned because of who they are. Or maybe it’s a Mission House in Ohio where the elderly become invisible because of age and infirmity. In both places, members and Companions seek to make visible the healing presence of Christ’s redeeming blood.

Whether it’s a parish in Los Angeles or Columbus or Ottumwa or Sedalia that ministers with immigrants fearing deportation, or a center in Chicago offering a safe place for victims of gang violence, a Renewal Center in Liberty where people come to find peace and deepen their relationship with God, or a Shrine in Ohio that welcomes pilgrims expressing a more devotional spirituality, we seek to reclaim each place as an expression of our ministry of reconciliation.

What’s new about this is seeing how this mission-driven New Creation is supported and nourished by our community life where we are bonded in charity—young and old, members and companions, definitively incorporated members and volunteers who give one or two or three years of their lives in the service of this ministry of reconciliation. If we really want to re-imagine our future, we can look at new forms of membership within a Society of Apostolic Life, to an extended temporary incorporation where young men and women or those who are older who are in transition in careers can live and work and minister with us for a few years but not make a permanent commitment.

What is new about this new creation? As I wrote in *The Cup and the New Covenant* last year, I believe

“we are creating a community where three or four Precious Blood people will go to the margins, go where others dare not or cannot go, and establish a presence that will be welcoming as they live in solidarity with those whose hope has worn thin. It will mean that we say goodbye to some parishes and faith communities that have been served by Precious Blood priests and brothers for many years, but in many of these places the spirituality of the blood of Christ will continue to be central to the life of these parishes because of the presence of Companions who will make certain renewal and reconciliation remain hallmarks of parish life.”

We may not be the “greatest show on earth,” but I still believe we have the greatest spirituality to renew the face of the earth. As that song from *The Greatest Showman* proclaims, we make no apologies for giving witness to a spirituality that welcomes misfits, freaks, sinners and outcasts for who we are—each one of us—are made in God’s image and “we are glorious.”

When I listened to that song on the plane coming back from Vietnam, I was deeply moved by the sight of that Bearded Lady, Siamese twins, Tom Thumb and the others singing and dancing defiantly into the crowd of wealthy aristocrats and deep pocket prejudices while also confronting those outside the circus who scorned them because of their appearance. The gospel always addresses this desire of God to enlarge our hearts, so no one is left out of the circle of God’s grace. So, this New Creation promotes not a “three-ring circus” of priests, brothers, and Companions, but a five or six-ring circus that includes volunteers, Amici, and all who seek to live the spirituality of the blood of Christ under a big tent of God’s mercy.

When Jesus appeared to his disciples in that upper room, showed them his wounds and breathed on them, he gave us a new commission: even with our “broken parts,” we are to go into the world as ministers of reconciliation. Though we are “bruised, we are brave,” and with God’s grace and Gaspar’s dream guiding us, we embark on this New Creation as we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us to renew our community, our church, and, boldly, “the face of the earth.” ✠



*Jubilarians, back row: Fr. Joe Uecker, Fr. Tim Coday, Fr. Ron Will, Fr. Joe Bathke, front row: Fr. Al Ebach, Fr. Mike Goode, Fr. Bill Hubman, Fr. Mike Volkmer, Dennis Schaab*

## Take Us to the Edge

*Homily from Jubilarian Mass by Fr. Joe Uecker, C.P.P.S., Odessa, Texas*

Where is Elijah when you really need him? Here we have a prophet of God, so courageous, so full of the Spirit, that he took on the 450 prophets of Baal. He wasn't in the mood for any "fake news" about some trick, so he put so much water on the sacrifice that he filled the trenches.

Ok, so this is an exaggerated story. So, it didn't happen quite this way. So, what is this all about? Why do I think we need Elijah today?

We all know the commandments: "I am the Lord your God. You shall not have any strange gods before me." Some people, including Jesus, think that's about all you need. Get that first one right and everything



else falls into place. Jesus put it a little differently: "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, with your whole mind and with all your

strength." And if that's not quite enough, Jesus adds the second: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But it's really the same as the first commandment.

Time and again, the Israelites violated this commandment. Time and time again God forgave and took this people back. Little by little, the Israelites they came to see their relationship with God like a marriage. And when you look at things like that, you don't ask any more: "What do I have to do? Is it a sin if I...?" You ask rather: "What can I do to show my love?" And if you use the marriage comparison, unfaithfulness becomes adultery.

