

The NEW WINE PRESS

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

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LISTENING FOR CHANGE

Mike Throop

In our society, listening is a commodity that is sometimes in short supply. Genuine and sincere human interaction is likely on a par with the listening shortage. It's an axiom, but for any serious communication to take place you must listen before you speak. In the book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, author Robert Putnam's premise is that the myriad social changes our society has experienced since World War II have led to a breakdown in social bonds that cross economic and community boundaries. Think about organizations in your community. Is Rotary still active? What about Kiwanis or Sertoma? The Jaycees? Is there still a local bowling center with leagues tied to work shifts? I venture to say membership in service organizations is down significantly. Educators continue to bemoan the lack of parental involvement in their children's education, for example, the poor attendance at parent/teacher meetings or PTA events.

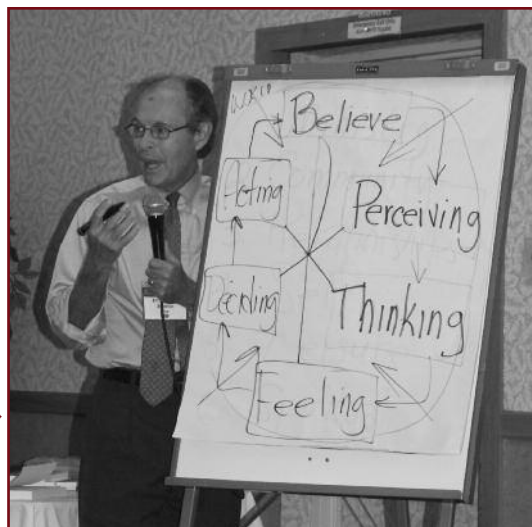
The "millennial" generation, the young people in college or just out in the workplace, seem just as disconnected, perhaps more so. In my recent experience as an instructor in mass media, I was dismayed to see students, ear buds connected to their mp3 firmly planted in each ear, writing papers or surfing the Net in the media lab—sometimes texting on their phones at the same time. Each was a singular event; none were connected directly with another person, a classmate, a friend, or a family member. This generation will listen in short bursts, but long-term attention is a challenge.

The issue is more than "information overload." I believe our society is suffering a retreat from "active" skills along with a reversion to "passive" skills. Blame television. Blame the Walkman or iPod. Blame the personal computer. Blame us for misusing products created with the best of intentions.

What to do? Rediscover the art of listening, of mindfulness, and of basking in the quiet. Easier said than done? Certainly! I am relearning the art of listening for what I call "God's whispers" to me during my day, and it's not easy. The beginning of this new journey with you is also to be filled

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Dr. Richard Johnson speaks to the Assembly about skills for change.



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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.

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Leadership Notes

Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S.

[An edited version of the talk given to introduce the Wednesday morning session of the Assembly.]

This coffee cup is from the Precious Blood Congress held in St. Louis in 1993. Not unlike our Kansas City Province, it is chipped and cracked, but it still holds coffee. Fifteen years ago at that congress, the keynote speaker, Sister Joan Chittester, challenged the communities named for the blood of Christ to become prophetic congregations. She said that as religious communities we have listened to our prophets long enough; now it is time we become prophetic congregations for our church and our world.

She also spoke at the LCWR's (Leadership Conference of Women Religious) 40th anniversary two years ago and told a familiar story about the old woman who began her pilgrimage to the holiest shrine on the most sacred mountain in the land. The fierce wind was against her and the rain pelted her face as it created rivers of mud that caused the old woman to slip and slide. But she would not be deterred. She kept climbing toward the top of the mountain.

At some point early into her journey, she stopped at an inn just to make sure she was going in the right direction. The innkeeper told the old woman, "The mountain

is steep, the mud is too deep, and the wind is against you. You cannot possibly continue the journey up the mountain." But the old woman smiled and said, "The climb to the holy shrine at the top of the mountain will not be a problem, sir. You see, my heart has been there all my life and now it is simply a matter of taking my body there."

If we believe, like that woman, that our heart, our vision as a precious blood



people and as the Kansas City Province of the Missionaries of the Blood of Christ is already at the top of God's holy mountain, then the only question is whether or not

we will take our bodies the rest of the way to embrace that vision. The heart symbolizes what we care about most deeply, most passionately. So, what do we care about as precious blood people, as missionaries—companion and incorporated members—of the blood of Christ?

To set the context for our conversation today, I draw on the insights given to us by Dr. Richard Johnson yesterday and on recent reflections by Sister Joan Chittester, Quaker theologian Parker Palmer, and the former Master General of the Dominicans, Timothy Radcliffe, who offer encouragement as we seek to honor the past, celebrate the present, and embrace our vision for the future.

LIVING IN THE TENSION

In his book, *The Hidden Wholeness*, an invaluable resource for the ministry of reconciliation, Parker Palmer writes, "To be in the world nonviolently means learning

EMBRACING THE VISION

to hold the tension of opposites, trusting that the tension itself will pull our hearts and minds open to a third way of thinking and acting... We must learn to hold the tension between the reality of the moment and the possibility that something better might emerge."



"But as missionaries of the blood of Christ, the cup of wine expresses the outward thrust which is important for kingdom Catholics, the reaching out to all humanity, ready to find the Holy Spirit working in all people."

How do we live in this tension? The reality is staring us in the face. We are getting smaller, older, grayer. We have fewer members who feel called to service in parish ministry as they hear the call to explore ministries that reflect the charism of Gaspar and the spirituality of the blood of Christ. As our parish ministry summit in January indicated, we are faced with some very important decisions in the very near future regarding the parishes we presently serve. Can we sense that the tensions we are now experiencing in the province are opening our minds and hearts to new ways of thinking and acting and serving? Are we afraid of these tensions or do we embrace them as the creative impulse that will help shape our future?

These tensions take many forms. Timothy Radcliffe suggests the tension in the church today is not between liberal and conservative, left or right, progressive or traditional. These polarities, Radcliffe maintains, are "alien to Catholic thinking" because they reflect "an opposition between tradition and innovation." He writes, "The Second Vatican Council... was a moment of incredible newness, and



Companion Jackie Maddy

simultaneously a return to the gospels and the theology of the early church."

