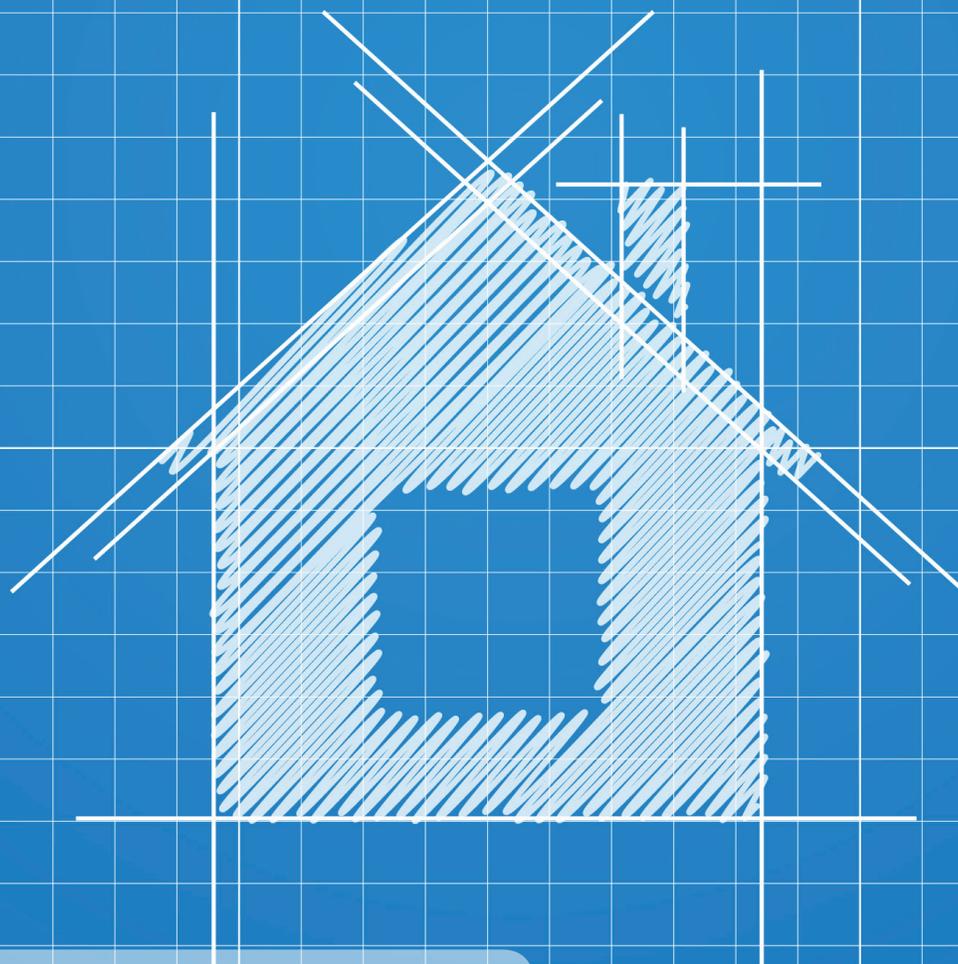


# THE **New Wine** PRESS

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Volume 25 No 10 • June 2017

**BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING & RESPECT**

**WATER AND LIFE**

**THE LANGUAGE OF MINISTRY**



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Volume 25 No.10 • June 2017

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

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

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

THE New Wine PRESS

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# The Gift of Community

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

Every year as we prepare for our annual Provincial Assembly, I am reminded of the fine print we often read on the box containing something we are purchasing: “Some assembly required.” “Some” is a relative term, but assembly is required nonetheless. This is true not only for our Precious Blood community, but for our families, our parishes, our country. Without careful assembly, things and people just don’t come together well. That box from IKEA will be a bunch of parts that don’t fit together—or worse, end up broken. And so as a community, as families, as a parish, as a country we must remain committed to assembly, to coming together, sharing deeply, and renewing the bonds that build us into a “finished product” (which, of course, is never finished).

Community in all its forms is a gift that always needs some further assembly. I share with you here the reflections of a high school classmate some years ago on the occasion of one of our reunions. It speaks to me of this gift of community.