That's what today's story is all about: calling God's people from their adultery back to a loving and forgiving God. Elijah says: "So this people may know that you have turned back their hearts to you." So much for the fire-and-brimstone God. Not this God; this God "does not desire the death of sinners, but rather that they be converted and live."

Where is Elijah today when we need him? Who is our God? This is an important question now that we are in the process of forming a new creation. As crazy

as it sounds, I think there is the danger of making a god out of the community. I don't say we're doing that, but I think there is the danger of trying to keep or preserve the community as we want it to be or keep some aspect that we're married to. We have a certain reputation in our province. Will we lose this? Is this our god that we have to let go of? This or that ministry? This or that parish? Even the place where we live?

It's like putting all this in our open hands and saying: "God, this is our life, take what you want." And then as soon as God takes something, right away we close our fist and say: "Not that, God. Come on!" Then once again you reach out tentatively and try again. I don't know about you, but I need Elijah to call me out like he did the Israelites to "paint or get off the ladder."

These days we use the word edge or the margins to signify people and places that don't count, the nobodies, the losers, the powerless, those who are ignored, those at the bottom.

Some years ago, Fr. Joe Nassal wrote a prayer called "Psalm of the Edge." For me, that prayer is a call to leave something behind. It's no secret that we have a lot. I don't feel like I'm on the edge, (except maybe the edge of civilization down in Texas). Don't misunderstand: I love what we have, but I don't think it is the edge.

The prayer starts out: "Spirit of St. Gaspar, take us to the edge."

How does St. Gaspar go about this? What do we members and Companions have to do to get to the edge? We certainly have a powerful example in Francis, the Bishop of Rome. I see our Precious Blood



Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago as definitely at the edge. Or our brothers and sisters at Most Holy Redeemer in San Francisco. I've heard their ministry has softened the heart of the Archbishop such that he is a regular helper each week at the dinner for the needy. You can't beat that for results.

Not everyone is called to these things, but in some way we are called to the edge, perhaps even in the midst of wealth. Let me give you an example. I would not call the Diocese of San Angelo in Texas a wealthy diocese by any means, but there are several wealthy parishes, especially in this time of the oil boom. The pastor of one of these parishes told me: "If I preach charity, the people will give the shirts off their backs. But if I preach justice, they'll run me out of town." As I see it, if it is charity, I am in control, I am free to say yes or no; if it is justice then I'm not in control, I'm obliged, I have a duty. Does that make these wealthy parishes bad people? Of course not? It just means that we still have a lot of work to do to bring people to see what justice requires. It means we're not at the edge yet.

I don't think it is so much what we do, what our ministry is, but how we do it, how we get to the edge even in the midst of wealth. But that's not easy. Let's get on with our prayer.

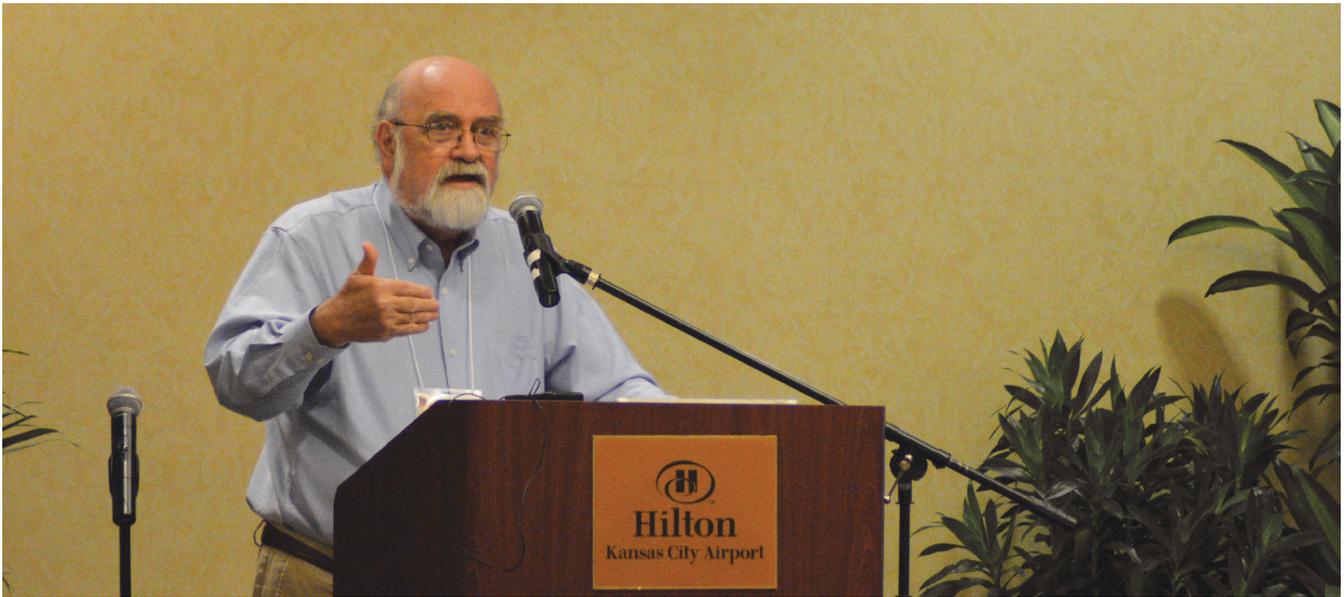
"With a gentle push, send us forth to fly beyond the confinements of our minds to the heart of mystery."