It is a holy coincidence that the beginning of the Kansas City province coincided with the closing of the Second Vatican Council. Both were moments reflecting that something new was happening in the church and in our religious community. But then, as John

Wilkins points out in the current issue of *Commonweal*, so much of the meaning of Vatican II—especially regarding collegiality—is lost on many in the church today. "The story is told of the school teacher in the United States who asked a class what Vatican II was. Silence. Then one student ventured a guess: Might it be the pope's summer residence?"

The pioneer spirit that echoes through our history has characterized our province to be as wide open as a Kansas prairie. But we also know that unless one has appreciation for the expansive nature of the prairie—especially as seen from 1-70 as one journeys westward—one will put the pedal to the metal to get across Kansas as quickly as possible.



Ers. John Wolf and Tom Welk.

Still, this pioneer spirit is an important part of our history and our identity and it reflects what Radcliffe chose to name one of the two kinds of Catholics caught in the tensions of today, "kingdom" and "communion." He defines "kingdom" Catholics as "those of us who have a deep sense of the church as a pilgrim people of God." Communion Catholics are "those who came, after the council, to feel the urgent need to rebuild the inner life of the church." Radcliffe sees kingdom Catholics as being open to the world while communion Catholics focus on identity, of what it means to be a Catholic. The tension is expressed in the "very name of our church, Roman Catholic. Roman stresses the clear identity that we have in communion with Rome... while Catholic stresses the outreach for what is universal." We will only heal the divisions

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Listening,
continued from page 1...

with learning moments: how do we as members and companions and staff recognize and interact in the secular world? How do we stay true to our journey, so that we are “Honoring the past,



Br. Robert Herman

celebrating the present and embracing the future”?

As a “first-timer” at the Assembly, I see a community with more questions than answers, but also much faith and true fellowship that will help its nurturing and growth in members and companions. There are unknowns on this journey, however.

St. Louis-based senior adult ministry specialist Dr. Richard Johnson spent his day-long Assembly presentation not only acknowledging the tremendous challenges Catholic religious (and lay) communities face with declining membership and aging populations, but also identifying how communities will survive by being “sufficiently unsettled.” Dr. Johnson’s specialty is spiritual adult development and aging, and his discussion, “Change Potential for Religious,” focused on the uncomfortable truism that change is inevitable.

The call to change can be enriching or stifling. How will incorporated members and companions react? Will there be fear? Will there be resistance? Resignation? Acceptance and the intent to “run with the ball”?

“This is a time when we need more change, not less. We’re...being asked to dig deeper...what is the direction now, what are we supposed to be about? We need change agents more now, than ever,” Johnson stated.

Taking change to the personal as well as the community level, Johnson reminded us that as Christians we are called to make today different than yesterday, to learn how to live and love better than we did yesterday. Today is *supposed* to be different. That means change, obviously.

The changes occurring today do not have historical precedent, according to Dr. Johnson. We are in the midst of a “fundamental transformation,” making history, not repeating it. The Spirit is always seeking to raise us up through change; for some this is growthful, and for others stifling and even illness producing.

Much of his presentation consisted then of leading us through a series of what he calls “Competencies for Change.” These included, among many others, wellness and well-being, the degree to which you value yourself, your capabilities and your good health; leisure import, the degree to which you have developed a mindset that values ideas, events, activities and relationships outside your mission and ministry life that rest the body, enrich the mind, and/or stimulate the spirit; and personal purpose, the degree to which you can derive personal meaning from your life as a consequence of pursuing your dreams, goals, quests, and/or directions.

The reason for his emphasis on these and other competencies for change stems from his belief that it is flawed thinking to assume that all a community needs is for leadership to paint a clear vision of the change desired. Change is predicated rather on skill development, and not everyone has the competencies needed for change. Much of his presentation consisted of leading the gathering through various exercises aimed at helping us identify



Companion Gerry Downs and Fr. Jim Sloan

“The call to change can be enriching or stifling. How will incorporated members and companions react? Will there be fear? Will there be resistance? Resignation? Acceptance and the intent to run with the ball?”



Fr. Joe Nassal and Br. Daryl Charron

some of our own skills for change as well as areas where there is room for growth.

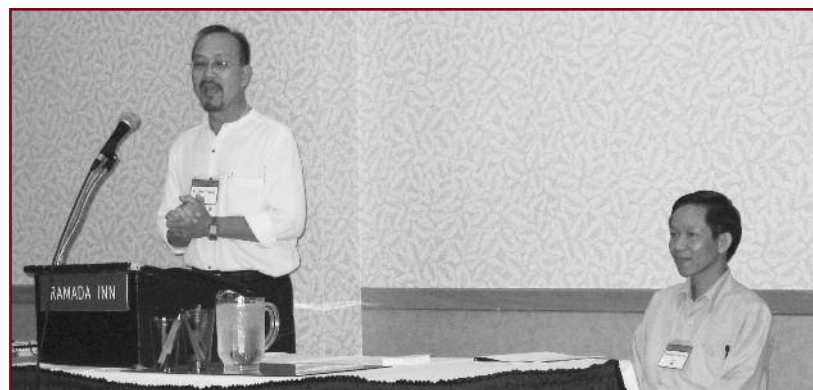
Father Joe Nassal led the Wednesday morning table conversations which were a followup to the “Vision-Storm” gathering in September 2007 and the “Parish Summit” in January 2008. He invited everyone to reflect on the vision for the future—with its many concrete ideas and suggestions—which came out of these two gatherings. He concluded his remarks by asking that we consider two questions around the tables: What do we care about as a Precious Blood community? What is possible for us? (Fr. Joe’s remarks are printed elsewhere in this issue.)



Frs. Ed Oen, Dennis Schaab, Ron Will, and Mike Volkmer, all jubilarians, at the Mass celebrating anniversaries of ordination and incorporation.

Outside meeting times, I had the opportunity to experience the joys and difficulties people face as they mark important personal and spiritual milestones as C.P.P.S. members.

