

THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 26 No. 7 • March 2018





Let us serve God with holy joy.

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

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Cover photo: Mrs. Wingard, member of CRIC, works on the Mother’s Mural at the new Mother Brunner House at PBM in Chicago

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

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

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

THE New Wine PRESS

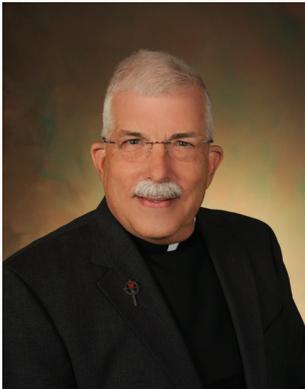
Missionaries of the Precious Blood
Kansas City Province

Precious Blood Center
P.O. Box 339
Liberty, MO 64069-0339
816.781.4344
www.preciousbloodkc.org

Editor
Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.
rbayukcpps@mac.com

Layout & Design
Margaret Haik
communications@preciousbloodkc.org

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The Power to Choose

by Fr. Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S., Vice-provincial Director

Christopher de Vinck in his book, *The Power of the Powerless*, tells the following story. He writes:

One spring afternoon my five-year-old son David and I were planting raspberry bushes along the side of the garage. A neighbor joined us for a few moments. David pointed to ground. "Look, Daddy! What's that?" I stopped talking with my neighbor and looked down. "A beetle," I said. David was impressed and pleased with the discovery of this fancy, colorful creature. My neighbor lifted his foot and stepped on the insect, giving his shoe an extra twist in the dirt. "That ought to do it," he laughed. David looked up at me, waiting for an explanation, a reason. That night, just before I turned off the light in his bedroom, David whispered, "I liked that beetle, Daddy." "I did too," I whispered back.

De Vinck concludes the story by saying, "We have the power to choose."

Yes, we do. In the first reading for Thursday after Ash Wednesday, we heard Moses speaking to his people: "Today I have set before you life and prosperity, death and doom.... I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the Lord, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him."

Just three months ago I wrote the following words, referring to comments made by someone after the Las Vegas shooting in which he called those deaths the price of freedom: "I fear it has become the freedom to not give a darn. A few tweets about prayers for the victims and then on with life. Really caring about this would require a commitment to solve the problem. A very serious problem we have with gun violence.... More than 33,000 people die from gun violence in this county each year. This will continue. As will the hand-wringing and the unwillingness to address the problem.... I don't expect anything to happen soon, if ever. Until it does, we will witness more of the same carnage. And tweets about 'thoughts and prayers' and the 'price of freedom.'"

Universal background checks (not yet a reality) were then and are now supported by a huge majority of Americans (97% in Quinnipiac poll on 2-20-18; the same poll showed 66% support for stricter gun laws, the highest ever). The NRA is no longer an organization that advocates and educates for responsible gun ownership and use. It is instead primarily a powerful lobbying group for the companies that manufacture weapons, giving millions of dollars to help elect (and control) politicians. (An aside:

As I write this the NRA has been silent on Twitter for nearly a week since the Parkland shooting, the longest that account has been silent since early 2015. Pardon me if I am suspicious that they are just waiting until things cool down before business as usual, namely, opposing every single attempt at even the most basic reform. This has happened after every mass shooting.)

But we have the power to choose, and maybe, just maybe, this time it will be different.

But we forget so quickly. Does anyone remember the name Bailey Holt? Preston Cope? They were the two 15-year-old students killed by a shooter at a high school in Benton, Kentucky on January 24th. Eighteen others were injured. It became the 11th school-related shooting in the first 25 days of 2018. It had a “shelf life” of about five or six news cycles and then was gone. We moved on to some other outrage.

Dr. Sterling Haring, who treated many of the wounded in the Kentucky shooting said in a *Newsweek* interview at the time, “You don’t suffer some of the wounds these patients suffered and just move on with life. They will have this for the rest of their lives. I can’t go into details, but there are wounds that have changed their lives. Their life as they knew it is now completely over.”