Elijah wasn't so gentle with the 450 prophets of Baal. He had the people slit their throats. I guess it's my wimpiness coming through, but every time I pray this prayer, I emphasize the "gentle" push. So maybe it is time to listen more closely or to expect that the kick in the pants would be a little less gentle. I don't think we're at the edge yet.

"You preached the vision of a new heaven and a new earth. This vision has its time and will not disappoint."

At this time it looks dark. In another community prayer, we say: "Help us to understand the signs of our times." I don't know how much brighter the signs have to be for us to realize that something has to be done. If we stand up and are counted for the sake of truth and human decency, we will definitely find ourselves on the edge with many people.

*continued on page 15*



*Fr. Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S. speaks at the 2018 Kansas City Provincial Assembly*

## Summary of the Discussion on “The New Creation”

*by Fr. Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S.*

### **Called on a Journey**

Moving toward a “New Creation” calls the Kansas City Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood to embark on a journey. To help orient us in this regard, we can turn to images in the Bible. The Bible recounts a variety of different journeys, undertaken out of different motives and with different goals. Our movement toward a New Creation might draw on elements from some of these to shape our journey:

- Abraham and Sarah were well settled into what might be called “retirement” when they were called to set out for a new land and a new story. They could have stayed comfortably where they were, but were urged to move to something new.
- Jacob and Esau undertook a journey back toward each other after years of separation. They did not know exactly what to expect, but found themselves in a new place once they met.
- Moses was called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to a Promised Land. The journey turned out to be more demanding and lengthy than they had anticipated. Part of the journey was a purification process. In the words of an old Jewish proverb: “It took God three days to

get the Israelites out of Egypt, but it took forty years to get Egypt out of the Israelites.”

- Ruth decided to accompany her mother-in-law Naomi to her homeland, even though Ruth would be an alien there. Accompaniment can change people.
- Jesus was called out of his home village to a ministry that led him through Galilee and surrounding regions, down through Samaria and Judaea. His family didn’t know what to make of it, and tried to bring him home.
- Paul thought he was making a trip to Damascus to persecute the followers of Jesus. On the way, God set him on a new path that led him in a very different direction. He came to describe that path as one of his being reconciled to God.

Which elements of these biblical stories help us chart our way to a New Creation?

### **Discerning the Vision/Call that Guides Us**

The New Creation process is about more than a technocratic merger or reducing bureaucracies. It is about responding to what God is calling us to do at this time. Sometimes we speak of “seeing” a new



creation, and visual images such as “vision” help us illumine the way. At other times, images of hearing are more helpful: we are being “called” to blend “voices” or create a “symphony” of gifts.

No one has given a definition of just what the New Creation is, other than appealing to 2 Cor 5:17: “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.” We know that the experience of reconciliation brings us to a new place, not a return to some previous one. A few thoughts about the New Creation might be helpful here.

This New Creation is not something we construct ourselves. Rather, it is the experience of what God is doing within us and among us. Romans 8:18-27 captures best this experience of a New Creation emerging within us—creation longing for the revelation of the freedom of the children of God, groaning as if in childbirth, helping us in our weakness, “for we do not know how to pray as we ought.”