Incorporated members I visited with who are celebrating their ordination and incorporation anniversaries say their experiences of

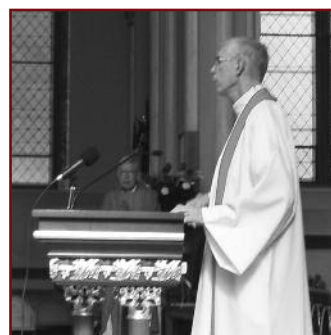


Fr. Dien Truong gives the report on the Vietnam Mission, while Dominic waits his turn to speak.

religious life in the latter half of the 20th century and first part of the 21st have kept them open to constant change.

Fr. Al Ebach reflected on his 40 years of incorporation. He has seen people leave the priesthood, and he has spent time considering his decision to remain a priest as others moved in a different direction. What is the greater meaning for him and his decision to serve God in this manner? Fr. Al sees a challenge ahead in listening to each other, and to hear each other. “Whose person do we look at for change? Is it only mine? The leadership team? Do we listen to all peoples’ personalities and have that be a part of change for us?”

Fr. Vince Hoying is celebrating 50 years as a priest, and he points to increasing lay involvement in making the Church “more of their purpose and mine”. He points to Vatican II as the most



Fr. Joe Uecker preaching the homily.

profound change, including the move from Latin to the vernacular. Fr. Vince says there was a learning process in lay involvement, which may have negatively impacted listening skills in parish life.

Fr. Joseph Uecker marks 40 years by looking forward to the consolidation of two parishes, and he says that the change is “coming together well.” His work in Hispanic ministry has also been a major force in his priestly ministry.

He concluded his remarks by asking that we consider two questions around the tables: What do we care about as a Precious Blood community? What is possible for us?

Fr. Mike Volkmer celebrates 40 years of incorporation, and he, too, points to the impact of Vatican II, and its requirement that clergy and laity do a better job of listening...which he says has gone well, overall, in his pastoral experience. Fr. Volkmer says the American culture will make an increase in the ranks difficult in the foreseeable future.

Fr. Ed Oen celebrates his 50th year as a member. He is most enthused about the dialogue between members and Companions as a real gift.

See Listening, continued on page 8...



Fr. Joe Batbke and Companion Lynda Quistorff

On Wednesday afternoon the participating members and companions at the Assembly were invited to continue the discussion on visioning, which was begun in the morning.

The people were reminded that the discussion about visioning had been an agenda item for a number of Assemblies. After all the years of discussion on visioning it was suggested that it may be time to focus on specifics. To illustrate this point Fr. David Matz was asked to address the Assembly with the vision he and his committee members have been addressing.

David shared his vision of Precious Blood Ministry of Justice for persons who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered. He listed some of the projected goals for the ministry: to increase awareness of LGBT; to decrease fear, misunderstanding and stereotypes; and to provide educational opportunities. The committee is planning some workshops and retreats, along with some resource materials, which will hopefully invite all God's people to the table.

After David's presentation the members and companions reviewed the criteria developed by the pastors and associates who met in January, 2008 to discuss the future of parish ministry in the province. After a brief discussion about the criteria the members and companions were invited to participate in table discussions with two challenges: 1) As we approach the future, name ministries and/or apostolates we should continue to be involved with as a province, or name apostolates which we may want to develop, and 2) Name other criteria which were not mentioned at the pastor's summit, that could be additional determining factors to remain in a parish. Some of the responses from the table conversations are listed here.

Apostolates:

- Hospital and hospice.
- Inner city and street ministries.
- Missions and retreats.
- PBMR in Kansas City.
- Parish.
- Teaching.
- Undocumented, Hispanic.
- Evangelization.
- Vietnam.
- More vocation ministry.
- LGBT.
- PB Spirituality Center.

Comments:

- Continue some education at each Assemblies, preaching, e.g.
- Use Precious Blood Center.
- Ministerial networking (i.e., use of technology).

Criteria:

- Strong peace and justice focus, which could include parish committees and staffs.
- Parishes with schools.
- Collaboration of members and companions in ministry.
- Spiritual support.
- Reconciling witness.
- Encourages, nurtures lay leadership.
- Involves members from other provinces or countries.
- Open to missionary model.
- Supported by bishops.
- A source for vocations.
- Promote education.

Comments:

- Better discernment process when leaving parishes.
- A discernment process to help leave a parish when the community members and companions feel they have done all they were called to do.



Fr. Garry Richmeier



Fr. Dave Matz and Companion Marie Trout.



Jan Agee, Province Director of Finance, speaks with Frs. Bill Miller and Bill Walter. Background: Frs. Jim Urbanic and Vince Hoying.

COMPANION COVENANTS

Marie Trout

On Tuesday evening of the Assembly, during the celebration of Eucharist, many Companions made covenant for the first time and others renewed their covenants. Along with some photos, I am sharing—with permission of the authors—quotes from some of the covenants which were entered into between individual Companions and the Kansas City Province. They may offer you a glimpse into the spirituality of the Precious Blood which continues to grow and develop among us.

“I will live and grow in the spirituality of the Precious Blood, with the Members and other Companions, showing my love and care. ‘I like me best, when I’m with you!’”

“Even though I can not participate physically, I do so in my prayer life. I pray daily (and more) in prayers for all of our members, priests, brothers and Companions. I would like to continue that until death do us part.”



Kansas City I Companions

“Jesus said, ‘Where two or more are gathered in my name, I am present there.’ I think of this when we gather as Companions. I find strength in our praying, sharing and coming together. The positive energy and joy I feel when we gather together, I draw on until we meet again.”

“I commit to facing my troubles, limits and difficulties with unshakable faith. As St. Gaspar tells us, ‘Hardships offer us occasions for deepening our relationship with Jesus.’”

“As I prepare to renew my covenant for another three years, I understand more and more what it means to be a missionary. I see being missionary as someone who is flexible and open to change in their life. Gaspar’s example of looking at the signs of the times is teaching me to be open to new possibilities and to not approach them with fear, but with prayer and hope to be where God’s call is taking me.”



