



# The New Wine Press

*Motivated by the spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ*

## The Heart of Community

*Frances Flanagan*

In 1815, Saint Gaspar del Bufalo founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood on the three pillars of spirituality, mission, and community. In “The Three Pillars,” an article which appeared in *The New Wine Press* in February 2011, Fr. Jim Schrader, C.P.P.S. observes that both spirituality (or holiness) and mission have received recent attention from the Kansas City Province of the C.P.P.S., while community has not. We who are members of the Precious Blood Companions, a lay movement established by the Society in the late twentieth century, hear a great deal about such aspects of community as caring, doing, giving and sharing, but beyond the inquiry stage, very little if anything about community as a concept or as a pillar.

So is it worthwhile to consider “community,” even in its somewhat esoteric uses? Yes. At its heart it is about love, as are holiness (love of God) and mission (love of humankind). Basically, community is about the love that members (and now Companions) share with one another as they work for their own salvation and for the salvation and earthly well-being of those whom they serve. We, like the earliest members of the Precious Blood Society, need to love and to be loved.

To get some understanding of Gaspar’s use of community, we need to consider his use of both community and love. Gaspar’s most common use of community seems to be as a name for a small division of the Society, consisting of about five members and including both priests and brothers, who worked together as a unit in giving missions and retreats, in providing thisworldly support to the poor, or occasionally on some other project related to the Society’s overall mission.

The love Gaspar desired for his followers was not the sentimental variety that fires St. Valentine’s Day; rather, it was an everyday love, blessed with such gifts as forbearance, self-sacrifice, humility, hospitality, and a sense of humor. Gaspar saw this love as a necessity, not only in the lifelong formation of Precious Blood members, but also as an empowerment in their missionary endeavors. If the missionaries made their great love visible, as the new Christians did in the days of the early Church, the men and women who saw them would know that they came from God and know that God is good.

This love had (and still has), another task; it must create and recreate the heart of the third pillar. If the members (and now Companions) have a strong love for each



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## Leadership Notes

*Revolution to Evolution: An Opportunity*

Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S.

Last month the whole world witnessed the amazing events in Egypt. Thousands of people gathered to demand change from a dictatorial government which had been in power for decades. The protests reportedly were begun by the youth of the country using, among other tools, the internet. The power of the largely peaceful protests overwhelmed the Mubarek regime, and have spurred similar movements in other countries in the mideast. How things in Egypt will change now is uncertain, but the people's demand for democracy will be a driving force in the creation of any new government.

The "20-something" youth of our church seem to be participating in a similar protest/revolution. There are no gatherings in squares and no huge crowds chanting for the church to change. Rarely do we hear any demands put into words. No emails, tweets, or messages on Facebook calling for revolution are flying around the internet. The main tool that the youth in our church are using to voice their protest is their absence from church. This quiet protest may not be as noisy and world-shaking as the one in Egypt, but it is affecting the church as much as the protests in Egypt affected that country.

On January 28th and 29th of this year, there was a conference held at Fordham University entitled "Lost?" It was only the latest gathering to address the problem of non-involvement of "20-somethings" in the church. We have all experienced this problem. Most pastors have noticed the increased "graying" of their congregations. Everyone is acutely aware of fewer people choosing religious life as a vocation. People sending their children to Catholic School while not going to church themselves is commonplace. Parishes that used to be overloaded with weddings in the spring and summer now have only a few—a sign that people are seeing less need for getting married in the church.



We tend to blame the youth or their parents for this lack of involvement. They don't have (haven't been taught) traditional religious values, we say. Or they are just interested in playing video games and partying and sex. Or they are just malcontents. But surveys and polls have shown that our youth haven't suddenly lost their interest in, or need for, a spiritual connection to something greater than themselves. Apparently they just don't see the church (and organized religion) as helpful in their spiritual growth. So they have turned to other things, both helpful and unhelpful, in their search. And they are absent from the church.

As a church we seem to be telling our youth that they have to change rather than the church having to change. We tend to say "This is who and what the church is, and this is what it has to offer. Take it or leave it." There seems to be little willingness on the church's part to reevaluate its hierarchical structure in order to

## The New Wine Press

*Missionaries of the Precious Blood*

Kansas City Province

[www.kcprovince.org](http://www.kcprovince.org)

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

The Kansas City Province—incorporated members, covenanted companions, and candidates—united in prayer, service and mutual support, characterized by the tradition of its American predecessors, are missionaries of these times with diverse gifts and ministries.

In a spirit of joy, we strive to serve all people—especially the poor—with care and compassion, hope and hospitality.

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

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assess how/if it is effectively ministering to our youth today (the upcoming changes in liturgical language with little consultation with people in the pews is just one example).

Unlike Mubarek in Egypt, the church really doesn't have to change immediately in response to the message its youth seem to be sending. It can maintain the status quo for a while. But the loss of a generation will hurt the church so severely that it may take generations to repair the damage. And some would say that this "writing off" of an entire generation would be unconscionable.

Our community has a big stake in addressing this issue, both from the viewpoint of our continued existence, and our duty to read "the signs of the times" so we can effectively minister to people. But we have followed the lead of the wider church in many ways. Our focus on parish-based ministries has changed little, we describe ourselves to others in the same way we always have, and we are using the same recruitment model we've always used to invite people to join us to do basically what we've always done in basically the same way. And young people are saying "Thanks, but no thanks."

In general, we minister well in our traditional settings—parishes, hospitals, schools, etc. And individually we are generally hard working and generous in offering our gifts to those we serve. The question is not whether or not we have done/are doing good ministry. The question is: Is what we do and who we are as a community inviting young people to join us as a church, and us as a community, in doing God's work? If not, are we willing to change and adapt to be more inviting?

Significant, effective change as a community will probably involve more than just "rearranging the furniture." Such change will probably be akin to Egypt's moving from a dictatorship to a democracy. If young people's spiritual needs are not served by involvement in traditional church buildings, parishes and rituals, we would need to make some major changes in our focus, our identity and our work, in order to invite them to work with us. If young people do not find life-long celibate

commitment spiritually life-giving, we might need to find other ways for them to find life and belonging in our community. If youth find that rigid hierarchy does not help them in their spiritual search, we might have to provide a more collaborative arena for them.

We may decide we don't want to change in order to address this silent protest of our youth. We may decide that how we are serving the people of God now is what we want to continue doing. We may decide we don't have the time or energy required to make the necessary changes to appeal to youth.

What we decide to do (or not do) in response to the "signs of the times," of which the absence of our youth is a part, is up to us. Provincial leadership alone cannot simply hand down a blue print for what we will do or what we will look like as a community in the future and expect people to conform to it. But it is leadership's responsibility to highlight the issues facing us and urge, invite and cajole members to help decide what we as a community want to do (and when I say "members" I'm referring both to those who are incorporated and to Companions). It is each member's responsibility to join in the discussion and provide leadership with input which can guide leadership in specific decision-making.

It has been said that our youth are our future. The possibilities for new life in the future are endless if we can tap into the energy of our youth by helping them with their spiritual growth. If we cannot or don't want to evolve as a community in order to do this, our future may not be too bright.



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other, the third pillar will be strong; if love is weak, the pillar will be weak and unable to do its share in supporting and holding up the Society. The Society can be no stronger than its pillars.

I admit that when I became a part of the Companion movement, I wasn't really ready to accept all of its blessings—perhaps least of all those associated with community. My journey from being a sort-of-committed Companion to one who was at least ready and willing to make the journey that the Society of the Precious Blood was asking me to make began when Fr. Jim Urbanic, C.P.P.S., then my pastor, spoke in a homily about his two familial relationships, one with his birth family and one with his Precious Blood family. Although I had been a Companion for several years, never had it occurred to me to think of my Precious Blood family. Nevertheless, Fr. Jim's remark stayed with me and now and then surfaced as I was unconsciously beginning to deepen my relationship with other Companions and members of the Society.

Then, in the summer of 1996, I learned that Deacon, now Fr. Dien Truong, C.P.P.S., was to be in my parish for about six months and that he could use an English tutor. I volunteered for the job; Fr. Jim Urbanic, still my pastor, accepted me.