*I grew up in the 50s with practical parents. A mother, God love her, who washed aluminum foil after she cooked in it then reused it. She was the original recycle queen, before they had a name for it. A father who was happier getting old shoes fixed than buying new ones.*

*Their marriage was good, their dreams focused. Their best friends lived barely a wave away. I can see them now, Dad in trousers, t-shirt, and a hat and Mom in a house dress, lawn mower in his hand, a dishtowel in hers.*

*It was the time for fixing things. A curtain rod, the kitchen radio, screen door, the oven door, the hem in a dress. Things we keep. It was a way of life, and sometimes it made me crazy. All that re-fixing, eating, renewing. I wanted just once to be wasteful. Waste meant affluence. Throwing things away meant you know there’d always be more.*

*But then my mother died, and on that clear summer’s night, in the warmth of the hospital room, I was struck with the pain of learning that sometimes there isn’t any more. Sometimes, what we care about most gets all used up and goes away—never to return. So, while we have it, it’s best we love it and care for it—and fix it when it’s broken, and heal it when it’s sick.*

*This is true for marriage...and old cars...and children with bad report cards...and dogs with bad hips...and aging parents...and grandparents. We keep them because they are worth it, because we are worth it. Some things we keep. Like a best friend that moved away or a classmate we grew up with. There are just some things that make life important, like people we know who are special. And so, we keep them close.*

Community has to do with connections and the life we share with others, including and perhaps especially those who did the assembling before us and for us. †

# What Stories Are We Missing?

by Fr. Mark Miller, C.P.P.S., Provincial Council

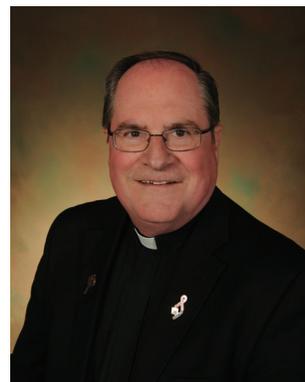
During these past several months, most of us have completed the four discussion questions that we were to take to prayer and reflect upon as to how we believe the Lord is calling us into the future. The important question for us is, do we believe we have a future? When we answer that question in the affirmative, we then ask what will the future look like for us and for those who follow us? Here it may seem to get a little more complicated.

One of the temptations we must resist is to look back, as if—because it worked then—it will work now. The Lord is calling us to a new creation, to a new expression of who we are as Missionaries of the Precious Blood, comprised of incorporated members, covenanted companions, actively involved volunteers, and laity of all stripes desiring to move forward in bringing about a renewal in our Church and world. We are aware of some of the challenges that lie before us; we are conscious of the risks that may have to be taken. However, we must approach the future with a sense of hope just as our former leaders have done, knowing that when we “read the signs of the times in faith,” our God will guide us to a future yet unknown.

Our first discussion was to share our best memory of experiencing community life. It was an exercise in identifying the ingredients of that experience so as to understand more clearly how significant that was and whether we were able to implement those ingredients into our present experience of living in community. The second discussion invited us to see how we might be invited to “expand our tents” so as to include more deeply those who share our spirituality and mission on a deeper level. This conversation also asked us to reflect upon the “internal mission” and the “external mission” of our personal and communal lives. The third discussion invited us to look at some of our Normative Texts and reflect upon which ones described our present way of life most sufficiently. This discussion may have highlighted some of our deficiencies in living community life but also reminded us of some of the more important aspects to what we committed ourselves when we were incorporated or covenanted. Our fourth discussion centered on how Pope Francis is inviting us to live our “consecrated life.” Two aspects of his Apostolic Letter that struck me were the phrases “read the signs of the times with the eyes of faith” and “live in the light of the loving relationship of the three divine Persons.”

We have become familiar with the phrase “read the signs of the times,” but when we add the phrase “with the eyes of faith,” it demands a more careful reflection. How is our faith calling us to respond with greater compassion and understanding to the issues of our day? Perhaps our “external

*continued on page 5*



by Vicky Otto, *Precious Blood Companions* Co-director



# come, HOLY SPIRIT,

One of my favorite days in the Church year is the Solemnity of Pentecost. As I thought about this article, I was immediately drawn to the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles that is read on Pentecost. Remember that the community was gathered together in one place and heard a loud wind. Then the tongues of fire descended upon them and they were filled with the gift of the Spirit. At the end of the reading St. Luke describes the many people from every nation staying in Jerusalem, and when they heard the voices of the apostles, they all “heard them speaking in their own language.” As our world and our Church changes, I can’t help but wonder if we need to be open to more of these “Pentecost moments.”