Liberty Companions

“The question ‘can you drink this cup’ resonates in me. I know I am not worthy, but I will try. My response of ‘yes’ to this question is a vast and important commitment. I will need to work at experiencing ‘my wounds’ more deeply by looking further into myself and acknowledging the ways I must change my inner self in order to feel worthy of the Cup of Christ. I find myself stronger, more able to truly see God, more able to help others because of my own suffering and sorrow. I am no longer ashamed to weep for others, to go to others as a help when they suffer. This is how I grow in spirituality, whether it is someone I know and love or someone who is suffering in the world. My faith and the cross of Christ carry and guide me in what I can do to help others.”

“My association with the community has led me to experience more clearly the shedding of Christ’s blood for his people. The word reconciliation has taken on new meaning in my life. I know that Christ is calling us to be a people of peace and gathering—to gather all into one in His name. In making this covenant again, I will be more aware of how my life can be a channel of reconciliation, in my life and in the life of my family, friends and others. I will strive by my example and prayers to encourage those who find discord in their life to seek out Jesus and live His life of forgiveness and service.”



St. Joseph Companions

“Desiring to become a better person and to grow in my faith and understanding of how God is a part of my life and me, I will continue in all of my current ministries. I want to learn more about the Precious Blood and to offer my support in any way that I can. I want to grow in my knowledge of the Precious Blood and apply this knowledge to my life... A new ministry I have been involved in has made me more aware of the healing that so many people are wanting. Carrying this over into my everyday life, I will try to help people reconcile the areas where they feel this needs to happen. Not by preaching or counseling them, but by just living more Christ-like and let them maybe find the forgiveness of Christ through me.”

Listening, continued from page 5...

Fr. Dennis Schaab, marking 40 years of ordination, has nearly “done it all,” in teaching, hospital ministry, and parish work. He is also enthusiastic about the role of Companions to support and work with members for the overall good of the community and the church.

Fr. Garry Richmeier celebrates 25 years as a priest, and he is interested in participating in the evolution of vocations, with a fulltime vocations person and a team to assist in the outreach. Fr. Garry is also enthused about the contributions of the Companions and the dialog that has flowed from the partnership of members and Companions; a partnership that makes us stronger.



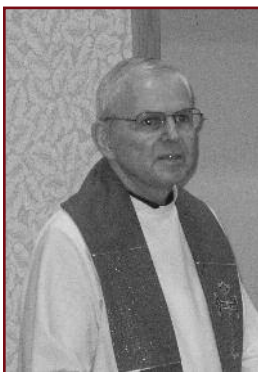
Fr. Joe Bathke

The variety of reports clearly painted a picture of a province engaged in ministry and moving into the future with a vision.

Fr. Ron Will marks his 40th year of incorporation, currently as pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish in St. Joseph, Missouri. He says he learned early in the priesthood about the importance of collaboration with the laity, to the point of juggling meetings nearly every night of the week. Fr. Ron says “it’s the only way to get things done.”

The jubilarians were honored and their anniversaries were celebrated within a Mass held at St. Francis Xavier Parish in St. Joseph on Wednesday evening. A banquet followed to continue the festivities at the hotel where the assembly met. There was good food, musical entertainment, and of course remarks from each of the jubilarians.

Thursday morning was given over to several items of business and also reports from the different offices. Marie Trout and Br. Nick Renner showed a Power Point presentation on the Companions and other Precious Blood lay associates throughout the world. Fr. Dien Truong gave a report on the Vietnam Mission, and Dominic Nhan Bui spoke to the gathering as well. In addition to the three incorporated members in Vietnam, there are also four pledged candidates and four others who are in the inquiry stage of formation. Candidates are involved in a variety of ministries in Ho Chi Minh City, including serving the thousands of workers who take part in the Sunday Masses at the parish where the Missionaries assist. Hope remains alive in the Vietnam Mission.



Fr. Mike Volkmer

Fr. Joe Miller and Sharon Crall from the Vocations Ministry Office gave attendees a packet of materials which included vocation program ideas, prayer cards, handouts, and “talking points” to share with inquirers and those simply interested in learning more about religious life. Additionally, they reported that St. Gaspar will be included in the 2009 J.S. Paluch Church Calendar, and suggested that our parishes might want to encourage local sponsors, such as funeral homes, to consider ordering the calendar for distribution.



*Cincinnati candidate
Bob Jansen*

The finance office report was given by Jan Agee and Fr. Richard Bayuk; I reported on the beginnings of the Office of Communications. Fr. Joe Bathke, Province Director of Formation, reported that the Kansas City and Cincinnati Provinces are working towards a possible combined Initial Formation program. The variety of reports clearly painted a picture of a province engaged in ministry and moving into the future with a vision.

One final business item gave witness to the unfolding vision very concretely: the assembly unanimously approved funding for a Precious Blood Volunteer Program, something that has been in the planning stages for several years now. Frs. Al Ebach and Jim Urbanic and Companion Marie Trout are leading the effort to bring this to fruition.

One person’s observations from the Assembly: varied views, many opinions, plenty of questions and concerns, and...faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love. As Dr. Johnson pointed out, for a Christian our call to grow in



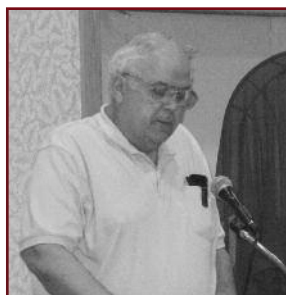
Fr. Garry Richmeier and Companion Dan Lappin

love is at the center of change, and reason we embrace it.

You have invited me to be a part of this journey; I take this responsibility seriously, and with the same faith, hope and love that Paul gently exhorted his readers who were shedding the ways of the law and learning the ways of faith. May we seek to be a source of hope to others in our ministries—not by having the last word to say, but rather the first ears to hear. Sometimes we must listen for the signs of the times.



*Fr. Ron Will and
Companion Nancy Clisbee*



Br. Steve Ohnmacht

Vision, continued from page 3...

caused by these tensions if “we stretch our imaginations” and “open our minds to understand why others think and feel as they do.”