Deacon Dien and I approached the study of English in a variety of ways. Sometimes we worked on basics, at others on a homily for the upcoming weekend. Sometimes, too, we just talked. From our conversations I learned that Deacon Dien loved God, the Church, and the Society very much. One day when we were talking about the Society, I heard myself saying *our* provincial instead of *your* provincial. It took me a few seconds to realize what had happened. Then I knew that the wall that had kept me at a distance from both members and other Companions had been broken down. It was not that Deacon Dien was deliberately seeking to convert me, but somehow, through God's grace, he who already knew something about living in the Precious Blood community had opened a door for me. His gift had been unintentionally given and was unknowingly received.

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*“Being a part of the Precious Blood family is a part of my identity. I have become a ‘new creation,’ made somewhat according to the specifications of St. Gaspar. Prayer by prayer, gathering by gathering, hug by hug, I am still learning to be a part of the Precious Blood community.”*

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Now, just like Fr. Jim Urbanic, I have a second family: another group to pray with and for; another group to pray for me. One by one, the members of that group have each become a person to me, one whose company I want to be in, whose welfare has become my concern; if I need some commiseration, I know where to find it. Being a part of the Precious Blood family is a part of my identity. I have become a “new creation,” made somewhat according to the specifications of St. Gaspar. Prayer by prayer, gathering by gathering, hug by hug, I am still learning to be a part of the Precious Blood community.

How God may literally pull us into the arms of the Precious Blood is a gift to accept; how we go on to grow in our sense of and participation in community is very much our responsibility. Community is a relationship, and it requires our doing things, from praying to playing—together.

This list may contain options that your group has not conceived. Growth of community among us can be encouraged by making regular attendance at meetings and functions a priority; allowing ample time at meetings for praying together; participating in special prayers, such as a prayer service or even an anointing service, if appropriate, for a seriously ill member or one facing a serious operation; participating in a special wake service for a Companion who has died; establishing a prayer chain for people with special needs; participating in Provincial Assemblies and Companion retreats; planning and participating in a pilgrimage to a nearby shrine or monastery, or even a distant one to Rome, the Holy Land, or other venerated spot; enjoying the fellowship of the Society's annual Epiphany party; playing together (previously suggested by Frs. Dennis Schaab and Jim Schrader).

Although group involvement in ministry is not a part of the plan for the Companion movement, individuals may give financial support to the Vietnam mission or even get personally involved in Tanzania or Latin America. The new volunteer program also offers Companions a way to enlarge their interaction within the Precious Blood community.

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## +Companion Eugene Clark



*Eugene "Gene" E. Clark*  
1933-2011

Our memories of the entire Clark family go back over 40 years, so it's hard to verbalize the essence of that relationship in a paragraph or two. While Gene had his competitive spirit when golfing with the guys, he took much more of a coaching attitude when we women were on the course. He was always wanting us to try a new swing or putting method, and delighted in our attempts to hit a good shot. He LOVED looking for golf balls, and would appear out of nowhere with his pockets full while we played. I can't tell you the last time I had to buy golf balls due to Gene's benevolence. While most people struggle finding their own ball on the course, Gene could spot a ball a hundred yards deep in the woods and under a leaf. Gene remembered every shot he ever took on any course and loved telling the stories that surrounded them.

He could strike up a conversation with anyone, anywhere, on any topic, but mostly loved to talk about golf, politics, his youth and food! I sometimes think the tee shirt that reads "will work for food"

was probably designed after watching Gene over the years. Everywhere he went there seemed to be a chili dog involved somewhere. He was a dedicated Catholic School volunteer who worked bingo, coached, refereed and called plays in the press box. We always joked that the only reason he did all that stuff was because they fed him chili dogs afterward.

Gene was quite a character and a delight to spend time with. We will miss his talents, generosity, shining smile and love of life's simple pleasures. We know he's greeting old friends, getting the real scoop on the economy and global warming, looking for a golf course and a hot dog stand, and gathering new stories to share with us when we all meet again. Thank you Gene and thank you Clark family for sharing your husband, dad and grandfather with us both.

*Companion Peggy Dillon*

The best story I can tell on Gene is one that clearly states what it was like playing golf with him in his heyday. Randy, Andy, Pat G., Gene and I all played for years together in Bella Vista every summer on our yearly golf vacation. Through the years it has been a little bit competitive between the 5 of us, to say the least. We will always remember Gene for not only beating most of us most the time, but grinding it in while doing it. I clearly remember one particular day—and this is just one example of how he would get you—Randy was having a really good day, yet had missed a couple of close putts that would have made it the round of a life. Nearing the end of the 18 holes we were on a par 3, and Randy hit one about two feet from the pin. All of us were moved to give him compliments—which in this group were hard to come by. Andy said "sweet swing"; Pat G. commented, "You are on today"; heck, even I said "nice shot." But good old Gene's comment after all that was "Yea, but he still has to putt," followed by that chalk board scratching cackle of a laugh of his. Ole Geno was a competitor.

I know we all have stories we could tell about Gene, but I want to mention that I did not admire him only for his fierce competitive sporting spirit. My greatest admiration and respect for Gene is because of what a great example he was to me as a wonderful family man dedicated to his children and Willie, so strong in his Catholic faith and his relentless support of St. Francis Xavier and Bishop LeBlond. Thank you Gene.

*Companion Steve Dillon*

*[The full obituary can be found on page 7.]*

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## “In Prison and You Visited Me”

Richard Colbert, C.P.P.S.

*“Our Precious Blood Spirituality sustains and directs all that we do.*

*It gives focus to our mission and ministry. It calls us to live in solidarity with those who suffer. It unites us as brothers and sisters in the blood of Christ. It strengthens us, encourages us, challenges us to be faithful to the call we have received. We share the hope it brings with those with whom and to whom we minister.”*

Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S.

As a C.P.P.S. Community, we hold a unique privilege and mission to connect with and witness to the faith values to all we serve. One aspect of my current pastoral assignment includes being on the Jail Ministry Team sponsored by St. James Parish in Liberty. This grass roots volunteer program was established in 1990 by veteran parishioner, Frank Hosticka. This group, led by Jack Burns, is comprised of several part-time volunteers. We estimate more than sixty men and women participated in this ministry project that attends to the spiritual and religious needs of some of the Residents at the Clay County Detention Center.



Responding to personal requests of inmates at the Clay County Detention Center for personal visitations and guidance, I have followed through with midweek, fifteen minute one-on-one interviews. I've hosted over 600 personal sessions with incarcerated women and men. For some of those inmates, I've helped to locate persons and groups willing to assist with job training or to explore employment options.

Occasionally, we can find legal assistance to help review and revise their child support schedules. Catholic Charities, among other local support organizations, offers incarcerated persons an impressive list of services and referrals in our area and throughout North America. For example, the *Turn Around* program in the diocese enables us to mentor released convicts as they work on mainstreaming themselves into the local population.

Listening to these imprisoned tell of their needs, dreams, disappointments and betrayals of broken trusts and relationships,

leads us to empathically connect with some of their multiple fractures. Within such churning chaotic episodes, some reveal deeply touching and admirable human and spiritual treasures. How some, through jail time, believe they find their faith restored and their Lord renewed is amazing. Clearly, this is a ministry of identification with the suffering which invites them to a metanoia of spiritual transformation to experience reconnect to their Christian taproot.

Some of the young men, often due to unemployment issues and criminal activity, are incarcerated and can not pay their child support obligations. It is puzzling to see how incarceration will help solve the problem if the demands of their financial obligations are not adjusted while they remain incarcerated.

Recently, I met 35 year old Justin. In repeated visits he described his family, consisting of five young children and their mother. He described his dreams of becoming involved one day in youth ministry at his fundamentalist church. Upon his release, he contacted me looking for work. I introduced him to a gentleman who opened his heart and home to Justin and his family since they had been recently evicted and were homeless. It is wondrous yet humbling to see how the Lord uses us human agents in his plan to create miracles for the poor to sustain their lives.

Occasionally, through this ministry, I am invited to trials and hearings by inmates to support their causes. Once I was asked by a public defender to testify for his client to advocate for leniency and to get him enrolled into a drug rehabilitation program as part of his sentence. I agreed; however, that judge disregarded my recommendation and instead gave him the full sentence for his crimes. A couple of months later, I was surprised when that sentenced inmate wrote to thank me for my support at his hearing. He requested I send a Christmas package to his two children. His son is eight and his daughter is nine. With a supportive couple's assistance, we sent a nice package of presents to his family in his name.