Haring commented on how the shooting affected him personally because he has seen what politicians do after these deadly incidents—namely, nothing. At the end of his shift, Haring said he walked outside to his car, got in and began to sob. Shortly afterward, while still in his car, he posted on Twitter, “Today, I cared for victims of Kentucky School Shooting as they arrived via helicopter. They looked like my kids and yours. All I could think about was the Thoughts and Prayers that would be tweeted from politicians who will do nothing to stop the next one. I’ve never felt so sick.”

And then, exactly three weeks later, Valentine’s Day/Ash Wednesday happened at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

In what has become for many an iconic image of this mass shooting, a woman with a cross of ashes on her forehead and a heart shaped pendant around her neck embraces and seeks to console a friend at the scene of the shooting.

At some point earlier in the day, someone had traced that cross on this woman’s forehead, and she might have heard the words “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Little did she know how soon she would be reminded of our solidarity in such a horrifying way.

continued on page 4



Leadership, continued from page 3

Fritz Bauerschmidt, referring to that photo on the blog *Pray Tell*, wrote, “Every Ash Wednesday we are reminded of our mortality and of our sin, and of the mysterious connection between them. But yesterday we were reminded in a particularly horrific way of the covenant that we have made with dust, the promise that our race has made to serve death, and the imperative to turn from the covenant of sin and death and to embrace the covenant of love and life that

is offered to us in Jesus Christ. Like the women in the picture, we who are marked with mortality cling to one another, and we cling to the hope that even the ashes of death can be washed away by the blood and water that flows from the side of Christ.”

“Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live...”

Lent is a time to listen to the voices that surround us and make choices that lead to life and growth—for ourselves and for others. What are the voices that surround us? Gratefully, many of them right now are high school students. They have had enough and they are speaking out, and I pray that they keep speaking until we hear them and respond with change. We have the power to choose.

I invite you to listen to some of the many who have and continue to speak out.

They say that criminals get guns no matter what laws you have in place. That might be true, but we don't have to encourage them to get those guns. We can make it harder...and we can prevent some seriously nasty crimes and some seriously indescribable tragedies from occurring. And if somebody doesn't want to

do that at this point, that's pathetic.... We keep telling them that if they accept this blood money, they are against the children.... You're either funding the killers, or you're standing with the children. The children who have no money. We don't have jobs, so we can't pay for your campaign. We would hope that you have the decent morality to support us at this point.... Every single person up here today, all these people should be home grieving. But instead we are up here standing together

because if all our government and President

can do is send thoughts and

prayers, then it's

time for victims to

be the change that we need

to see....In

Florida, to buy

a gun you do not need a permit,

you do not need a gun license, and once

you buy it you do not need to register it. You do

not need a permit to carry a concealed rifle or shotgun. You can buy

as many guns as you want at one time.

(Emma Gonzalez, Parkland)

It's absolutely terrifying, the fact that he immediately got up and started talking about how gun control is not the solution. Every answer is the solution at this point because we haven't tried any of them.... If you can't get elected without taking money from child murderers, why are you running?... We've seen a government shutdown, we've seen tax reform, but nothing to save our children's lives. Are you kidding me? You think now is the time to focus on the past and not the future to prevent the deaths of thousands of other children? You sicken me.

(David Hogg, Parkland).

I'm asking—no, demanding—we take action now. Why? Because at the end of the day, the students at my school felt one shared experience—our politicians abandoned us by failing to keep guns out of schools. But

this time, my classmates and I are going to hold them to account. This time we are going to pressure them to take action.... I'm just a high school student, and I do not pretend to have all of the answers. However, even in my position, I can see that there is desperate need for change—change that starts by folks showing up to the polls and voting all those individuals who are in the back pockets of gun lobbyists out of office. Please do it for me. Do it for my fellow classmates. We can't vote, but you can, so make it count. (Cameron Kasky, Parkland)

Just like those innocent teenagers in Florida, my brother and his classmates and teachers were killed doing exactly what they were supposed to be doing: going to school. They were murdered in the very place that was supposed to keep them safe, and they were gunned down with a military-grade assault rifle that had fallen into the wrong hands.... My brother and his classmates had a right to life. They had a right to safety.... All of that was violently torn from them, and these basic human rights have been torn from thousands of other Americans in the years since. The worst part? Congress has actively chosen to do nothing to keep it from happening again.