Creation in the Bible is not just something that happened. It is God’s deliberate work. The first creation story, in Genesis 1-2, was composed after the Israelites returned from the trauma of exile. It presents God’s work not as haphazard, but a deliberate set of acts, each performed carefully and each affirmed as being good. Such a sense of a new order was received gladly by those who had returned from the chaos of displacement and loss. (We might think of the situation of immigrants today.) Paul has this experience of being a New Creation, brought about by the reconciling mercy of God in his own life, and becomes the “Gospel of Reconciliation” that he proclaims to the Gentiles.

Our experience of reconciliation in the ministry of reconciliation—so central to Precious Blood

spirituality—is what attunes us to what God is leading us to in the New Creation.

## **Assembling Our Resources/ Checking Our Provisions**

We do not embark on this journey empty-handed or without resources. We have a host of provisions for the journey. In his early attempts to convince Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to depart, he requested that they might bring their cattle and provisions with them. Esau brought his entire family and livestock with him to meet Jacob.

We need to reflect on what we bring to the New Creation process. We do not arrive with nothing, but rather have a fifty-year story, and what we have learned along the way in that journey. Some of it parallels what the Cincinnati Province is bringing, but much of it is distinctive. This will not be set aside in the New Creation, but will enhance a common future. Three sets of resources will provide provisions for the journey and gifts for the arrival:

First, the experience of living out the three pillars of the C.P.P.S. as a Society of Apostolic Life: mission, community, and spirituality. The Kansas City Province has made distinctive contributions to all three. Just to mention a few of these: mission to the margins (Hispanic ministries, LGBT ministry); the Member-Companion relationships as an embodiment of community; the ministry of reconciliation as Precious Blood spirituality.

Second, the Kansas City Province’s living out of a Precious Blood spirituality both as a Cry of the Blood and the Call of the Blood, under the four symbols of covenant, cross, cup and reconciliation. (The April 2018 issue of *The Cup of the New Covenant* on

*continued on page 14*



wounds—especially the article by Joe Nassal—adds to a deeper understanding of the place of wounds in the blood of the cross).

Third, the Kansas City Province brings some concrete manifestations of living out our charism to enhance the experience of the New Creation:

- The Member-Companion relationships that are distinctive from incorporated member-lay associate relationships anywhere else in the C.P.P.S.
- A commitment to social justice marked by corporate stances on a number of issues such as the death penalty and gun violence.
- The Precious Blood Volunteers, engaging young people in the ministry to the margins.
- The Precious Blood Renewal Center as a distinctive embodiment of Gaspar’s vision of the mission house as a center for renewal.
- The Vietnam Mission, as inculcating the charism of St. Gaspar in a place unlike any other C.P.P.S. ministry.

### Signposts and Landmarks Along the Way

The biblical journeys that might illumine our way into the New Creation were often marked by moments that refocused a sense of direction. Four such moments or signposts are coming into view as we discussed the New Creation:

- From “us” and “them” to an enhanced “we.” “Who are ‘we’?” is a question long explored in the Kansas City Province. To outsiders



it could at times as a bit excessive and self-centered. In my time with you these days, I as an outsider have come to understand the outcome of those discussions a bit better. The Kansas City Province has developed a strong sense of a “we” that can help build a new relationship with the Members and Companions of the Cincinnati Province. The conditions that make a “we” genuinely possible are (1) recognition—not making those we do not know invisible; (2) belonging—a sense of genuinely being part of the group; and (3) welcoming or hospitality—not hospitality as a one-time greeting, but as a commitment to a relationship.

Creating an enhanced “we” in the New Creation can be compared to blending families. When someone gets married, they marry not only an individual, but the individual’s family as well. Perhaps even more helpful is the challenge of blending two grown families when a couple marries in mid-life. These challenges may help illuminate the New Creation we are envisioning.

- Are ways that a people carry and express their identity. Being aware of our story, and how we come to include new elements and events in the story, is a sign of being able to move to something new.
- Sharing/Imagining New Spaces. What the New Creation will look like in a nation-wide (continent-wide) situation will take some imagining. Our first tendency is to think of the geographical spaces. But we need to consider the social spaces as well that social media provide and the New Creation Committee’s call to engage those in the C.P.P.S. whom we do not know. And

perhaps most importantly (a learning from the ministry of reconciliation), we must provide safe and hospitable spaces for people to get to know each other, share their gifts, and share their wounds.