Helping people to find jobs, education classes, short-term assistance, and medical and/or counseling services all accompanied by prayer is what we on the jail ministry team are about. We strive to empower as many as we can to mainstream back into their families, churches, and society.

Regrettably, some still fail in their efforts, and regress back into their addictions or law breaking patterns and return to jail. Nevertheless, success with the few makes our efforts to serve the many satisfying. It nourishes our determination to expand and continue this empowering ministry. We certainly deepen our own spiritual adventures through prayerful reflection upon it. We network in collaboration with supportive proactive partners in the local community for these people.

Surprisingly, some of the residents consider themselves to be Catholic because their grandparents took them to Sunday Mass a few times when they were children. I even hear some wanting to reconnect with the Catholic Church and get their children baptized upon their release. Recognizing that this may be wishful thinking, I still give them our parish telephone number for follow-up information. Sometimes I get requests for Catholic editions of the Bible. They seem aware the Bible is their legitimate heritage too.

This is a fulfilling ministry especially, when I randomly meet former residents in shopping centers or restaurants when they come up to thank me for having visited while they were in jail. Occasionally, a few released contact me; then I host them to lunch to celebrate freedom and to see how I might help to sustain and explore further options for motivating their positive mainstreaming attitudes in restored liberty.



### *Eugene "Gene" E. Clark*

Eugene "Gene" E. Clark, 77, St. Joseph, MO, died Saturday, February 12, 2011 at his home. Gene was born on April 29, 1933 in St. Joseph to Edward and Virginia (Miller) Clark.

He attended St. Peter and Paul Grade School, Christian Brothers High School (class of 1951), and St. Joseph Junior College, graduating in 1954.

Gene entered the Air Force during the Korean War and worked in the Air Force Security Service as a Russian linguist from 1953 to 1957. Following the war, Gene worked as a Systems Analyst for Westab; Seitz Packing; Beaty Hy-Klas; Mid Continent Computer; Larson & Morris CPAs; Metro Bus Co. in Kansas City; Sherwood Medical; Cramer Inc., Kansas City, KS; and part-time for Heaton-Bowman-Smith & Sidenfaden Chapel.

In August 1954, Gene married Wilma "Willie" Dowdy and they were married 56 years. She survives of the home. He was a member of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church and Fairview Men's Club. He and Willie were involved as a team couple for the Marriage Encounter weekends. He was active in sports as a player, referee and coach.

Gene is also survived by his children Vicki (Randy) Rowland; Patrick (Suzanne) Clark; Renee Clark; Chris (Shannon) Clark; Sean (Darcy) Clark; Andy (Ronna) Clark and Jami (Dave) Guck; fifteen grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; two brothers, Norman Clark, and Robert Clark; several nieces and nephews and many friends. He will be sadly missed by all.

Mass of Christian Burial was at 10 A.M. Thursday, February 17th, at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in St. Joseph, MO. Interment in Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

The family suggests memorials to Bishop LeBlond High School, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, or Hands of Hope Hospice.

[Edited from *St. Joseph News-Press*]

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## A Pilgrimage to Haiti

Mark Yates, C.P.P.S.

As I began to tell people that I was going to Haiti at the end of January as part of a course on social and economic justice and its implications for ministry, and to witness a model of what it means to be in solidarity with the poor, they would invariably ask me what kind of project our group would be undertaking. I told them we were not going to do a project, but rather look at an example of how solidarity has worked between twinning two parishes—one in the U.S. and one in Haiti—and how this has evolved into a relationship even greater than either could have imagined. Usually they jokingly responded that I was going on some type of vacation. I would jokingly retort that I was going to be a “theological tourist.”



When one thinks of being a theologian, one thinks of someone reflecting on the many and varied ways people understand God’s revelation to them. When one thinks of being a tourist, one thinks of traveling to an unknown place to see the best in the way of another people’s cultural achievements—such as architecture, museums, and foods—while expecting to be shielded from the less desirable sides of a culture such as slums and beggars. The term “tourist” was not the best choice of words to describe our visit to Haiti, since our purpose was to engage and to learn from the people of Haiti, and through the process be transformed. Perhaps a *pilgrimage* to Haiti would more aptly encompass the purpose of our trip.

As we descended to the airport in Port-au-Prince, I could see the mountains scarred from erosion due to deforestation. After the plane landed we disembarked and were led to waiting buses that took us to a warehouse set up for arrivals, as much of the air-

port was still damaged and unsafe a year after the earthquake; there were no signs of reconstruction. We were met by Msgr. Andre Pierre, Rector of the Université Notre Dame d’Haiti, who had an aide gather our passports to be stamped and returned. We were led past the line at the Customs and Immigration station—to the comments of several standing in line wondering who we were to receive such privilege; one would have thought we were important dignitaries. It was an indication to me of the authority the Church exercises in Haiti, as I could not imagine a clergyman being able to circumvent the lines at a U.S. Customs and Immigration station for a group. It was also a sign of immense hospitality.

As we left the airport and headed for Frères St. Jacques, where we were going to stay, one could immediately see the tent neighborhoods with hundreds of people crammed into them. The devastation of the earthquake was also evident with buildings that were flattened. The building style and the congested traffic reminded me of my two month visit to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam two years ago. I was reminded of the talk by William Canny, Director of Emergency Operations at Catholic Relief Services, given on January 12, 2011 at Catholic Theological Union about their work in Haiti. He mentioned that when they were composing a mission statement, they had a Haitian read it. That person asked that the phrase about Haiti being the poorest nation in the western hemisphere be stricken. Since then, as I read articles about Haiti, I found that nearly every one of them used this phrase, which glared at me from the page. It seemed as though Haiti were condemned to be the poorest nation in the western hemisphere—a stigma, a scarlet letter, it cannot shake. Where is the hope?

Until the earthquake on January 12, 2010, Haiti remained on the periphery, or even off-stage, in many people’s minds, including my own. The earthquake brought Haiti to center-stage, and help poured in from other countries. Now a year later, help continues to arrive, but

the rebuilding is slow. The country lacks the infrastructure to support such massive rebuilding, building codes are non-existent, and much of the work is done by hand. As we disembarked and saw the crowded streets, my heart was moved. The earthquake only compounded the problems of Haiti, the second oldest independent nation in the hemisphere and the first black independent nation in the world when it gained independence from France in 1804.

We are told that eco-systems are a delicate balance of interdependence. Usually this refers to ecology, but I think it also applies to economics. Haiti and other countries like it have been pawns in an economic chess game controlled by the developed western nations who colonized them for exploitative purposes. As Paul VI noted in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*: “It is true that colonizing nations were sometimes concerned with nothing save their own interests, their own power and their own prestige; their departure left the economy of these countries in precarious imbalance—the one-crop economy, for example, which is at the mercy of sudden, wide-ranging fluctuations in market prices. Certain types of colonialism surely caused harm and paved the way for further troubles.” Often it seems to me that economics is the new form of colonialism.

Companies enter poor areas exploiting the workers with low wages, and when it becomes unprofitable, move to a new source of low wage earners—all in the interest of making a profit, which goes elsewhere. This exploitation is to provide those living in the developed countries with lower priced goods and maximized profits. The improvements that are made in a developing country seem only to be tokens to pacify the masses rather than to create any substantial change.

For such a long time, businesses and governments have used and continue to use trade policies as bargaining chips to keep developing countries under economic colonial control; even humanitarian aid has been used in this endeavor. Humanitarian aid can be as harmful as it is helpful through unintended consequences. It can destroy a country’s economy since who would not accept something for free that they would

otherwise have to pay, such as rice. Providing tons of free rice from the outside has hurt the rice market in Haiti. Ways in which this can be done without hurting the local farmer needs to be better explored when providing necessary commodities to nations.

Fr. Pascal Pierre, director of the Caritas development in Haiti, mentioned in his talk on the eve of our departure that development needs to be more than just handouts. Handouts do not instill human dignity, but continue a form of colonialism and oppression through giving from a position of power rather than from a position of solidarity.

A position of solidarity helps people with the education and resources they need to build themselves up in their own way, not a way dictated to them from abroad. A position of solidarity helps people build themselves up in way that honors their culture and values without imposing the values and culture

of the giver. Fr. Pascal used the maxim: “If you give a person a fish, she/he can eat for a day; if you teach a person to fish, she/he can eat for a lifetime.” I might add to that maxim that it is not only teaching the person to fish, but may also include providing the resources necessary to make a fishing pole, string and a hook, perhaps even a boat.