IMAGE OF COMMUNITY: THE LAST SUPPER

We need both kingdom and communion Catholics to grow as a church and as a people of God. The image that Radcliffe draws upon where both kingdom and communion Catholics find a home is at the Last Supper. “It is vital to see the difference between the words of the bread and the words over the wine,” Radcliffe writes. “It differs slightly in each of the synoptic gospels, but the thrust is the same.” When Jesus breaks the bread and gives it to his disciples, he says, “This is my body, given for you.” The implication is when we share the body of Christ, we are being gathered around the altar as a communion. We share Christ’s life and “now his death.”

But the significance of Jesus’ invitation to his disciples when he passes them the cup bears all the marks of charism, spirituality, and mission for a community gathered in the name of the blood of Christ. Jesus blesses the cup and says this is “for you and for all” and he will not drink it again “until the Kingdom. It looks forward to when the whole of humanity will be gathered into communion in Christ,” Radcliffe notes.

The breaking of the bread “is a sign of the interior life of the church” that gathers us into community and gives us an identity,” Radcliffe writes. But as missionaries of the blood of Christ, the “cup of wine...expresses the outward thrust which is important for kingdom Catholics, the reaching out to all humanity, ready to find the Holy Spirit working in all people.”

This is the vision of God’s holy mountain reflected in Isaiah where swords are converted to plowshares and the machinery of war and violence is transformed into farm implements and farm machinery. It is a vision of the eternal banquet where all find a place at the table. It is a vision of “for all” that names our missionary identity. It is an expansive vision. Is this the vision we have etched on our hearts, minds, and souls, and so it is only a matter of our bodies catching up to climb the mountain and embrace the vision?

HOLY CONVERSATION: LISTENING TO OUR HEARTS

This morning we hope to look honestly and carefully at the vision we hold in our hearts by listening to each other’s hearts. Remember, the original meaning of the word “conversation” is “to live together” and “to share a life.” It is in this holy conversation around these tables that will “help us draw near to the mystery of God which is beyond words,” according to Radcliffe. “God, of course, is the mystery beyond words wrapped in silence. Our words make a space for the silence that speaks. It is through talking together, especially with those with whom we disagree, that we build a home for God, the God who is the eternal conversation of the Trinity.”

The pioneer spirit of the Kansas City Province, of Schaefer and Stuke, of Cyr and Charron, of Bushell and Homsey, meant we would try new things, reach out in

The focus of our conversation this morning is “not how many people do we have to do” the work of the blood of Christ. The question is, “Are we willing to do the work of the blood with however many we have?”

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VOCATIONS OFFICE

Sharon Crall

As I drive back from one of my trips to work in the office at Liberty, I pass three different signs that could direct me off the fast track of the interstate and into a quiet spot to sit or get out and stretch my legs. Yet, this time (and many times) I cannot make a stop as I have commitments to make and things to do.

This summer was such a long time in the making. It was a cool, wet spring, and at least in Iowa, what followed were the torrential rains, storms, and floods. Now that the season has finally arrived, it seems summer is off to a late start. Here we are celebrating the 4th of July with fireworks and parades! And with July comes the observance of the month of the Precious Blood.



Sharon Crall, reporting on the Vocations Office at the Assembly.

These summer months can be a wonderful time to add “rest areas” to your hectic life and meditate on your own vocational calling and your calling to Precious Blood spirituality. As this newsletter reaches you, we hope you are “yielding” to some rest and relaxation. We hope you “stop” for awhile and give your Precious Blood spirituality some time to develop and deepen. Can you work in a retreat or at least a day of reflection?

Perhaps you can move into the “slow lane” and do some reading from our wealth of Precious Blood written materials available.

Most of all, it is our hope that you can dedicate some extra time to pray for vocations for our community and our Church. I have mentioned some “streets and avenues” you might take to reflect on your own calling. Since July is the month of the Precious Blood, can you think of someone you know who needs your support and invitation to look at our community? Take the time to make the contact. Give them some of our resource material that speak of our founder, our history, and/or our spirituality. You may be the “bridge” to lead someone into our community.



Fr. Bill Delaney



Companions Ed and Lynda Quistorff



Fr. Ed Oen speaking at the Jubilarian Banquet.



Fr. Ron Will preaching at the closing liturgy.

Vision, continued from page 9...

new ministries, go to places on the margins, to priestless parishes in remote areas. But now we don't have the numbers and even if we did, focusing only on the numbers is, in Joan Chittester's words, “a capitalist answer to a Christian question.” So the focus of our conversation this morning is “not how many people do we have to do” the work of the blood of Christ. The question is, “Are we willing to do the work of the blood with however many we have?”

What do we care about? What is possible for us?

2008 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Upon recommendation by the Human Development Fund Committee, the Kansas City Province Leadership Team has approved grants to the following projects and programs for 2008.

Catholic Charities, Odessa, Texas

Advocacy programs for immigrants, assisting with language, citizenship and a trusting environment. \$10,000

Diocese of Same, Tanzania

The region of Kilimanjaro is economically depressed, with drought and related problems, chronic famine and unemployment. The will help fund wells for safe drinking water. \$10,000



Franciscan Servants of the Holy Family Shawnee Mission, Kansas

A recently formed religious community provides retreats, inviting families to grow in virtue and prayer, teaching them to restore the “culture of life.” This provides an educational and spiritual approach for people to reach out to the poor. \$2500

Hispanic Ministry, Sedalia, Missouri

The Sedalia Catholic Community of St. Patrick and Sacred Heart Parishes provides ministry to the Hispanic community by hiring a full time director for the ministry. The director is responsible for education, sacramental preparation and advocacy to with Hispanic people. \$10,000

Ministry of Justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered Kansas City Province

This newly formed group is developing retreats and workshops to increase awareness and understanding about LGBT, and through resources will provide an increased understanding of the gift of human sexuality. \$10,000

Northwest Missouri Enterprise Facilitation Maryville, Missouri

This program provides funding for people in northwest Missouri who wish to begin a business. A director is provided to educate people who wish to seek employment in this depressed farming community. \$2500

Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation Chicago, Illinois

PBMR has begun a new program called “Peacemaking Circles.” This program is an outreach ministry in the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center and in local high schools, aimed at reducing conflict and expulsion. \$10,000