- Refocusing Our Mission. Entering the New Creation is not so much about what we might have to give up as what gifts we bring and how our ministries can enhance one another. The deeply fractured nation in which we are now living certainly provides a strong call to attending to wounds and to a ministry of reconciliation.

### Anticipating Our Arrival

Anticipating becoming a New Creation, even before the contours of it are entirely clear, helps us tap into the work of God, as the passage in Romans 8 reminds us. Our gathering at Eucharist, our spirituality of the Cup as a cup of memory and a cup of hope, will help sustain us along with way. As we move along that way, we can enhance our resilience—our capacity to be flexible and bend, but also call upon our trust in a God who does not abandon us, a God whose name is Mercy. It helps us to live in hope. The rituals that draw us together will echo those liturgies awaiting us in heaven, as the Book of Revelation set before us, allowing us to “follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (Rev 14:4). ✠



*Uecker, continued from page 11*

Is it a coincidence that at this time in history we are called to become a new creation? How can our new creation help to bring about the new heaven and new earth?

“Etch the vision in our imaginations to help us see the time is now.”

That word “etch.” It implies pain; it implies scratching, digging in with a sharp tool; it implies making a mark that can never be erased. So long as the vision is engraved into our minds and hearts, so long as we constantly refer to it, so long as it is the guiding force for our lives, we will know that we are on the right path. Come what may, this vision will be our guiding light.

“Give us the courage to find our home on the edge where heaven meets earth and hope is born.”

I doubt if any of us really want to be on the edge; it's too comfortable in the middle. It's not easy to let loose of power, money, and prestige and privilege, and sometimes even friends—those who would not join us on the edge. I'm sure St. Gaspar felt this when the jealousy of his brother priests got him in hot water—when they tried to kick him upstairs by making him a bishop in Brazil.

But isn't this why we're community? To be instruments of God, to push each other to the edge. When my well is dry, I come to yours to draw strength. When I get scared and weak-kneed, you are there to push me back into the struggle. When your well is dry, I offer mine. When you can't see clearly which way to go, I want to be there as a light for you.

But none of this can happen without honest sharing of ourselves. We're not too good at this yet, but we're learning. It's been happening little by little. To the extent that we can share, we can make it to the edge. And judging from the lives of the saints, once we're at the edge, that's where we find God most visible.

“Blessed, happy are the poor in spirit, the reign of God is theirs.” “I am the Lord your God; my favorite dwelling is at the edge.”

Come on, Elijah, do your thing once again, this time with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. ✠

# Our Common Humanity

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

To be honest, the title of this article was going to be “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,” a take-off of the old Clint Eastwood film. It was what I was feeling at the time. Frankly, there are times when the joy of this work is eclipsed by the pain and disappointment. There are days that are very good and filled with amazement and joy. Other days are a challenge to see through the darkness to the other side.

June 2<sup>nd</sup> was one of those good days. Cardinal Cupich came into Juvenile Detention Center to celebrate the Confirmation and First Communion of six young men. His pastoral style and generosity of time spoke of his dedication to those who so often have been judged unworthy of our care or concern. The glow on the faces of their mothers and fathers spoke of their pride and joy. The Cardinal saw what so few others claim to see—a child of God.

As he did the last time, he gave each of the young men a cross. The Cardinal explained to the young men that these crosses had been blessed by Pope Francis and were his gift to them on this special day.

June 6<sup>th</sup> was a bad day. Olu, one of the youth who is at the Center each day, was shot three times. He survived because a police officer arrived on the scene before the ambulance could get there and put a tourniquet around his leg—the main artery was severed and without his quick thinking, Olu would have bled to death. Today, however, Olu has to try to deal with the aftermath, the trauma that he carries.

As I spoke to Olu, he told me that he didn’t want to go home. The shooting happened right in front of his house. We spoke about fear mixed with anger. He looked at me, holding back the tears, and talked about the flashbacks he was having. He said that he couldn’t sleep because of the nightmares.

To be honest, my heart broke looking at him with the multiple gunshot wounds that marked his body.

The after-the-storm, as Shelly Rambo calls it, is the trauma that remains. I can see this on faces of the youth and the staff who try to accompany them, even

as they carry their own hurt and trauma. There is high tension in the air and it can look, at times, ugly.