People were willing to work: rice farmers were building an irrigation ditch by hand through a CRS funded project; the roads around Baradères were being repaired again by hand. Even with these projects, they lack the basic resources necessary to get beyond subsistence living—like fresh water and proper waste containment (the lack of which is fueling the cholera epidemic). Most live without electricity or indoor plumbing. They get their water from a communal spigot and have to carry it home. Fuel for

*Irrigation ditch project near Les Cayes*



*Baradères town spigot*

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cooking comes from charcoal made from trees, hence the depletion of the forests.

I was inspired by the way in which Caritas International and Catholic Relief Services of Haiti are helping to provide resources necessary to create jobs—through their *Work for Food* programs—in order for people to better earn a livelihood rather than only receive handouts of food or cash. I certainly had a misconception of what their work entailed and how it was being accomplished. When I heard that the various service agencies from abroad had agreed to divide up Haiti so that their efforts did not overlap, I imagined something akin to the colonial powers dividing up the western hemisphere, Africa or how the Native American



*Native tin art, this one with a Precious Blood symbol in the center*

reservations were divided among the Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists and Roman Catholics. I was glad that this is not how or why Haiti was divided, but rather to provide as much service without doubling or competing efforts in a given region.

To be in solidarity with a people involves a mutual relationship between people. To be in a mutual relationship requires mutual respect, commitment and responsibility. John Paul II described solidarity when he wrote: “This then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”

We were invited to attend a meeting on January 24th in Baradères of the Kafe Devlopman Baradè (KDB), or the Baradères

Growers’ Association, where we witnessed solidarity in the mutual exchange of ideas and information between the coffee growers, Fr. Pascal Pierre, and Kim Lamberty, representing *Just Haiti*. The whole coffee program is an indication of mutual respect and responsibility. It is a matter of empowerment and of treating people with dignity as created in God’s image and likeness. It is a matter of justice to help people in their human flourishing.

Solidarity with the poor does not mean one has to give up everything that is unnecessary, but it does challenge those of us who live in developed countries. As Jesus says at the end of the parable of the vigilant servant, “Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more” (Lk 12:48). Perhaps too often we in the U.S. have ceded our individual responsibilities to government or church organizations.

As we individually have been entrusted with much, we can be held to a higher standard in sharing with others. Being in solidarity requires a degree of humility. One has to humble oneself to be in relationship; one has to allow one’s self to be vulnerable, to risk reaching out and possibly being rejected. This is perhaps why it is easier to put money into a collection than to venture out and put human faces on poverty. Much is missed, however, in not seeing the fruit of that solidarity as we were able to see in the faces and words of the growers tell about the pride they take in working the land of their ancestors; of being able to provide a good education for their children; and of being able to provide assistance within their communities. I was overwhelmed by the hospitality that was shown us by everyone; this, too, was a very humbling experience. When we met with the KDB’s leadership team, they told us, “You are home.” I hope that I show that same hospitality to those with whom I come into contact.

I think there were many things that I learned or were reinforced for me from this class that will help me in ministry. One of these is solidarity; I must be in solidarity with the people with whom I minister. This means getting to know

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them, know their dreams and visions of who they want to become as God's people. This reinforces what I have already thought about what it means to be a missionary, even a missionary in my own cultural context. Being a missionary is being willing to risk creating relationships with others; to listen attentively to their needs; to work for solutions together.

It is also to teach and preach the Good News of Jesus Christ. In preaching, I have to preach as much to myself as I do to a congregation for it to be from the heart. The trip reinforced for me that it is God's mission and I am only responding as God's ambassador to help continue that mission by involving those with whom I am ministering to continue the mission of God.

As mentioned earlier, my conceptions of the work many aid agencies are doing were wrong. They are not just doling out food or doing construction in a wasteful manner, but doing it with local labor—and very often the beneficiaries themselves are doing the labor, as in the case of the rice farmers building concrete irrigation ditches to

route the water as it is needed. The work is hard, but it seems to build community and self-respect among the farmers; it also provides them with some income. This new understanding of how Catholic Relief Services operates will better help me when I have to preach about giving to that second collection. I can speak as a witness from firsthand experience of the need and how the money given is being used to help people help themselves by providing resources they would not be able to obtain on their own.

My visit to Haiti challenges me as a person from one of the privileged cultures that has for years kept other cultures in subsistence living standards in order to promote and further its own economic superiority. We often look to the corporate tycoons and say how they got to be so rich on the backs of the working stiffs. The same can be said of the U.S. as a whole; it got to be the wealthiest nation on earth on the backs of other nations that could be bullied into submission, not allowing them to prosper through free and fair trade. I do not think people realize to what lengths our government and corporations go to keep prices for imported commodities low for us as consumers through mani-

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*“Being in solidarity requires a degree of humility. One has to humble oneself to be in relationship; one has to allow one’s self to be vulnerable, to risk reaching out and possibly being rejected. This is perhaps why it is easier to put money into a collection than to venture out and put human faces on poverty.”*

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pulation and repression—as well as to maximize their own profits. I feel challenged as a consumer to not always take the best bargain, but to seek out more things that I use through fair trade where the manufacturer will receive more of the profit. I also feel challenged to be more discerning about my purchasing habits and giving to charity. Am I part of the solution or part of the problem?

The Haitian people affirmed for me the belief that people are basically good and are made in the image of God. The situation there is full of systemic problems, many that are not of their making, but to which they are the victims such as economics and politics. Like others in the world, they are trying to eke out a living under very difficult circumstances. They want better for themselves, their children and their children's children. The cycle of poverty is difficult to break, but the hope is that it can be broken little by little. Real poverty cannot be romanticized nor should it be. For injustices to be righted the dignity of the human person must be recognized in all people and that through solidarity and accompaniment one recognizes that God-given dignity.

My trip to Haiti was indeed a pilgrimage; it was an opportunity to look, listen, and learn. While our hearts were moved to compassion for the people of Haiti, it was they who taught us “many things” about survival, hospitality, and hope. Truly the “cry of the blood” is heard from the Haitian people and from the land, decimated not only from the earthquake in 2010, but from over two centuries of injustice.

*Mark Yates is currently completing his studies at CTU and will be ordained to the diaconate in June.*

## Stained by the Blood in Vietnam

Timothy Guthridge, C.P.P.S.

From February 7-11th of this year, David Matz and I gave a Precious Blood retreat to inquirers and a few others at an O.M.I. retreat house on the Eastern Sea, a couple of hours east of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. About 21 people attended the retreat. With Lac Pham as interpreter, the retreat went very well.

I gave the morning conferences that were about various aspects of Precious Blood Spirituality. I gave conferences on the sacredness of blood, how we encounter the blood of Christ through the sacraments, how St. Gaspar came to understand the Precious Blood, Gaspar's way of enabling people to encounter the blood of Christ especially through Precious Blood Devotion, and what the Precious Blood of Christ means for us today.

Dave gave afternoon conferences that focused on human relationships. He put us through a series of exercises that helped us get in touch with our bodies and he gave a conference on human sexuality and the significance of eros in our lives.

Each of the conferences had feedback sessions so the retreatants could reflect and share what was going on in their hearts regarding the various conferences. A talking stick approach was used to facilitate the feedback sessions. I was impressed and delighted by what the retreatants had to share. Lac had to work double time in that not only did he have to interpret the conferences, he interpreted for each of the retreatants.

One of the first things that struck in Vietnam was the size of the Catholic Churches and the vibrancy of the Catholic community. Church attendance at St. Mary's where Fr. Lac lives was in the thousands every weekend. The first Sunday Mass was at 5:00 A.M. with morning bells beginning at 4:30. This made for a very abrupt daily morning wake up call. It has to be this way since there really are not what we know as weekends, people have to go to Mass before they go to work. There is also an evening Saturday and Sunday Mass for people who have to work in the morning.

I was impressed by the number of people who came to these Masses and the efforts that were made to get to Mass. I can't imagine too many people from the United States getting up at 4:30 so they could attend a 5:00 A.M. Mass before going to work. Sunday Mass was attended by the thousands. The church itself could hold more than a thousand people. Each daily Mass was attended by hundreds of people. Daily Masses were

at 5:00 A.M., 7:00 A.M., and 7:00 P.M. Masses were never between these hours because of people's work schedules. If there was a wedding or a funeral, they would be at one of these Masses.