I was blessed to experience a “Pentecost moment” recently during a trip to St. Agnes Church in Los Angeles. Fr. John Wolf and I went to celebrate with the youth and young adult group who completed their discernment process and were celebrating the rite of welcome as they began their formation to become Companions. This visit was powerful for me because I realized how important it is to allow ourselves to be open to people of different cultural backgrounds as well as different generations. When this happens, what amazing gifts one receives. I realized sitting with these young people that I didn’t speak “teen” and I certainly was well past the “young adult” language as well. I didn’t speak “tech” and only have a passing understanding of Spanish. As we shared prayers and shared stories it became apparent that even though we all “spoke different languages,” when we spoke of our faith journeys and the process of answering our call to become Precious Blood Companions, we—like the crowds at the first Pentecost—heard each other in our own language.

As the Companion Movement continues to grow and move forward into the future, I have heard time and time again that we need to invite young people. I have also heard that there is a desire to expand our circle to include people of different cultural traditions. Are we ready for our Pentecost moment? Are we ready to embrace people who look, think, and are different than we are? Are we ready to embrace all that these Pentecost moments mean, namely, that we need to be open to doing things differently than we have ever done them? As Companions and as a

# come!

Precious Blood community, I think it is sometimes easier to relax and stay in the comfort of the familiar.

*Gather, Send*, our vision statement, challenges us to create something that will stretch us out of our comfort zones. It states, “We bring the cup of spirituality to ever-widening circles, to people of all generations, races and cultures.” One knows though that the simple act of stretching can be dangerous and scary. I imagine that the first disciples at Pentecost were terrified. Fr. Ben Berinti in his book *Firestarters*, appropriately described this tension: “For some, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the beauty and power and grace that cascades from the heart of God, and is now the living presence of the Christ in our midst, is best left at a distance—to be looked upon, or observed, or timidly recited as the words in a half-spent prayer or hymn.... And yet, the Holy Spirit is given to all God’s creation as the power by which the world is gradually transformed into the fullness of God’s of God’s reign. The Holy Spirit is given not for show, or for looks, or for decoration—but rather to be *used*, to be *encountered*, and to be both grabbed hold of and to be grabbed by!”

Over the next year, we will begin to discuss what this stretching means for Companions as well as for the larger Precious Blood community. Each of us will be challenged to step out of our corner of safety so we can encounter our own Pentecost moment.

What propels us out of that corner of safety is the fire of the Holy Spirit. When we allow ourselves to be enflamed with the Spirit, the anxiety and dread of trying something new gets burnt and tossed away. The warmth of the Spirit keeps us safe during those scary and challenging times and the flame of the Spirit keeps us moving and going forward in faith. During my visit to St. Agnes, that is what the youth and young adults reminded me as we listened and shared our stories. They reminded me that what separates us is irrelevant when we take that first leap forward into the unknown guided by the Spirit. And when we take the second leap forward we truly then can be those messengers of reconciliation and renewal that St. Gaspar longed for.

Fr. Ben Berinti concluded his story of Pentecost by sharing a poem by William Blake. Blake wrote:

*Unless the eye catch fire, God will not be seen.  
Unless the ear catch fire, God will not be heard.  
Unless the tongue catch fire, God will not be tamed.  
Unless the heart catch fire, God will not be loved.  
Unless the mind catch fire, God will not be known.*

May we be willing to catch fire and bring forth and share God’s love with everyone. Come, Holy Spirit, Come! ✠

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### *Leadership, continued from page 3*

mission” is asking from us a new approach in the renewal of the Church by acknowledging that the people we are called to serve are “out there” rather than “in here.” Or, to use the image of Gaspar, how are we being called to minister to those who are living in “caves” because they don’t feel welcomed in the city square?

This “reading the signs of the times in faith” seems to call us to a new place. Tradition is a wonderful aspect of life until it gets in the way of deeper, further growth. We study Tradition to understand how people made decisions based on the knowledge that was available at the time. But as more knowledge comes to light, a new expression will be demanded. This new response does not deny the past but builds on it with deep respect and reverence. Our Tradition says that we are to preach the Word for the renewal of the Church. We are to read the signs of the times in light of our faith. Our response will be inadequate if we simply answer in the same way our ancestors answered 100 or even 50 years ago. They were faithful in how they answered then, we are called to be faithful in how we answer for today.