Lawyer and author Bryan Stevenson, in his book *Just Mercy*, writes, “You can’t effectively fight abusive power, poverty, inequality, illness, oppression, or injustice and not be broken by it.” He goes on to say that being broken is what makes us human. He says that our brokenness is the source of our common humanity. Our shared vulnerability and imperfection nurtures and sustains our capacity for compassion. While he may not use the terminology, he is speaking of the spirituality that holds the ministry of reconciliation—to embrace the hope of a new creation, even as you hold the pain and suffering.

Certainly, it is evident to mothers who have lost children to homicide or incarceration. While they come from different backgrounds and life experiences, the brokenness that they experience brings them together in a way that I don’t think could happen otherwise. It is precisely in their woundedness that they find a common bond.

Embracing the brokenness within our own lives opens up the possibility of embracing those who suffer around us. When we deny our own pain, we deny a part of our humanity; and we embark on a road that does not allow us to see the humanity of others. Perhaps that is why the resurrected Jesus appeared bearing the marks of the crucifixion. He knew that without the marks, he would be seen as a ghost or somehow untouchable. Jesus came to share in our humanity. His suffering and death allowed him to be fully human and allowed us to have an intimate relationship with our God.

While I long for more good days than bad, I do recognize that my suffering and pain allow me to share more fully in the humanity of my brothers and sisters. For that, I am grateful. ✠

# Sent by the Blood

The Leadership Team of the Kansas City Province of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood, in consultation with Brother Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S., Director of the Vietnam Mission, is pleased to announce the following assignments for service in our mission, effective July 1, 2018:

- Nhan Bui, C.P.P.S., Retreat and Renewal Ministry, Vocation Ministry Team, and Director of Companions for Vietnam Mission, with residence at Gaspar Mission House, Ho Chi Minh City. Father Nhan will continue to serve as Treasurer and a member of the Leadership Team for the Vietnam Mission
- Tam Minh Hoang, C.P.P.S., Director of Formation, Vietnam Mission, with residence at Xavier Formation House, Ho Chi Minh City. Father Tam will continue to serve on the Leadership Team for the Vietnam Mission.
- Hao Pham, C.P.P.S., Co-Director, Vocation Ministry Team, Vietnam Mission. He will continue to live at Tan Thanh Mission House and serve in various ministries at the parish.
- Diep Vu Ho, C.P.P.S., Pastoral Ministry, Tan Thanh Church, with residence at Tan Thanh Mission House
- Hoa Vu Thai, C.P.P.S., Co-Director, Vocation Ministry Team, Vietnam Mission, with residence at Tan Thanh Mission House where he will serve the community as Local Director
- Ky Phung Van, C.P.P.S., Theology Studies, Redemptorist School of Theology, Ho Chi Minh City, with residence at Hoa Hung Mission House in Ho Chi Minh City
- Truc Minh Vu, C.P.P.S., Local Director, Hoa Hung Mission House. Father Truc will continue to serve at Hoa Hung Church in Ho Chi Minh City and in Sacramental Ministry in the area.

At its meeting on May 31, 2018, the Leadership Team also approved the following appointments:

- Lucia Ferrara, Director of Hospitality, Precious Blood Renewal Center, Liberty, Missouri
- Companion Maureen Lahiff, Member, Discernment for Elections Committee
- Companion Mary George, Member, Discernment for Elections Committee
- Matthew Link, C.P.P.S., Member, Discernment for Elections Committee
- Companion Rita McNally, Member, Discernment for Elections Committee
- Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S., Member, Discernment for Elections Committee
- Companion Cath Sullivan, Member, Human Development Fund Committee
- Ron Will, C.P.P.S., Chair, Discernment for Elections Committee
- Companion Gabino Zavala, Member, Human Development Fund Committee

We are grateful to Companions Jean Swymeler and Corrin Dunn for their service on the Human Development Fund Committee.

We are grateful to these missionaries for accepting the call to be sent by the Blood of Christ in the spirit of St. Gaspar to be a reconciling and renewing presence in the Church and our world.

With peace in the blood of Christ,

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

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

Thomas Welk, C.P.P.S.

Ronald Will, C.P.P.S.

Mark Miller, C.P.P.S.