None of the Churches had schools, because Catholic Schools are forbidden in Vietnam. All schools have to be state run. The role of the Catechist is very important in Vietnam.

What struck me about the men that are thinking about joining our commu-



*Fr. Timothy giving a presentation*



nity is how complicated their lives are. All of them have jobs, they all go to school, and in addition, they try to participate in some form of community life and religious formation. Their weeks do not go from Monday thru Friday like most of the people here. Their jobs and classes

*See Stained, continued on page 15...*

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## “Eat Everything On Your Plate”

David Matz, C.P.P.S.

Many years have passed since I last traveled out of the country and spent a good amount of time visiting our communities abroad. Since I was very young, my parents taught me to never refuse anything that people offer you to eat and drink because it is impolite. “Eat everything on your plate even if you don’t like it.” This is a value and a practice I have held throughout my life. Of course there are consequences to this practice. I am not talking about the *tourista*—a Spanish word used to name the digestive issues that arise as one travels the world. Because of this I have



learned that table manners and sharing food and drink are a universal form of communication beyond language. As we arrived in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, I knew that where we ate, with whom we ate, and what we ate and drank would give clues to our Vietnamese brothers and sisters how open we were to their culture and to all that gives meaning to their lives.

On the first morning of the retreat with the members, inquirers and candidates for our Vietnam Mission, Tim shouted across the dining room floor, “David, get a picture of this breakfast!” “Okay, Okay!” I responded, and retrieving my camera I took a picture. On the table was a bowl of soup with noodles, some cooked vegetables and pork, and various sides of red hot chili peppers, bean sprouts, lime and some soy sauce. In the United States, eggs and bacon, a bran muffin or oatmeal are the usual entrees served for

breakfast. Having arrived in Vietnam a week earlier, Lac had made the more common breakfast for us—eggs and toast, served with a rich and thick Vietnamese coffee with a good dollop of sweetened condensed milk that reminded you of a Starbucks espresso on overload. Just in case the caffeine from the coffee didn’t wake you up, the sugar from the milk would. But on this day, before us on the table was an authentic Vietnamese breakfast. I didn’t wait to see what Tim ate; I dove in gladly. “Hey, give me some chilies and pass the soy sauce please.”

We arrived in Ho Chi Minh City the evening before the Lunar New Year’s Eve on February 1st. The traditions and festivities practiced during this time correspond to the month of December in the United States, with families gathering, presents given and special foods prepared. Such was the case when Lac invited me to join him at St. Paul’s Parish where he ministers. After a lively New Year’s Eve mass, we gathered around tables with the parish staff and ate traditional vegetables, preserved meats and beer served over ice. The next day, New Year’s Day, Lac took me to his Aunt’s house where once again the tables were filled with food and drink enough to feed an army. And I thought I was going to lose weight in Vietnam. Didn’t happen! Like the many people who gathered around those tables, I not only ate and drank in the food that was offered to us, but through Lac, we ate and drank in the stories of the lives of the people around the table. Each time I picked up my chop sticks and ventured out trying to grasp a new type of food, all eyes were set upon the priest from the United States. As soon as it went into my mouth and my eyes showed any sign of pleasure or distaste, we would laugh. If I liked the food, I’d eat more of it; if I did not, we would move on to try something else. Needless to say, I tried everything at least once.

After Tim had left Vietnam, I stayed 10 days

more in order to spend more time getting to know our candidates. It was then that one of the candidates, Hoa, shared with me how insatiable the appetites of the Vietnamese are.



See *Everything*, continued on page 14...

*Everything, continued from page 13...*

“We eat everything!” he said. The conversation finally led itself up to, yes, dog meat. And also a rice wine with snakes, scorpions and spiders soaking in it, which they drank for vitamins. (I also learned that it was an aphrodisiac.) Ky, another candidate, heard the conversation and invited me out to eat dog meat that evening. I thought he was kidding. Not a chance! We hopped on the motor-bike, fought the hoards of motorists on the roads and in the alleys and made our way to the restaurant that served dog meat. Other than the overwhelming flavor of bad liver, once you wrapped it in a leaf of an herb, dipped into lime, salt and pepper, and—for all the strong-stomached people—dipped it into the black fermented shrimp sauce, it was very tasty.

I’m sharing this story because I ate dog meat three times while in Vietnam. But it was the third time, farther south in Vietnam, where the story becomes more Eucharistic. Ky had taken me to Thanh-An Village in Can-Tho where he was baptized as a Christian when he was 19 years old.



I met his baptismal godparents and his confirmation godfather. After reacquainting himself with his godparents, we sat down to eat. When Ky mentioned that I had eaten dog meat, one of their daughters left and returned ten minutes



later with...dog meat. They were thrilled. I was not, but I began to understand the important significance of sharing this food. On our last night in the South, the associate pastor invited some friends over for an evening snack. Ky and I had already gone to our room when the knock came inviting us to join the festivities. There in his upper room the associate pastor had gathered with his friends. They were sitting in a circle on the floor, which was set with food, plates, little glasses and a small grill to cook meat. Dog meat again! I thought The beverage we drank was “rice wine.” Although I was ignorant about what I was drinking at the time, we all shared in seven toasts to the guests sitting in the circle. Then they shared about the type of wine we had drank. Suffice it

to say, I received seven day’s worth of vitamins in one night. The next morning over cups of coffee it was clear we had become more than friends, all of us.

There were many meals with many families of our candidates, as each person welcomed me into their home. From the minute Tim asked me to take a picture of that bowl of breakfast soup, I knew that each meal and every encounter I had would be Eucharistic—and they were. Precious Blood Missionaries eat and drink in not only the food that is set before us. Knowing the people who cook, serve, and share in the food and drink changes us and transforms us if we take the risk to eat and drink in the lives of all the people who sit at the table with us. Hoa said the Vietnamese eat everything. I know that they love in the same way they eat, insatiably. “Eat everything on your plate,” my parents would say. This Precious Blood Missionary says, “Thanks for the food and drink. Thanks for sharing your lives and love! Until we meet again I lift up my cup of rice wine and say: 1-2-3, YO! In English we would say, “Cheers!”



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*Stained, continued from page 12...*

are on a seven day schedule which makes religious formation and community life very difficult. At the house where Lac lives, they often cannot have a community meal together until after 9:00 P.M. because this is the only time everyone is at the house. Most of the men are in their 20s and 30s; several are in their 40s. They are all at different places in their lives, and they all have different perspectives of what Precious Blood spirituality is and what their role might be as Precious Blood Missionaries.

I found Vietnam a vibrant place for mission. It is a country in great need of healing and reconciliation on multiple levels. There is still much reconciliation to be done because of war. Many of the Catholic families in Saigon used to live in the north of the country, but because of the actions of the communists, they were forced to leave their homes and villages and move south. The present government is very corrupt, dictatorial and controlling.

The church—or any religious institution—has to function under great restriction and oppression. In conversation with Lac, he conveyed to me that there is more of a need for lay missionaries than clergy. The actions of clergy are

very restricted and the institutional church in general seems to stand more with the corrupt government than it does with the people of God because many of the clergy, especially the secular clergy, are more concerned with personal status than with giving witness to Christ. He would like to see all the missionaries in Vietnam with solid theological education, but not necessarily as priests. He would like to see them working among the people and living the spirituality of the Precious Blood.

Vietnam definitely is a place that needs to be transformed by the Blood of Christ, which is why I believe our Mission has the potential to contribute a great deal to the Vietnamese people. The five charisms of our community are, as I have understood them, proclaiming the word of God, devotion to the Blood of Christ, renewal and healing of the church and of the world, community life, and ministering to the marginalized and the broken of the world. I can't think of to many more places where all of these charisms are needed than in Vietnam.

I pray for our missionaries in Vietnam. Right now there are only three definitely incorporated members in the mission with a fair number of inquirers with good missionary potential. There are presently three temporarily incorporated members studying English in Chicago and preparing themselves for graduate school. St. Gaspar was transformed by the Precious Blood of Christ while he was in prison. I pray these men, as well as all of our members and companions, may be transformed by the Blood of Christ, so that the whole world will be transformed by the Blood of Christ into God's eternal kingdom.