There are different ways to express our faithfulness today, but one thing is clear: faithfulness is never expressed if motivated by fear of change or fear of the unknown. The dreams that motivated our ancestors in faith to expand their lives to new frontiers offers a model of how we are to allow our dreams to enlarge our tents and embrace the ongoing mission of the renewal of the Church and world. What are the dreams that inform your life for the future? May all of our dreams be guided by faith as we respond to the signs of our times. ✠



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# Building Bridges of Understanding & Respect

*by Maureen Lahiff, Alameda, California Companion*

I have lived and thrived in urban, coastal California since 1986—in Los Angeles and now in Oakland. California is no longer a majority white state. I experience this as vibrant and positive, not something that makes me fearful and anxious. For this, I owe many thanks for the training and experiences I've had around building multi-cultural church communities. At a congressional town hall meeting on Martin Luther King weekend in January, one of the speakers pointed out that we were what the present and future look like: neighbors and community with a rainbow of faces and accents. At that gathering a few days before the inauguration, I felt hope in a group that had shared values and goals.

In the past year, I've been thinking a lot about the corporate stance on immigration that we adopted last June at our assembly. I think it's a really well balanced statement, including a call to assisting people who would rather remain in their home countries if they could live and work in safety, and a call to address the need for laborers in agriculture. Since then, so many even more pressing issues have come to the fore with the election campaign and the beginning of the new administration in January. I do not think it is an exaggeration to call these current challenges emergencies. Suspicion, fear, and concomitant hatred have

dominated what passes for public discourse. People don't seem able to listen to each other, perhaps because so many feel there's little hope of being understood or appreciated.

I have been looking for a perspective to help make sense of what I deem as hysterical, irrational fears and over-reactions. One lens that has helped me make sense of what's going on is cultural anxiety. In times of rapid change, cultural anxiety is a fear that one's culture is being changed in ways not under one's control and that one's values and way of life are threatened.

Cultural anxiety is not new in the history of the world and the U.S. I see it reflected in the Easter Season readings from the Acts of the Apostles as the early church struggled to incorporate Gentile converts. Fortunately for us, the majority decided not to impose most of the fabric of daily life on non-Jewish Christians. It helped, I think, that the culture in urban centers and ports of the Roman Empire was multi-cultural.

Today, almost 15% of the U.S. population was born in other countries. In 1960 and 1970, it was around 5%, so this is a fairly rapid change. Of course, new arrivals

often concentrated in some communities that are more used to arrivals of new groups.

St. Cloud, Minnesota made national news last September. Catholic Charities and Lutheran Social Services, among others, have long histories of assisting refugees to settle in Minnesota, including Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s. St. Cloud, a regional center and college town about 70 miles northwest of Minneapolis, has a total population of around 65 to 70 thousand, about 10% of whom are now Somali. A high percentage of the town's children and teens are of Somali heritage. In an unfortunate incident, a knife-wielding attacker stabbed 10 people in a shopping mall before being shot and killed by an off-duty police officer. The young man was a college student who appears to have been "radicalized." ISIS claimed credit. But is this a reason to ban refugee settlement? Even before this, long-term residents of St. Cloud have expressed concern about rapid shifts in the city's demographics. St. Cloud is a poignant example of the changes and realities that lead to the current wave of cultural anxiety.

In 1790, the Naturalization Act restricted the right of immigrants to become U.S. citizens to "free white persons." What about U.S.-born children of non-white immigrants? This issue was fought up to the Supreme Court, and the answer was finally yes, U.S.-born children of all immigrants were citizens. This decision sadly confirmed that Asian immigrants, among others, could never become U.S. citizens, although their U.S.-born children were not denied citizenship.

The first major attempt to ban people based on country of origin was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. It was originally a "temporary" act that was made permanent. The Immigration Act of 1891 added wide classes of "excludable aliens" and established deportation procedures. In the 1900s, immigration from Japan was specifically prohibited.

Immigration from Europe dominated in the 1800s and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Each new wave to hit the East Coast ports and spread out to the Midwest came under suspicion. Catholics especially were considered unable or unwilling to "become Americans." By the 1880s, the majority of immigrants were coming from southern and eastern Europe. That demographic shift, along with political ferment in Europe, led to increased cultural anxiety. Around that time, the population of the U.S. was over 14% non-U.S. born.

For the first time, quotas on immigrants and quotas by country of origin were enacted in 1924. As a

consequence of this highly restrictive immigration law, fully 84% of immigrants by 1960 were from Europe and Canada. In 1965, an immigration law was passed which removed the quotas of 1924. In 1986, another major immigration reform law was passed. By 2013, the percentage of immigrants from Europe and Canada had dropped to 14%, while Asia and Latin America accounted for about 78%, a dramatic shift.