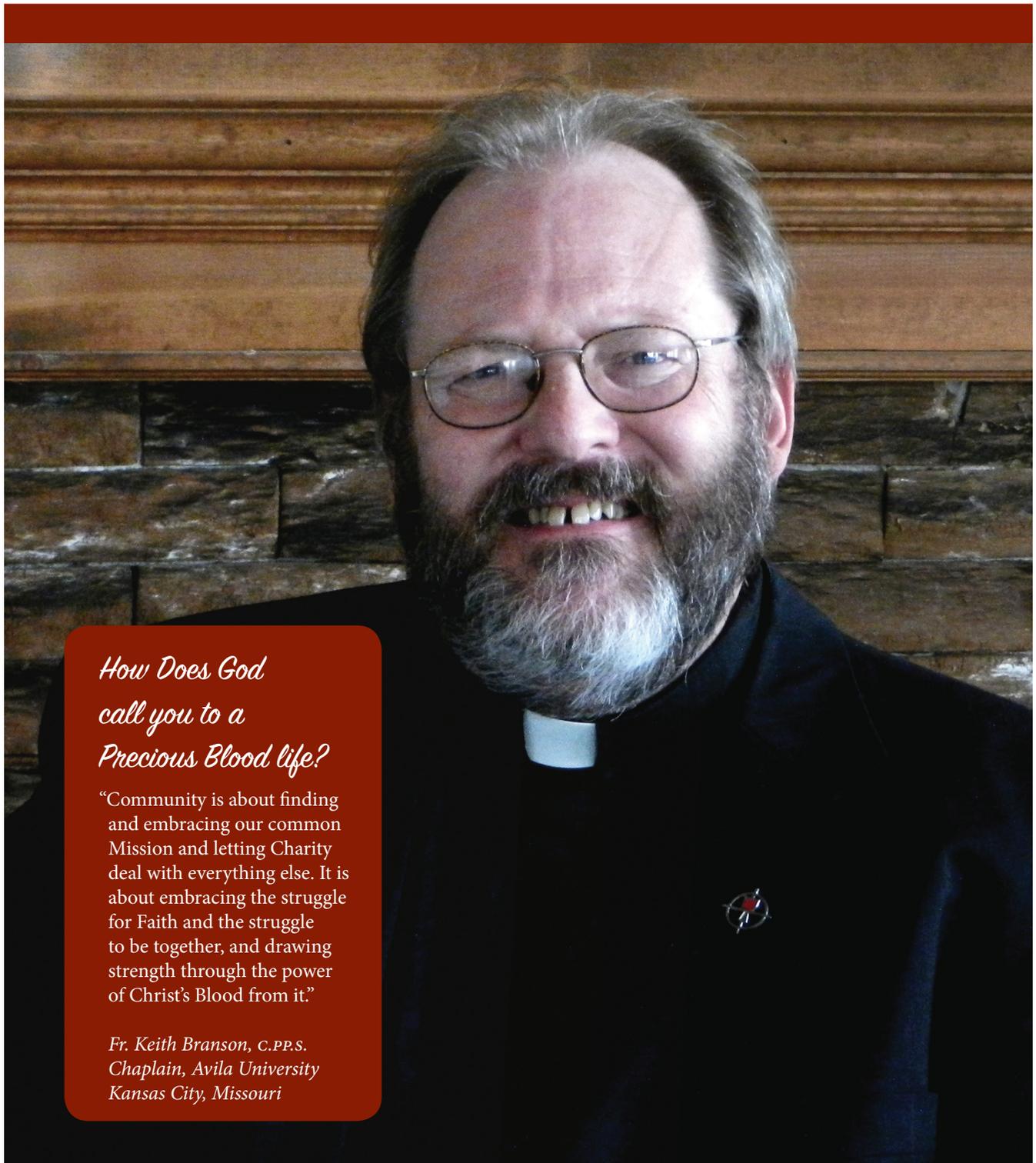
THE **New Wine** PRESS

Precious Blood Center

P.O. Box 339

Liberty MO 64069-0339

*Change Service Requested*



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

“Community is about finding and embracing our common Mission and letting Charity deal with everything else. It is about embracing the struggle for Faith and the struggle to be together, and drawing strength through the power of Christ’s Blood from it.”

*Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S.  
Chaplain, Avila University  
Kansas City, Missouri*