Not this time. I can feel that this time is different.... They [students] are giving a voice to the voiceless. And they are demanding change in a way we've never seen before. They are calling out politicians who have accepted hefty donations from the National Rifle Association (including the president). They are organizing marches to demand action from American politicians on the gun violence epidemic. They are turning their grief into action so that no more parents, siblings, or friends have to experience the despair and anguish of losing a loved one to senseless gun violence. (Danielle Vabner, whose six-year-old brother Noah was killed in his first-grade classroom in Sandy Hook, Connecticut in 2012)

I hope that this time it is different. Everyone will need to keep speaking out, otherwise this latest horror will be eclipsed by the next one—while the status quo is maintained and the NRA gods continue to receive their sacrifices.

Gabino Zavala, Province Justice and Peace Director, in response to the latest shooting, responded in a statement to members and Companions: “On Ash Wednesday, we were once again shaken to our

core by another shooting in one of our schools. This is the 18th school shooting that our children have had to experience just since the start of this year. Is this becoming the new normal for our children? Is this insanity of our society around the issue of guns becoming so commonplace?” He then invited us to revisit and remember our Corporate Stance on Gun Violence. The following is part of that document.

“Motivated by the Blood of Christ and called to be ministers of reconciliation, we, the Missionaries and Companions of the Precious Blood, Kansas City Province, affirm our belief in the sacredness of life. Present laws making it possible for uncontrolled and limited access to weapons and ammunition of any amount and any type do not foster a culture of life. Local, state and national legislators must pass reasonable laws which will curb the culture of violence tearing apart the fabric of our nation. The ‘cry of the Blood’ (Genesis 4: 1) demands we do no less. We come together to confront evil manifested by the culture of violence. Bonded in charity, we seek to create a safe environment for our children by promoting a culture of life and peace. We advocate measures that reflect our founder, St. Gaspar’s message, ‘try to make every effort to bring everything to a peaceful solution.’”

We have the power to choose. As John Pavlovitz wrote in response to the ongoing carnage, “America is losing something important: we’re losing our outrage when children are murdered with guns. We’re losing the ability to be rightly moved to sickness at what we’ve become. America needs to recover its outrage. It needs to recover its compassionate heart. It needs to recover its soul.... We need to face our gun problem—and yes, it is a *gun* problem. It is other things too; a mental health problem and a violence problem but make no mistake it is predominately a gun problem.”

We have the power to choose. In the words of Isaiah, on the Friday after Ash Wednesday, “This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.”

We have the power to not turn our backs on our own. ✠



Strength and Serenity: The Women’s Mural Comes to Life

by Leah Landry, *Precious Blood Volunteer at PBMR*

“The women of PBMR.” Not a phrase you hear often at a Center started by four priests as a safe haven for young men. But over the past few years, the women in the neighborhood have become vital members of the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation community. On Saturday, February 3, these women gathered together to christen the

new Mother Brunner House—the Women’s Center—with a mural that depicts the strength, serenity, and power of the women of PBMR.

The project included women from three programs at PBMR: the women of the advocacy group Community and Relatives of Illinois’ Incarcerated



Children (CRIC), the women from the Mothers' Healing Circles who have lost children to incarceration and gun violence, and the Young Women's Group, the newest program for women.

With the help and direction of PBMR's teaching artist, Alberto Alaniz, the women gave suggestions of the words and images that come to mind when they think of the women of PBMR. The answers were as varied as the women themselves: unity, strength, love, hearts and stars, peace signs, mother and child.