The U.S. was reluctant to accept those fleeing from expanding Nazi persecution in the late 1930s. Very few of the over 300,000 seeking visas to enter the U.S. succeeded. Anti-Semitism, fear of political ideologies, and fear that refugees with relatives remaining in Germany would be pressured into espionage kept people out. Isolationist and pro-Nazi groups were effective in sowing doubts.

After we could no longer turn away from the horrors of the Holocaust, the U.S. reluctantly accepted refugees—"displaced persons" as they were then called. At first, the number of people we were willing to take was stingy in the face of massive need. President Harry Truman led efforts to overturn restrictive legislation. By 1952, the U.S. had accepted almost 140,000 refugees from Europe, including about 100,000 Jews. In the circumstances of the Cold War, there was much more willingness to admit and support refugees from communist countries, even from Latin America and Viet Nam. However, non-white and non-Christian refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria, and places of strife have not been welcome, even though community groups have offered support.

For a long time, the image of the "melting pot" held sway. What, exactly, did this mean? The dominant image implies that immigrants will assimilate or acculturate, adopting the values, attitudes, and behaviors of those already here. In a word, they should become like us and look like us. A much less common understanding of the "melting pot" allows for contributions from newer immigrants and cultural changes.

Integration is an alternate vision that respects people's heritage, a both-and that would allow for people to be bilingual and bicultural.

Islam and Catholic Christianity have a great deal in common. Really? Yes, really! Perhaps the most important is our shared understanding that there is a place for religious values in public life. The role of family is another shared value. We are both multi-cultural, international faith communities. (One slightly humorous note: Catholics, of all people, should understand a

*continued on page 9*



*Danielle Karlin and Debbie Bolin work in of the box gardens at PBMR*

## Water and Life

*by Debbie Bolin, Sedalia, Missouri Companion*

*Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation Trip; April 17th-April 21, 2017*

As I reflected on Salvation History at the Easter Vigil—reading from Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, and Ezekiel—I had the opportunity to witness my students being baptized into new life and into the Church. In the reading from Genesis, God said: “See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed bearing fruit on it to be your food; I give all the green plants for food.” And so it happened. God looked at everything he made and found it very good!”

On Easter Monday, Fr. Timothy Armbruster, his sister, Danielle, and I began our journey, traveling to the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) in Chicago with more automatic watering systems for their community garden. Water gives us life. Water gives plants life. To see and experience how the community comes together to create this garden for people we don't

know and may never meet, but knowing the good that it brings, is what keeps us coming back.

On Tuesday, a ton of black dirt and rocks was delivered for the 10 new planter boxes that were built this spring—in addition to the 25 they currently have. It would take hours upon hours to water these planter boxes by hand—which they were doing last summer—besides the harvesting, cutting, weighing, and distributing of the produce into the hands of the community. And then it begins all over again with the fall crop.

But it's not about the water or the garden; it's about the people we are helping. If we can help Sr. Carolyn, Sr. Donna, Fr. Denny, Fr. Dave, the youth and the staff at PBMR to lighten their load for just a few hours during the week, it's worth it. It's about the empathy that they feel for the kids and the mothers of their incarcerated sons or daughters—and even all of the death that they have experienced. As Precious Blood people, we are to

share God's love with others by sharing our gifts and talents, to go to the edges and draw all people in!

Many words and phrases from *The Joy of the Gospel* by Pope Francis stand out and speak to me. For example: "The Lord has taken the initiative; he has loved us first, and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcasts. An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's lives; bridges distances...touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Taking on the 'smell of the sheep' and the sheep are willing to hear their voice...standing by people every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be!"

PBMR is working to transform their neighborhood—one person, one garden, one community gathering, one prayer circle, one tree, one flower, one fountain, one class, one student, one house, one fundraiser at a time. They go to court hours on end in hope that one of their incarcerated youth will be resentenced with the possibility of parole. They sit with the mothers of these children, listen to their stories and just be with them.

The guys have become friends with faces and names; their stories have become part of our stories. Tommy Meyers has a full-time job and is now supporting his family. Raheem Johnson began working at PBMR two years ago and realized he was interested in carpentry and construction and is now enrolled at Daley College to develop his carpentry skills. And then there is our friend of three years, Joe, who wasn't there when we visited this time. He is in jail.