St. Agatha Center, St. Louis, Missouri

The Precious Blood Sisters serve the increasing number of homeless people in the impoverished areas of St. Louis. This grant will help the sisters finance an educational program for those who live in poverty. \$10,000

St. Charles Guatemala Project, Gladstone, Missouri

This project serves educational needs in Guatemala through the assistance of St. Charles Parish in Gladstone. This grant will provide funding for an educational program directed by Fr. Salvador Rojas of Guatemala. \$10,000

St. Francis Xavier Parish, St. Joseph, Missouri

The parish is part of a collaborative effort to develop and provide affordable transportation for seniors in the area. \$5000

Sangre de Cristo Health Care Project, Guatemala



The Adorers of the Blood of Christ have assumed responsibility for this clinic in Guatemala. They provide health care with education prevention and treatment components, focusing on immunization programs for women and children. \$10,000

Wichita Women's Initiative Network Wichita, Kansas

Sponsored by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, this network is a non-profit endeavor that provides women survivors of domestic abuse with educational and employment opportunities, as well as a camp for women and children to help them cope with the process of recovery from abuse. \$10,000



It's a long way to Vienna, Illinois from Chicago. Drive to the ends of the earth, make a left, and keep driving. For me, my trip to the Vienna and Shawnee Correctional Facilities was reminiscent of road trips I used to make during my IRS career, visiting the outlying offices in Carbondale, Mattoon, Olney, and Decatur from my headquarters location in the Windy City. You have a lot of "think" time on these trips.

Along the way, I was reminded of the ongoing relationship I had with the two young men I was to visit. I met Devon in 2004 during his 8 month stay at the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. His grandparents eventually bailed him out, and for the next 14 months of court dates, I continued to visit him. I fondly remembered trips to the movies and to Northwestern University basketball games. He was sentenced to 6 years in April 2006, and so far he has endured stays at the Stateville and Robinson Correctional Facilities, before being transferred to Vienna in 2007.

I was introduced to Aaron, while working with his brother, Terry, at the PBMR Center in 2004. He happily joined us on trips to football games and work details at my church.

Unfortunately, Aaron ended up in the Detention Center, and he was eventually sentenced to 6 years, presently serving his time at Vienna, after stays at St. Charles, Stateville, and Mount Sterling.

Seven hours and two pit stops of \$4.00 per gallon gas later, I made it to Shawnee. Even though I was the facility's only visitor, I was made to wait 90 minutes, a minor indignity compared to the endless hours, days, and months endured by the inmates. When Devon finally arrived in the visiting room, I was met with a hug from a 6'4" young man, basketball fit, and now 20 years old.

Although this was my third visit since his incarceration, his maturity and positive outlook was never in clearer evidence. With time off for good behavior, he will be paroled in 26 months, and he sees the end in sight. Despite the many obstacles he will face, he is optimistic

about his future, and has spent his time reading, writing poetry and a novel, and watching the Travel Channel, which has whetted his appetite to see the world. If the prison ever gets off of lockdown, he is also determined to get his GED.

Of all the things we talked about, however, the news I was most excited to hear about was Devon's reconciliation with his father. You see, Devon's criminal actions had left his family divided and broken. The legal expenses incurred during Devon's protracted court hearings have left his paternal grandparents penniless. This resulted in their strained relationship with Devon's mother, who did not contribute to his defense. Devon's father, stepmother, and stepsister were personally harmed by his crime, and other than one letter, his father has never visited with him or accepted his collect calls since his arrest. However, Devon has been persistent, determined to make amends, and rebuild their fractured relationship. Finally, they're talking again, with hopes for brighter future.

After my visit with Devon, I drove down the street to see Aaron at the Vienna Facility. Although I was the only visitor at this facility too, I again waited 90 minutes before being ushered into the visiting room to visit with Aaron. The retro 70s era, wild, Afro hairstyle of this 18 year old teenager startled me, making him seem a lot taller than 6'2".

After catching up on old times and acquaintances, debating the NBA playoffs, and solving other world problems, our conversation got down to real business. Aaron was transferred to Vienna five weeks ago, and he is still having problems adjusting to his new surroundings. The feelings of abandonment and loss are also weighing on him,

because his mother has not visited since his imprisonment—nor has she accepted his collect calls.

As much as he appreciates my visits, I am not family, and the importance of staying connected to his loved ones back home is very important to him. He will need them more than ever, upon his release in 14 months. While he doesn't fully understand the lack of family

See Peace, continued on page 13...



LET PEACE BEGIN WITH ME

Mike Donovan

In the midst of what has been a difficult few months in Cook County Juvenile Detention Center, we gathered for a peacemaking circle. The administration was worried that the chapel offered too much space; they wanted a more secure area. So, rather than in the chapel area which is our normal setting, we gathered in one of the school classrooms. It provided enough space and had only one door, thereby relieving the fears of the administration.

We were to gather with a living section—a unit from the fourth floor. All the youth were being held—and would be tried—as adults. This particular unit had been involved in many of the recent fights. And so we gathered with them to try to ease some of the tension and the fighting of the past weeks. Also there was a young man whom they confined in a separate area. He had been accused of instigating many of the fights. The whole detention center was on a virtual “lockdown”—little to no movement off the units. There has been no regular school, no religious services, and limited recreation off the living unit since February of this year. Things were and are tense.

We gathered in a peacemaking circle to bring together the young man held in confinement, the other youth from his unit, staff from the mental health department, and detention unit staff. Fr. Denny and I were the “circle keepers.” The purpose of the circle was two-fold: deal with some of the issues on the unit and offer support and encouragement to the young man held in confinement. He was about to be moved to Cook County Jail (in a few days he’ll be 17 years old) and, from there, will be sent to the joint for a lengthy prison sentence. This was an attempt to send Darrius off in a good way and to ease some of the tension and violence.