Then representatives from each program consulted with Alberto and together the group came up with the image for the wall. A few weeks later, over 20 women gathered at the Mother Brunner House to paint in the image.

You'd think a room full of 20 women, ranging from ages 6 to 80, painting a huge space with lots of color would be a chaotic scene, but the space had a peaceful, collaborative, and happy feel.

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Fear, Narcissism, and Another Way

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

The mental health of the person who occupies the White House has been under much scrutiny lately. Not a few mental health professionals have suggested that his behavior resembles someone with narcissistic personality disorder. A narcissist is someone who cannot or will not view reality from another's viewpoint. Such a person tends to evaluate everything only in regard to how it affects him/her. A narcissist often needs the focus (good or bad) to be on them, because that is how they gauge their importance.

Whether or not the person in the White House is actually a narcissist, his focus on himself and his achievements seems to have given many others permission to openly engage in the same dynamic. Of course, he is not the first to exhibit this quality. His election may have been only the logical culmination of the steady growth of that egocentric, narcissistic dynamic in our country over the last number of years.

There are a number of factors that push us human beings toward being self-centered. They tend to be intertwined, and most have fear as the root motivator.

Greed can be described as the epitome of self-centeredness, and it is often about wealth and power. A person caught in this trap is fearful of losing control, so they have to get more and more to feel secure. But in this age of nuclear threats and terrorism, it is almost impossible to feel totally in control, so the wealthy and powerful focus on amassing more and more wealth and power for themselves, trying to allay their fears. This often results in costly and useless battles among those with power, whether on the battle field, in congress, or elsewhere.

When some amass power, control, and wealth, it necessarily means that others will not have the same power and control and will certainly have less wealth. For these people, the fear is that they don't matter or aren't important. However, the greatest fear is that something of what they hold important won't survive, be it their values, their freedom, their culture, their religious practices, or even they themselves. In response, we see the rise of the gun culture as people trust only themselves for protection. We see sometimes violent protests as people who don't have power and control

take to the streets to be heard. We see religious terrorists who brutally kill people because they are afraid that the cultures or governments in power will endanger their religion and its practices. We see inner city youth joining gangs to feel important because there are few other opportunities in their environment to find that. We see people who voted for the kind of president we have now because they feared no one in government was listening to them, so they wanted to "shake things up."

It is unrealistic to think that we humans can be totally other-centered. We have an instinct for survival and self-preservation, without which we would probably not be around long. But we also have the ability to understand that seeing to the needs of others is also crucial to our own survival, security, and happiness. That understanding is possible only when we don't let fear run our lives.

Jesus often told his followers "Do not be afraid." Why? Because he knew that fear is what prevents people from taking the risk to love. Managing our fear is thus the first step in letting God's love flow through us more smoothly.

As a Precious Blood community with our particular charisms, we are in a good position to help people manage fear, and thus minimize the movement toward narcissism and self-centeredness. Our work of reconciliation brings together those who experience only opposition and division, in hopes that familiarity might breed trust and unity. Using Circle conversations is a specific and powerful way to help people hear and understand that we are much more similar than we are different as human beings. It is very difficult not to feel compassion when hearing another's heartfelt life story.

Our preferential option for the poor and our ministry to the marginalized help people know they are important, that they count. This can help them resist finding their importance in less constructive ways. It can also be an example to others who "forget" that the powerless and ignored are still part of the human family.

Our ministry of the Word can be a powerful tool to invite people away from narcissism and toward living more as the one Body of Christ. To imitate Jesus by

serving rather than being served needs to be up front and center in our preaching. The Paschal Mystery—dying to one’s self to bring life—is the antithesis of self-centeredness and needs to be the core of our preaching and our lives. This promise of New Life can dispel fear.