I close with the beginning of the prayer on the Emmaus Road: "We give you thanks, God of all goodness, for you gather peoples of every race and culture, and unite them on an uncommon journey of truth and tenderness, compassion and care. This holy band of pilgrim people is alive through your spirit. Resplendent as a sign of the unity you desire for all women and men, you invite us to give witness to your love as we walk this road of peace together. Along the way, you invite us to share the stories, to catch the dreams, to open our hearts to the fullness of your hope." Amen! ✠

*Maureen Lahiff, continued from page 7*

religious prescription for women to cover up in public!) This is a topic that deserves much fuller exploration. Precious Blood parishes are engaging in dialogue. Dialogue at the local level is crucial and the only starting place that can lead to lasting results.

There are resources in our Catholic faith and in Precious Blood spirituality that can help us build bridges of understanding and respect. Since Vatican Council II, Catholics have acknowledged that we are a multi-cultural church and have sought to work towards understanding and appreciating diversity. It still is not easy, and many parishioners have faced cultural anxiety—but we are on our way. I think we have to acknowledge where our relatives and neighbors with cultural anxiety and fears for their children's prospects are coming from. For example, during the recent election campaign, it was apparent that among some demographics that the major structural changes in our economy, with markets becoming global and muscle-power jobs replaced by automation, are contributing to cultural anxiety. In addition, the changing roles of women in the economy and society, and the civil rights of gays and lesbians are threatening.

What about America as a Christian nation? To me, there's a great contrast between the faith of immigrants from other major faith traditions and the decline in the practice of Christianity.

It's really only since Vatican II that Catholics have come to accept that people from other faith traditions will be our neighbors in heaven. The question is still open, I think, as to whether they will get there because of their religious practice or in spite of it. Where do we go from here? We still need to seek the productive questions, even before we work together toward answers. More importantly, we need to seek allies. ✠



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# Disconnected

By Mike Donovan, PBMR



For the young men I visit in Illinois adult prisons, the struggle most often spoken about during my 90 trips in 2015 and 2016 was their disconnection, separation, and detachment from family. I call it the loneliness of the long-distance in-

mates of Chicagoland. That loneliness leads to stress, anxiety, worry, depression and anger. Without that loving, supportive lifeline back home, their re-entry into society becomes that much harder.

The separation starts with distance. Seventeen of the 22 correctional centers in Illinois are over three hours from Chicago, with most being four, five, six, and even seven hours away. For 22-year-old Dez, incarcerated at Graham Correctional Center in Hillsboro four hours from Chicago, he has had no family visits in the four years he's been locked up. His mom has no car, can't afford to open an inmate telephone account, and my attempts to call her after I've finished my quarterly visit with Dez go unanswered. Dez is very frustrated, and does not understand the lack of contact from his family.

Jose, 18, is housed at Shawnee Correctional Center near the Kentucky border, seven hours from Chicago. His mom has a car, but it's not reliable enough to make the long trip. Even if the car could get her there, she couldn't make the round-trip in one day, and couldn't afford a hotel room to stay over. As with Dez, his mom also can't afford a phone account. Although she has written Jose, he wants to hear her voice and hug her in person. Jose views himself as the "man" of the family, so he is constantly worried about his younger siblings. While he appreciates my quarterly visits, I'm no substitute for family.

To Juan, I am his family. He lists my relationship to him as uncle. He's had only two family visits in his seven years of incarceration. He's "only" three and a

half hours away in Danville on the Indiana border, but his mom is too sick to travel, and his sister moved to Florida. He is really angry with her, because she promised that when she returned to Chicago to visit her mom, she'd make time to visit Juan. She's been back twice, but did not visit.

Stressed out is how I'd describe Sammy, incarcerated at the Hill Correctional Center in Galesburg. No one in his family has visited, yet he recently heard that his mom visited his brother in California. What about him, he worries?

Every time I bring the subject of family up with Allen, he gets angry. For a while, he completely wrote off his mother and brother as "dead to him." His father was faithful about visiting him for years, but during my last two quarterly visits, Allen said that he hadn't heard from or seen his father since Christmas. Allen tries to block the hurt out of his mind, with no success.

Lonny is only 19, and was sentenced last year to 38 years. He's serving his time at Menard, one of Illinois' three maximum-security prisons, six and a half hours from Chicago. So far, his mom hasn't been able to visit, but she is looking forward to joining other families who will be making their annual bus trip to Menard, sponsored by Communities and Relatives of Illinois Incarcerated Children (CRIIC), a partnering agency with Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation. Lonny can't wait. He misses his mom so much.