We began with a ritual of sharing about a person in our life who had taught us well, who had helped keep our dreams alive. The youth spoke of grandmothers and great-grandmothers; the staff spoke of mothers and fathers and their own children. In that classroom, we claimed the space as sacred ground—a safe place to tell our stories. We spoke to Darrius and how he, even in his confinement, was a young man who had respect and many talents. We were able to speak from our hearts, tears were shed, youth spoke of things that they had kept “bottled

up” for a long time. Staff members spoke also—not as staff, but as part of the circle.

In that circle, Darrius heard that there were people who cared a great deal about him. One of the things that haunted Darrius was that for most of his incarceration—already two years—he had had no visitors, not from family, not from friends. He felt alone. But in the circle, staff and youth alike told him he was loved and that he could be somebody in life.

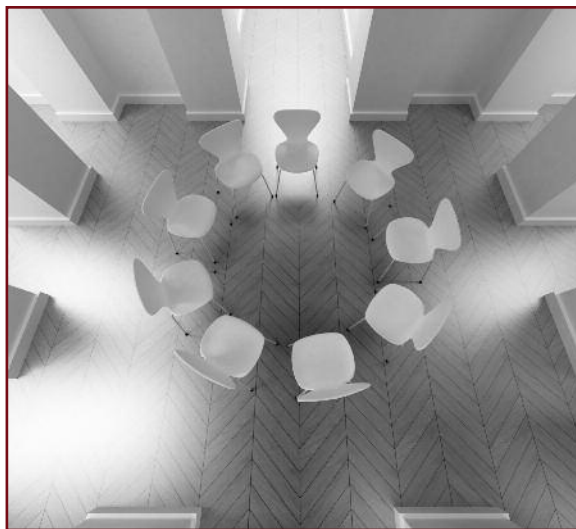
Upon leaving, one of the caseworkers said to me, “You know, Father, this was a good thing. More of the staff and administration need to know about this circle

you all do. I am going to tell them what happened down here today.”

It was collaboration—staff, youth, mental health workers, and religious all coming together in a good way for the benefit of Darrius and everyone involved. It made all of us more human. It was a sacrament of healing. In that classroom, on an otherwise ordinary day, something very powerful happened in Cook County Juvenile Detention Center. My prayer is that we can continue this movement, this transformation.

These Circles allow us to work for reconciliation in a place that knows a great deal of pain. We

believe that the Peacemaking Circle is a method that allows the spirituality of the Precious Blood, the spirituality of reconciliation, to make a real difference in the lives of people.



A RITUAL OF HEALING

Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S.

Peace, continued from page 12...

contact, other than an occasional letter, I left amazed at the unconditional love he has for his mother, despite her many issues and flaws.

On the long drive home, I thought about our ministry on the South Side of Chicago. Too often, our hope for peace and reconciliation does not seem possible amidst the violence that besets our neighborhoods. This trip renewed my faith that our prayers to end the violence begin with the peace and reconciliation found within the heart of every person. As the hymn goes, “let peace begin with me.”

Mike Donovan is a part-time employee with the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago.

LETTER OF THANKS

Very Rev. James Urbanic, C.P.P.S.
Society of the Precious Blood
Kansas City Province
P.O. Box 339
Liberty, MO 64069-0339

Dear Fr. Jim,

Please extend the thanks of the entire Cincinnati Province to all of your members for your very generous support of our *Missionary Hearts* campaign and specifically the renovations at St. Charles Center. We have received your second payment of \$500,000, which completes the pledge of the Kansas City Province.

The renovations are underway and proceeding well. The new windows are already installed and work on the hospitality rooms in the former convent are well under way. The entire project is projected to be completed in the fall of next year.

Your fraternal care and support of our province is greatly appreciated. My hope is that Phase Two of the St. Charles Project will place us in the position to continue to provide quality care for all our members in a facility that is welcoming and comfortable.

Fraternally, with much gratitude,

Rev. Angelo P. Anthony, C.P.P.S.
Provincial Director

Rev. Larry J. Hemmelgarn, C.P.P.S.
Director of Mission Advancement

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Greetings from La Paz, Bolivia! I just finished reading the March issue of *The New Wine Press*. It was such an inspiration. All of the articles were so well written. Please tell Lynda Quistorff that we have a similar sponsorship program in La Paz through SALUD INTEGRAL and it is a mutually enriching program for the sponsors as well as the recipients when there is a visit. In February we had a delegation here from Waterloo, IL.

I also was moved by the article by Judy Kotecki. Her holistic approach is so in line with our Precious Blood spirituality. How wonderful to have Companions with such fine backgrounds! Last January a married couple, who are C.P.P.S. Associates with your community in Lima, Peru, came here for a month and they were a great asset ministering to couples in our area. I would like to see more exchanges like that.

Have a good day and thanks again for your wonderful publication!

In the Blood which unites us,

Sister Anita Fearday, A.S.C. (from Ruma)

WE COMMEND TO GOD

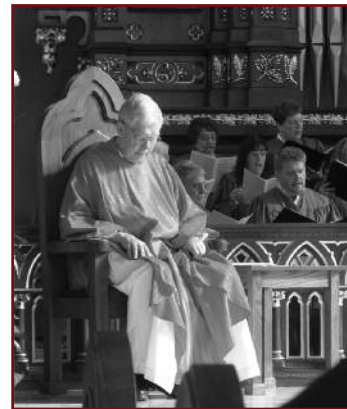
+Cliff VanMeter, son-in-law of Centerville
Companion Joan Mattingly.

+Mary Crall, sister of Albia Companion Helen
O'Brien.

+St. Joseph Companion Frieda Gallagher. Her
daughter and son-in-law, Kathy and Tom
Pankiewicz, are also St. Joseph Companions.

+Father Peter Chiodo, C.P.P.S., of the Cincinnati
Province. May 15, 2008.

+Brother Donald Fisher, C.P.P.S., of the
Cincinnati Province. June 25, 2008.



*Fr. Vince Hoying
presides at the
Jubilarian Mass. The
St. Francis Xavier
Parish choir is in the
background.*

I want to write because I receive *The New Wine Press*. I have been so touched by Tim Guthridge's recent article on "Imagination and the Presence of God."