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## To Reconcile or Not

Robert McCray

It's hard for me to forgive, to reconcile, or to practice community. At least to the point of actually doing it. I talk a lot about it. Do a pretty good job explaining it to others. Some people have assumed I'm laid back enough that none of the typical problems of human interaction gnaw at my gut. (I'm concerned about those people. Are they naïve? out of touch with reality? Or am I that talented an actor?)

Well, when I'm honest, I'm not as laid back as I let on. I can will it for a while. I can play at it. I can act as if I believe it, but when squeezed by circumstance, my elbows go out and I find out that I haven't budged spiritually. It is so easy to learn the vocabulary of some group and then use the lingo to pretend I'm moving along at a significant clip. Then when I try to apply it, I falter. I am anything but forgiving, reconciling, or community oriented. In fact, I'm pretty indistinguishable from everything I don't want to be and everyone I don't want to be like. I do often want to forgive, but I rarely want to reconcile. According to the Lord's Prayer, I need to forgive others their trespasses for God to want to forgive my trespasses. Although I may drag my feet a bit, that's good enough for me to get into action.

It's just that I don't want to add someone to my Christmas card list unless it seems really important.

I believe I should reconcile. I remember those moving narratives from South Africa when women would not uncommonly forgive the former government for their atrocities, then actually invite the perpetrators to come to her home and be treated as a son. That is operating from a spot much further along the spiritual development scale than I have ever visited personally. When I'm honest, I'd rather have the person I forgive drop out of sight and move to another town or parish (or continent).

I've read accounts of Elizabeth Smart, the young girl kidnapped by a drifter and held for nine months. Elizabeth was forced to go through a ceremony that the drifter said made her

his second wife, then proceeded to sexually use her for as long as he wanted as often as he wanted.

After she eventually was found and returned to her parents, this teenager didn't propose she wanted to be a social worker or therapist, helping poor tragic people such as those who held her hostage. She wants to be an assistant prosecutor and put law breakers away.

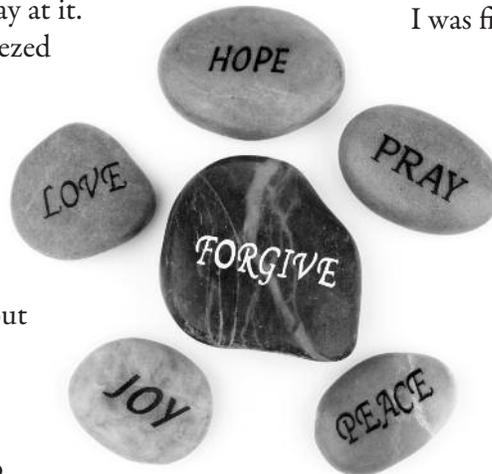
I was first struck that this didn't fit my caricature of a "sweet Mormon girl". I was expecting testifying before Congress. She may some day run for Congress.

It might be argued that she forgave, then reconciled whatever may have been broken within her. Finally, she finds that sense of community in the prosecutor's office.

Bearing a grudge comes easily to me. I may have a gift for grudges. "Those who didn't treat me right should be isolated and crushed". Thank you, Jesus for hearing my prayer. Alleluia. When David gets rolling in some of those Psalms where he's knocking heads together, I can get all misty-eyed.

I could end up resembling some sort of closet misanthrope stumbling into the light, finding I am not becoming compassionate or caring after all. The positive stuff was a ruse. I am just as self-righteous as anyone I was supposed to help. They just got caught breaking some company policy, societal rule, or divine edict. While I kept skating along, sometimes even believing my own press notices.

I was told a story once. It may not have been true, but it should have been. It seems this fellow was working in a particularly dysfunctional setting. He had promised himself not to trash



*"Bearing a grudge comes easily to me. I may have a gift for grudges. 'Those who didn't treat me right should be isolated and crushed.' Thank you, Jesus for hearing my prayer. Alleluia. When David gets rolling in some of those Psalms where he's knocking heads together, I can get all misty-eyed."*

the supervisor who was spending quite a bit of time at the persecutor position on the Karpman Triangle. He meditated regularly and modeled relaxation several times a day. When others gathered to eviscerate the boss after work or at lunch, he'd leave to go get some coffee. Finally, he was leaving. He was asked how come this didn't get to him. He said, "Because I don't care that much."

Now, was this a weakness? A strength? Or just being a smart aleck? Maybe a bit of all of them. But he had managed to hold onto his peace (Is 26:3).

I've been thinking about the Tucson congresswoman who was shot in the head. I'm against capital punishment, but if I were her husband and were given opportunity, I'd be tempted to execute the guy who shot her and to do it slowly. Hurt my wife and I'd relish restoring balance to the universe.

So much for reconciliation. I wouldn't want to see the scoundrel, speak with him, understand him, or donate hours in a homeless shelter.

This all shows why I need Jesus and the kinds of things Precious Blood Spirituality talks about. And I need it more deeply and completely than something to sleep through or to refer back to when writing a term paper. The Blood changes things. I need this relationship when nothing is working in my life.

That's why confession is still scheduled each Saturday evening. I also need it, perhaps even more, when I get it in my head that "I" know what "I" am doing. Self takes over, Christ is pushed to one side, and both faith and reason are barred from the discussion. It's time to open the door and let Him in. He's knocking (Rev 3:20).

### *Community, continued from page 4...*

Perhaps we will need to keep in mind that since the Companion movement stands on the three pillars of mission, holiness, and community, we may not slight any one of them without doing harm to the entire structure; we must not, therefore, put our interest in community at the forefront while we ignore the demands of holiness and mission. Harmony, a most desirable end, comes from giving each pillar its due and its share of responsibility.

When we begin to feel the harmony we are working for, we will find ourselves closer to God. When our relationship with others who are under Gaspar's banner becomes a tender and fruitful vine; when our vision of ministry extends beyond what is right before us; and when the Precious Blood, on the cross and in the chalice, becomes the center of our existence, we will know how we as Companions are sustained by the combined strength of the first, the second and the third pillars when they are all standing tall.

*Frances Flanagan is a Precious Blood Companion from St. Joseph, MO.*

## Looking Ahead

May 2-5, 2011

*Provincial Assembly*  
Annunciation Parish  
Kearney MO

June 6-10, 2011

*Installation of Leadership  
and Community Retreat*  
Savior of the World Center  
Kansas City KS

June 25, 2011

*Diaconate Ordination*  
*Mark Yates, C.P.P.S.*  
St. James Parish  
Liberty MO

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## Listening to Advice

Robert McCray

*The way of the fool seems right in his own eyes, but he who listens to advice is wise (Proverbs 12:15).*

Stories about young children and animals teach those who will listen to them. Upon occasion, they teach those who write them. Such stories or parables may or may not have happened. But they could have. Or maybe should have. Their lesson remains very real, regardless. This is one of those stories.

Lynda and I have three grandchildren. As you might imagine, they are perfect. Well, nearly perfect. Let me explain. At seven, Princess Anna wants her own kingdom, and she wants it now. Although her two older brothers are surprisingly gentle with her, she presents as far tougher than any boot—or glass slipper—I have ever seen.

Michael is the middle child. He is pragmatic, practical, and relentlessly realistic. He likes Legos, fixing broken things, and movies. But not homework. Homework beyond the absolutely necessary is viewed at best as being something like an undeserved penance being exacted in spite of his obvious innocence.

What happened the day I attended morning Mass with Joshua, the oldest of the three, may explain him best.

Lynda and I got there early. She found Michael among the swarms of students in the narthex just as his class got there. After eliciting from me a couple of affirmative statements that I knew what I was doing and I knew how to find Joshua, she smiled her Lynda smile and left me in the vortex of hundreds—maybe thousands—of identically dressed and coiffed short people surging around me like some trout farm feeding frenzy.

Joshua was not, however, one of the millions of students in the foyer! At least the ones I saw. I visualized never finding him. I could see myself sitting alone and lonely on the back row during Mass. My scrutiny of almost every non-Joshua face kept returning to two young mothers with their retinue. They, or their doubles,

seemed to be everywhere. I was sizing up which seat to pick and which cluster of grandpas to join.

Then, all at once, Joshua was at my elbow. “Grandpa, you’re late. Granny told me where to find you. Let’s go.” I began to explain being lost amongst short people and young mothers with babies.