There are many more stories I could tell, all with the same theme. My purpose in relating them is not to judge these families. They're not responsible for the location of these facilities. Most are poor, and many lead very complicated lives of their own back home. I might add that there are many families that do make the effort and have the resources to visit as often as possible. Added to the many other hardships these young men endure daily while in prison, you've got a recipe for many mental health issues, especially depression. I thank God for the opportunity to visit these young men, listen to their stories, and work for healing and reconciliation in the midst of their loneliness and isolation. ✠

# Renewed Life in Volunteers Program

by *Tim Deveney, Precious Blood Volunteers Director*

As our early application deadline rolled around in mid-March I was feeling nervous, but slightly hopeful. The work that was put in to recruit people to serve as Precious Blood Volunteers would soon be put to the test. The test being that we actually have applicants. Based on past experience I knew that we needed ten applicants to meet our goals of having at least four volunteers serving here in Kansas City. I also had some hope we would have enough interest in the program that we could reopen our placement in Chicago at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR).

The slight feelings of hope were soon replaced with cautious optimism that was brought on by us receiving twelve applications. After we moved through the initial and second rounds of interviews the cautious optimism has been replaced with excitement! We have five volunteers committed to serving with us for the 2017-2018 volunteer cycle and an additional two who are still waiting on acceptance from their placement sites. Three of the fully committed volunteers have pledged to serve for a full year and the other two have committed to serve for at least six months.

Since we have a high quality and large group of volunteers we have been able to fill our slots in Kansas City and reopen our placement at PBMR in Chicago. Two of the volunteers, and possibly a third, will be serving at PBMR. The other three, and possibly four in total, will be serving in Kansas City. The Kansas City based volunteers will be living at Gaspar Mission House and serving at KC CARE Clinic, Cristo Rey Kansas City High School, and St. James Place (part of the Bishop Sullivan Center).

In Chicago, our volunteers will live at two separate houses. Among our Chicago volunteers there is one young woman and a young man. The female volunteer in Chicago will be living with the Dayton Precious Blood sisters, as will the third Chicago volunteer when and if she commits to us, while the male volunteer will be living with incorporated members of both the Kansas City and Cincinnati Provinces at the formation house in Hyde Park. Both of these volunteers will be working at PBMR where there is a good mix of

Cincinnati Province incorporated members, Dayton Sisters, and lay staff. This is an opportunity for greater cooperation between the two provinces and with one of the Precious Blood women's communities.

Precious Blood Volunteers is a formation program. We are helping to shape the lives of our volunteers through community living and service, so that they will be people of deep faith that seek reconciliation in their communities and in the world. The program brings youth, enthusiasm, and different perspectives to the Precious Blood community. It is a program with benefits for the volunteers, the Precious Blood community, and to the agencies and people they serve.

As with any mutually beneficial relationship, the Precious Blood community has given our volunteers a great deal of love and support. I am grateful for the support the community gives the volunteer program. Our volunteers have been sponsored financially by the Kansas City Province and welcomed through the hospitality of incorporated members of the Kansas City Province, the Adorers, and the Dayton Precious Blood sisters. Companions have extended this hospitality by welcoming the volunteers to their meetings and engaging with our volunteers in less formal settings.

The help of incorporated members and Companions is needed even more this year in supporting our volunteers. As the July Orientation comes closer I will be working with Companions and incorporated members to see how the Precious Blood community can more formally engage with the volunteers. I am happy to listen to any ideas the members of our community have in how to make this work the best. In the meantime you are welcome to be a part of their lives by inviting them for a meal at your home, bringing them care packages, or sending them notes of encouragement. As always I ask for your continued prayers for our volunteers and the people they will be serving.

I am looking forward to this coming year and the opportunities it presents for our community, for our volunteers, and for the people they serve. ✠

# The Language of Ministry

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

Over the years, I have read some of St. Gaspar's sermons, mission talks, and letters to community members. To be honest, it is difficult for me to find inspiration in most of them, and I have to do much translating to make them pertinent to my life and situation. I know that Gaspar was proclaiming the same Gospel message that I do, and he must have been very skilled at communicating it to the people of his day. After all, we are told that people in great numbers flocked to hear him speak. He spoke in a way, in a language, that people understood. That is a skill that all good preachers have.