Also, the poetry from this issue is so moving: "Mail Call," "Forgotten souls" and "Concrete Man." Amazing how these authors, whom I presume are prisoners, reach so deep inside their human spirit and express such profound emotional experiences.

Thanks for the beautiful work you and the others do as editors.

Blessings,

Fran M. Sulzer, F.S.P.A.
Park Ridge, IL

APPOINTMENTS

The Kansas City Province announces the following appointments:

Pastoral Team at Sedalia Catholic Community:

Fr. James Betzen, pastor at both Sacred Heart and St. Patrick, effective June 16, 2008

Fr. Linus Evers, associate pastor at both Sacred Heart and St. Patrick, effective June 16, 2008.

Fr. William Miller, Senior Priest in Residence at both Sacred Heart and St. Patrick, effective June 30, 2008.

Fr. Timothy Armbruster, associate pastor, St. James Parish, Liberty, effective July 1, 2008.

Fr. Joseph Bathke, assisting in initial and college formation, for Cincinnati and Kansas City provinces, residence in Dayton, Ohio, one year, effective September 1, 2008.

Fr. Timothy Guthridge, mission and retreat ministry, in residence, St. Francis Xavier, St. Joseph, assisting in parish ministry, effective July 1, 2008.

Fr. Vince Hoying, retirement St. Charles, Carthage, effective June 16, 2008.

Fr. Matt Link, faculty, Cristo Rey High School, Kansas City, effective August 1, 2008.

Fr. Mark Peres, joint appointment, Director of Advanced Formation, Kansas City and Cincinnati provinces, effective June 1, 2008, residence at formation house, Chicago.

Fr. Dennis Schaab, pastor, St. Mary Parish, Centerville, Iowa, effective July 1, 2008.

Fr. James Urbanic, pastor, Sacred Heart, Warrensburg, Missouri, effective July 1, 2008, with assistance from other priests in the province.

Lou Carey, assistant archivist, effective July 1, 2008.

What really matters
Is choosing
What really matters,
Not merely
Being aware or
Knowing about or
Considering attentively.

What really matters
Is choosing
What really matters
With a clear and
Gentle heart
In all matters.

About Matters
Mattie J. Stepanek



Back Pages, continued from page 16...

of our conversation this morning is ‘not how many people do we have to do’ the work of the blood of Christ. The question is, ‘Are we willing to do the work of the blood with however many we have?’” The losses we experience, the diminishment that we fear, are precisely what we need as individuals and as a community for growth to occur. To accept instead of resist is to see the glass half full—or even more perhaps. The “however many we have” is the gift of the moment. It’s much easier to share the part of the glass that is full.

I am grateful for this time in Oregon, for the stories of faith, struggle and commitment that I have heard in this community of dedicated women. We share not only some roots, but also many of the same concerns and challenges today. Yet we recall: “From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace” (John 1:16).

Finally, my thanks to one of the sisters who shared with me this true story about a local woman whom she knew.

Gladys Dunne, who is now in Heaven, was a very active, involved Catholic. One Sunday she went to Church to find that a visiting priest was offering Mass. He also gave the homily, which went on...and...on...and...on. When Mass was over and Gladys was walking down the aisle, she noticed a man she had never seen at her church before. She said to him, “Welcome to our parish. I’m Gladys Dunne.” The man answered, “I’m glad he’s done too. He talked way too long!”

Indeed he has. It is time to listen—and say “thank you.”



If you have
Enough breath
To complain
About anything,
You have more than
Enough reason
To give thanks
About something.

Grasp of Truth
Mattie Stepanek

Mattie J.T. Stepanek was a poet and the best-selling author of the Heartsongs poetry series. This poem carries even more impact when one realizes that he died in June 2004 at the age of thirteen from dysautonomic mitochondrial myopathy—a disease which kept him attached to a breathing machine for much of his life.

I am writing this in Beaverton, Oregon at the motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon, where I have been offering a retreat to about 45 sisters and lay associates for the past week. It has been a graced time in a beautiful corner of the earth. The impeccably kept grounds contain a little bit of everything, from huge sequoias to rows of calla lilies.

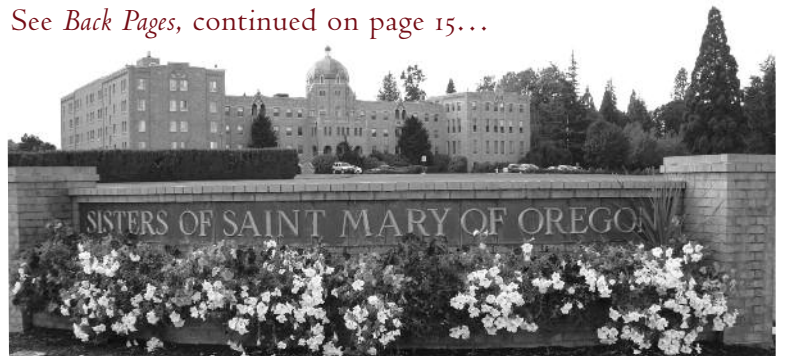
Founded in 1886, the SSMO community shares some of its earliest history with the Society of the Precious Blood in the United States. It is too much to recount in detail here, but I wanted to begin by acknowledging the connection. I was pleasantly surprised at morning prayer on my first day, to hear everyone begin with the familiar words, *“Eternal Father, I offer you the most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. . .”*

During these days, we have been talking, reflecting and praying about the threefold dynamic that might shape our lives and our liturgy—gift, gratitude, and giving. Put more simply, as we all learned when we were very young, “Say thank you” and “Share.”

Also during these days in Oregon, I have recalled our recent assembly more than once, especially as I have been reminded of it while putting together this issue. It was by many accounts time well spent together, positive and energizing and hope-filled—an occasion for gratitude, if I may come back to that. In the midst of our so-called diminishment, there is grace to be received, the gift of community, of support, of challenge. To say thank you is to see our glass as half full, our energies ready to be expended in mission.

Two statements in particular from the assembly have remained with me. In his presentation, Dr. Johnson emphasized that “Every success requires a loss,” and “Loss is the driving force of growth.” Joe Nassal, in his introduction to our table conversations about vision, concluded with: “The focus

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