He held the door for me as we entered the huge sanctuary. Interestingly, he put his finger to his lips as we started down front to his class. As we negotiated our way along, we kept being blocked by adults in twos and threes. Mostly with energetic, interchangeable pre-schoolers oblivious to the start of Mass being imminent.

Looking back on it, I probably didn’t miss commenting to Joshua on over one or two of those groups we encountered and how loud they were.

We slid into our seats. Joshua smiled the same smile Lynda smiles and said, “You know you have to be quiet in Mass, too.

Don’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Just do that and forgive those people. Actually, maybe they don’t know any better. There’s little anyone can do to silence them, anyway.”

“Thanks Joshua.” I felt very blessed. “You ever thought about being a priest or a deacon?”

He grinned his Joshua grin this time, handed me a hymnal turned to the right page, and knelt to pray.

I followed quietly.

*Bob and his wife Lynda are parishioners at St. James Parish in Liberty, MO.*



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# The Rewards of Volunteering

*Jim & Charlotte Noble*

Taking the opportunity and heeding God's call to a volunteer's lifestyle has added many rewards to this couple's life. When we volunteer outside of our home area of Des Moines, IA we immerse ourselves more fully without distractions. Our efforts over the past 22 years have been to volunteer from one to five months each year, a goal we've achieved for nearly 17 of those years.

We do miss our family and our home back in Johnston. However, we go forth with the blessings of our family, their understanding and support. The telephone and e-mail take on a completely new meaning of correspondence, and so we are always in touch. Working with the poor, the needy, and those asking for help has many rewards in itself.



*An outing on Fisherman's Wharf with friend Najib, an Afghan refugee*

One highlight is meeting and making friends with so many people of different nationalities and cultures from around the world. Currently we are working as Precious Blood Volunteers for three months in the San Francisco Bay area of California. Our home is at the Precious Blood Sonnino house in Berkeley and our work is with Catholic Charities in Oakland. Charlotte is teaching Beginners' English to refugee students from many different countries: Burma, Eritrea, Sudan and the Congo. Jim is working in the Employment Service Office, providing services to refugees and asylum seekers coming into our country with clearance from the United Nations.

Many have been in refugee camps in such countries as Thailand, India, Nepal and Africa, and are unable to return to their home country. Some have been in these camps for over 20 years waiting to be accepted so they can start a new life in a new country. To say our that work as Precious Blood Volunteers—helping these wonderful people find a welcome in their new country of the U.S.—is good is an understatement Not only do we have the opportunity to meet and help the newcomers get settled, but working with the staff of Catholic Charities also broadens our knowledge and understanding. It is a joy working with like minded

and caring people. We work with some staff who are former refugees from Vietnam, Iraq and Laos. They know from firsthand experience what the refugees and asylees need.

For us, living in a different part of the U.S. is a bonus. Here in Berkeley, the mix of people from various cultures is very evident with so many different languages being spoken. Nowhere in the world have we found so many different languages spoken in one geographical location. Our living location in Berkeley offers very good, accessible public transportation. The bus, the BART subway and the ferry make getting to our jobs and recreational locations in the Bay area an enjoyable task. In this part of the country, the beautiful coastal State Highway 1, San Francisco highlights, and the mountains make our free time exciting with the enjoyable activities.

All this has been a great experience, but a highlight is sharing and learning the Precious Blood Spirituality at the Sonnino House. Fathers Dave, Joe, Matt and Jim have been great teachers offering warm hospitality. We are very thankful that we accepted the challenge to be Precious Blood Volunteers.

*Jim and Charlotte Noble are Precious Blood Volunteers living in community with members of Sonnino House. They will return home in April after three months of volunteer service to Catholic Charities of the East Bay.*

*Charlotte and two of her Burmese English students. They, on the left was in the refugee camp for 17 years; Myint is on the right.*



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## Why I Became a Priest

Alan Hartway, C.P.P.S.

On my birthday last year just before Christmas, a gold crown filling fell out of its socket in my mouth. This is one of those liabilities of growing old. It's happened before. I called my dentist to have it glued again back in place. The appointment then was set for the day before Christmas Eve in the morning. I could then chew my Christmas duck with more gusto.

When I finally sat down in the dental chair, after the xrays, the dentist came in for the verdict. It went something like this: "Well, we could perhaps have glued this back, but things have changed with your jaw, your gum line, and your mouth. You'll have to get a new crown." I'd heard this before.

In fact, I've heard it so often, that I had collected a number of gold fillings and crowns which had fallen out over the years. The night before the dental appointment I decided to ransack my desk to find them all and gather them into one place. As it happened I put together a spare handful of them. So I brought them with me to the dentist.

After his glum prospectus for my dental future, I pulled a little container out of my pocket with my old fillings and crowns. I asked him, "What do people do with these?" He said, "Well, some people just leave them here. Some take them to a coin shop where you might get about \$20 or \$40 for that little pile." I retorted rather sharply, "Well, that's not what your charged when you put them in!" He said, "They're not really pure gold, but a alloy or a mix of things. We just kind of use the word "gold" for convenience or shorthand." Again, I came back with, "You know I was not led to understand that at all when you put them in." He asked, "So do you want to just leave them here?" I clearly stated "No!" as I harrumphed myself to the front desk, made an appointment for my new crown, and got myself out of there.

I decided to go the local coin shop. After all, it was right on my way back to the university and my office. I was feeling a bit piqued.

When I got the counter in the coin shop, I brought out my little hoard and inquired as to its value. The man said that in fact they do buy used gold and even dental gold. He said he would weigh it, assess it, and return in a moment with what he could give me.

While I stood there waiting, a coin in the rolling drawer under the counter glass caught my eye. On its little square cardboard holder, it was the single word "Vatican" that grabbed my attention. It was the only such coin from that country in the store. They were all arranged alphabetically.

Soon enough the buyer returned and offered me an amount for the old crowns and fillings. He stated, "I'll give you this much." I was stunned because it was way past the amount predicted by my dentist. It was way more than to make Christmas very nice indeed. I was also very happy that I did not just turn them all over to my dentist. What a big mistake that would have been.

Now newly rich, I asked the coin shop owner if I could see that one Vatican coin. So far I could only see that the obverse was the head with tiara of Pope John XXIII. This alone made me interested, because he was pope when I was in 8th grade and made my decision to attend del Bufalo Seminary in Liberty, MO in the Fall of 1963 when it first opened. I remember reading several years later under the recommendation of Fr. Joseph Jakubiak, who was assigned to be my spiritual director, John XXIII's autobiography, *The Journal of a Soul*. I was very impressed and moved. But before that, it was during 8th grade, on October 11, 1962, that Vatican II opened. I was taught at the time by the very good Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration from LaCrosse, WI. They stopped school that day so that we could



watch the opening session of the Vatican Council on television.

The coin dealer handed me the coin from the display case, and I immediately turned it over. I was delighted. On the reverse of the coin, I discovered that it was minted to commemorate that same opening day, October 11, 1962. It portrays the council opened up to the viewer as if to the whole world which was looking in. Above the pope in the center, I could see Jesus and Mary, and above them God the Creator, and hovering over all the Holy Spirit (I think then she was still the Holy Ghost) as a dove with outstretched wings and rays of light like grace raining down over all. It presents a remarkable vision of the Church. Organized, in union with God present, enlightened by grace, and open to the world in front of it. This was an incredible, and the time, a very new and fresh vision. It was called “aggiornamento” in Italian. It excited the world and especially the Church. It captured my imagination and directed a choice for life.

That’s why I became a priest. Well, that and my blessed grandparents’ faith, and the priests and sisters who educated me. I fear that today some of that new and fresh spirit, that sense of grace, and the insights of the Council are being lost to a more skeptical and fearful world of hardened hearts. The council will be 50 years old next year and only really just beginning its work in the Church. It would be an incredibly sad loss if it all just were forgotten in the current ecclesial culture which honors some wacky *bildungsroman*\* of AD 1217—which is a complete fantasy. I believe that the vision is still there, waiting to be lived with all its grace and strength. This vision moves me still. I believe it still moves our Society of Apostolic Life.

Needless to say, I bought the coin for a Christmas present (for \$22.00) but I look upon its immense value for an entirely different reason. It feels great at my age to be reminded so happily of my youth.