My problem is that I speak a different language than did Gaspar and his audiences back then. I'm not talking about Gaspar speaking Italian and me speaking English. Things like theological concepts, references to popular ways to pray, the role of church hierarchy and authority, and societal and cultural norms were all part of the language Gaspar used to help people understand his message. Since many of those things have changed over the years, they sound foreign to me, and I sometimes have difficulty gleaning the Gospel message from what Gaspar spoke and wrote.

As a community, we carry on the work of Gaspar. Our mission is to proclaim the Gospel message in a language that people understand. On the whole, we have done this pretty well over the years. Traditionally, we have spoken the language of parish church, prescribed church rituals and prayers, sacraments, male clergy and laity (hierarchy), church doctrine, the catechism, etc. People have understood this language, and have heard the Gospel message through it.

But the "signs of the times" seem to be telling us that many people, especially people under 50 or so, aren't hearing the Gospel message very well through this language. Indications of this are everywhere: Mass attendance is low, there are fewer church weddings, fewer confessions, church laws and rules are taken less seriously (if people even know what they are), the parish is less and less a center of the community, fewer people are joining religious orders or getting ordained, etc. It is easy to blame people of today and say they have abandoned their faith. But the Gospel message of God's love is what everyone longs for because it is the source of all life, and people

haven't abandoned the search for that. It is probably the case that, like Gaspar's language being foreign to me, the language we have traditionally used to communicate the Gospel message may not be speaking that clearly to younger people today.

So what should we as a community do?

One option is to do what we've always done, and speak the language we've always spoken. There are still people in the church who understand and appreciate this language, who hear the Gospel message through it. If we choose this option, we need to admit up front that this group of people is getting smaller and smaller, as is the number of people who will want to join us as a community in speaking this language.

Another option is to identify and learn to speak a different language, which will communicate the Gospel message more effectively to people today.

To identify what language "works," we would need to listen, rather than instruct. Towards this end, a good question to ask would be "Where/how do you see God's love speaking most clearly today?" The answers we receive may or may not have much to do with institutional church as we know it, but they would help us identify what speaks the Gospel message to people most clearly.

Then we would have to learn to speak the new language, which would be no small task. It would probably require us to adapt to different places of ministry, different people with whom we do ministry, different ways of making decisions in ministry, etc. In some cases it might even mean ministering outside the auspices of the institutional church.

To be honest again, I'm not sure we as a community have the energy or the will to learn a new language with which to proclaim the Gospel message. We are all getting older, and we know what they say about teaching old dogs new tricks. But we don't exist as a community today because we've done exactly what Gaspar did, or because we used the same language he did. We are here because we have been somewhat successful at proclaiming the same Gospel message in ways that people in different times and different cultures could understand. The level of our desire and ability to continue to do this will determine where we go in the future. ✠



**Let us serve God  
with holy joy.**

**- St. Gaspar del Bufalo**



# Missionaries of the Precious Blood



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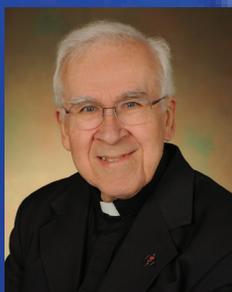
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Precious Blood Center  
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Liberty MO 64069-0339

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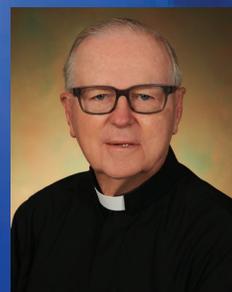
## 2017's Jubilarians of the Kansas City Province



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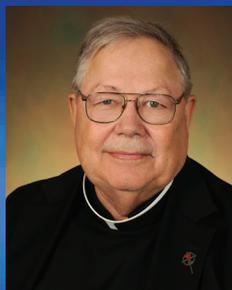
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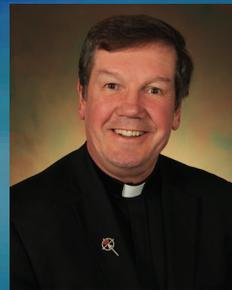
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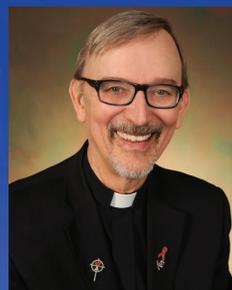
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Fr. Joe Miller, C.P.P.S.



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Fr. Joe Bathke, C.P.P.S.

Congratulations on your  
anniversaries!  
May God continue to bless you  
in your ministries!