I did learn one other thing. I learned that good things can actually fall out of my mouth. That’s always a good thing to know. Newly rich and enriched, I also had a very fine Christmas after all—to say nothing of the amazing life as a priest for the last 35 years.

*\*A novel that traces the development of a character from childhood to adulthood, through a quest for identity that leads him or her to maturity.-ed*

*Chili, continued from page 22...*

invited them into their home and their hearts. Most of our guys have only been invited into a gang, but now they were invited into as one said, “a lovely college.” Another said, “It opened my eyes to bigger things.”

Can you imagine the amazement and joy of these young men? They felt respected—maybe for the first time—by others, except in our Precious Blood Chicago Center. This is restorative; this gave them a voice, a feeling of worth and a sense of crossing over from death to life, to hope. For many of our guys, they wonder if they will live to see college even if they had the opportunity. They plan funerals more than futures; they see more death than life.

After this total experience of fun and information, connectedness and circles, we were on our way home. We were all tired, but all knew we had had a life changing experience. We were given a reason to move on and up—the guys proudly held in their hands a college admissions packet, drank from their St. Joe cup and looked college bound in their St. Joe sweatshirts. Go Pumas Go!

I hope each of you reading this article can feel what we felt, and rejoice with us that these young men—even though not all will go to college—do now look to a future not of destruction but of hope. Actually, two have already sent in their applications. This experience helped them to see that they could break out of a cycle of violence and poverty and give a positive twist to Gaspar’s words in their situation: “I can, I must, I will!”

*Sr. Donna Liette is a staff person at PBMR.  
Jonathan Little works there part time,  
and is a college student.*



## Anyone For Deer Chili?

Jonathan Little & Donna Liette, C.P.P.S.

E-mails were shooting back and forth from Rensselaer to Chicago as preparations were being made for the PBMR annual youth retreat. This year Saint Joseph College generously agreed to offer us their facilities and personnel. Our guys sensed something good was about to happen so, they began to sign up...one...two...three...and then eight! Sunday, February 20th came, and nine showed for the trip—YES! Despite the rain and some snow (no, the blizzard was history), the journey was on—nine young men and Dave, Denny and Donna.

These guys had already caught the Precious Blood spirituality from our Chicago Center, but it was obvious that it flowed from Chicago to Rensselaer because that same spirit of hospitality and respect could be felt coming from every person that spoke with us, served us and/or invited us into their lives and their college.

Jonathan, was one of the nine that traveled from the gang banging, violent streets of South Chicago to the peaceful, quiet, countryside of Rensselaer, Indiana. Jonathan tells of his experience:

“Hi my name is Jonathan Little and being part of the Precious Blood Center is one of the most beneficial things going on for me right now. Thanks to Fr. Kelly and Fr. Denny I have met lots of important people that have a passion for helping others. They’ve helped me in plenty of ways for example helping do what’s necessary to get back on track and in school. They took some friends and me to Saint Joseph’s College in Indiana; it was a wonderful experience. Listening and talking to some of the students and staff really inspired me to strive to be successful. Visiting Saint Joseph’s broadened my view on life because of the friendly environment, the beautiful campus, and the inspiring lectures gave to us. I met some wonderful people during the

visit, but there’s one person that stood out the most and that was Br. Tim. He welcomed us with opened arms and it remained that way throughout our visit. The day came for us to go home, but I didn’t want to leave because it felt like I was at home. I talked about Saint Joseph’s for a week straight at work, at home and at my current school. I learned a lot just from that day and a half, but the most important was that despite your background or ethnic group you can be successful if you work towards it. There’s going to be some struggles along the way. You have to look past them, open your eyes and see that there are doors to be opened, paths to be taken. It’s all about which path you decide to take and what door you decide to open. Whatever you set your mind to, you can achieve. Overall my visit to Saint Joseph’s College was exciting, educational and fun. I would love to visit or maybe even attend next year. Thank you. Jonathan Little.”



I, Donna, often walk with a heavy heart as I see “kids”—yes, they are so young and have already felt the victimization of society, the fallout of poverty, family disintegration, poor education. But this experience lifted me, because I saw in the eyes of these young men, a ray of hope, a sense that I could do this, I could go to college and actually succeed.

It was a wonderful experience of Precious Blood collaboration. Brother Tim fixed the “I want your recipe” chili—beef not deer. The members of the Precious Blood family ministering at St. Joe and the staff and students offered their special hospitality, nice rooms, good food and supporting presence. St. Joe college moved prison bars and gates that keep youth like ours locked up and

See *Chili*, continued on page 21...



In 1963, Pope Paul VI designated Good Shepherd Sunday (the Fourth Sunday of Easter) as “World Day of Prayer for Vocations.” This year it falls on May 15th. It is a good opportunity to bring vocation awareness to people, as was Vocation Awareness Week in January. We all need reminders every now and then, especially in the busy world that most of us are a part of. I write this to allow you to plan on addressing this in your ministry.

As we celebrate this day, we recall that a vocation is a calling from God to a special way of life. There are three major vocational calls: marriage, single life and religious (priest, brother, or sister). I do realize a religious vocation can be broken down into several other options. I remind all of us who have chosen a vocation to renew our commitment to the calling God has for us and live out our baptismal call.

This World Day of Prayer for Vocations encourages people to listen more closely to the Good Shepherd’s vocational call in our own time. I want to share with you many things that can be done on this special day. The first priority is taking time to pray. This prayer could be done communally (the Eucharist or Prayer Service) or by oneself. Other possibilities include setting up a vocation environment in the vestibule or narthex; using music relating to call or journeying with God; using general intercessions with vocation themes; inclusion of vocational call in the homily; us of thanksgiving prayers for those who have chosen a vocation; hand out vocation prayer cards.

All three vocations are important, but I would suggest people invite those who have not chosen a vocation to consider a religious vocation. We thank you for your support and encouragement to people to consider a vocation as a priest or brother of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. If Sharon Crall or I can be of any help, please let us know.



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## My Back Pages

*Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.*

“It is a terrible thing to see and have no vision.”

*Helen Keller*

Consider the following. A brother and a sister. They have the same mother, were born on the same day, same hour, in the same year. Yet they are not twins. How can this be? Actually, the answer is as plain as day—they are part of a set of triplets—yet most people don’t see it. It’s because they stop thinking too soon, before they see everything that’s there, before they see all the possibilities.

On the Second Sunday of Lent this year we heard God’s call to Abraham to leave what was familiar to him and set out to a new place. In the gospel, Jesus takes some of his disciples up a mountain and invites them to see him, the world, and their future differently, in a new way.

Abraham surely protested (Sarah and I are too old), and the disciples liked the mountaintop so much that they wanted to stay there. But...we don’t get to stay where we are—except at our own risk. (As the old saying goes, “The difference between a rut and a grave is about six feet.”)

Abraham didn’t get to stay where he was. Neither did the apostles—nor did Jesus, for that matter. The journey of catechumens during these weeks can be powerful reminder of this truth as well.

The experience on the mountaintop gave the disciples new vision and a different view (this is true of many mountaintop stories in scripture). Seeing differently means acting in new ways. Limited vision means limited action. I am reminded of the mother who found her 5 year old son sitting on the edge of his bed one morning, fully dressed and crying. She asked him why he was upset. He responded, “I finally figured out how to tie my shoes myself.” “That’s great. But why cry about it?” “Because I’m pretty sure that from now on, I’ll have to do it myself every day!”

Once we look, once we learn, we are never the same. I picture Jesus inviting the disciples to come up the mountain with the words, “Come with me, I have something to show you.” As you read through the diverse collection of articles in this issue, consider how each author in his or her own way experienced a kind of new vision or insight—and imagine how that might lead to change for them—or yourself, given a similar experience.

During this season of Lent, a time when we as a province are also risking to look beyond and be open to the future, perhaps we can resist the temptation to stop thinking too soon. We can see all the possibilities, despite the uncertainties and seeming risks. Before they came back down the mountain, Jesus touched the disciples and said, “Rise, and do not be afraid.”

Two of the most common and frequent words in scripture are “come” and “go”—or some variation. Called and then sent. The pattern of discipleship. We will reach out as far as we are willing to look—and see. Beyond all our material comforts and our “things are fine the way they are” comforts, our fears and anxieties, our mountaintops and our low points. We don’t get to stay in any of those places for long. God has something else to show us. Take a look.

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