In a time such as ours, where fear and “me/us first” seem to be the norm, our work of reconciliation and proclaiming all as part of the same family may seem strangely out of place. Sometimes we may be actively opposed and criticized. Hopefully we won’t let our fear stop us from promoting/living our charisms, compassionately speaking the truth, and mirroring the Love of God which brings all together. ✦

Mural, continued from page 7

Mrs. Wingard, the eldest and wisest in the group and a member of CRIC, shared her reflections on the day: “Just to remember that I put a paint brush on the wall and Fr. Kelly and Julie and Sr. Donna are gonna walk through there and see the mural and I thought ‘Wow, I really feel a part of that’...And then to think about them getting the house and putting something on the wall that actually reaches out to the community. [The mural] shows families coming together and it’s not just one ethnicity. It’s not just black, not just white, not just Latino: it’s everyone coming together for a common cause, for our children, for our community.”

Shumeka Taylor, a representative of the Young Women’s Group, said that putting the handprints and

quotes on the wall was her favorite part. “The hands was so nice. We all who had been doing the part of the wall and engraving our names and a nice quote and that’s something that’s going to live forever in the house and I like that.” Shumeka added “From the older women to the young women, I truly enjoyed it. The older lady put the French braid in my hair while I painted the rest of the mural because they didn’t want paint to get in my 26 inches. I greatly appreciated everything that went on that day.”

Aldena Brown, a member of the Mothers’ Healing Circles, felt Helen Keller’s quote “Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much” captured the essence of the day. “That day of the painting felt good. Everyone working together, good laughs, music, and food! That moment was like nothing mattered. Painting that mural was everything, just being a part of something so meaningful. That gave my heart joy and peace in that moment. My mind drifted to a great place pushing that paintbrush. Yes, I must say that will be a day I’ll never forget! I was a part of that painting coming to life! I’m very thankful!”

The women of PBMR are leaving their legacy all over PBMR and the neighborhood, from the relationships they make to the steps they take towards their goals to the beautiful mural that will greet all the visitors of the Center. From now on, every person who walks through the doors of the Mother Brunner House will know that the women in the community are an integral part of PBMR: strong, unified, and here to stay. ✦
Creators of the Mother’s Mural; Leah Landry is center, front row.





Precious Blood Volunteers' Orientation, July 2017, Leah Landry, John Lee, Hector Avitia and Lota Ofodile

God Chose You, Remember That

by Lota Ofodile, Precious Blood Volunteer, Kansas City, Missouri

There's an old story that has been circulating in my family for years now, since I was born—the tale of how I got my name. Legend has it that my grandfather wanted to name me Raluchukwu (which means “Choose God” in my native language, Igbo) but that changed after a little conversation.

Interesting fact: I grew up being part of a small Catholic community called *The Neocatechumenal Way*. Each year, Andrea and his wife Francesca, a nice Italian missionary couple and the leaders of our group, would make their way down to Nigeria from Rome with a new priest and seminarian and stay for a few months. They lived right next door. (So just in case some of you, like most of my friends and colleagues at the clinic, are all wondering how I am so comfortable living with Fr. Dick and Fr. Garry, it's because I have lived with priests for years).

Andrea was in the country when I was born, and apparently after he heard I was going to be called Raluchukwu, naturally he asked what it meant. Once he found out, he said, and I paraphrase, “You can't choose God; he has already chosen you. You just have to remember that.” That was how Lota came about. My first name, Lotachukwu, means “Remember God.”

Funny story, right? And who knows if that's exactly how it happened? It doesn't matter now because I have owned it, and every time I think about that story I realize how God shows himself to us in the most unexpected ways. Sometimes, the most incredible experiences happen to us when we least expect it.

At exactly this time last year, I had just graduated college and had no idea where my life was headed. I was lost and afraid. I had no job lined up.

I had applied to a few places, but nothing seemed tangible. I couldn't apply to medical school because I owed my college some tuition and therefore I couldn't get my transcripts. Being an international student, especially in Trump's America, that was a very scary time. I had pretty much accepted that I might end up moving back to Nigeria. Then Precious Blood Volunteers happened.

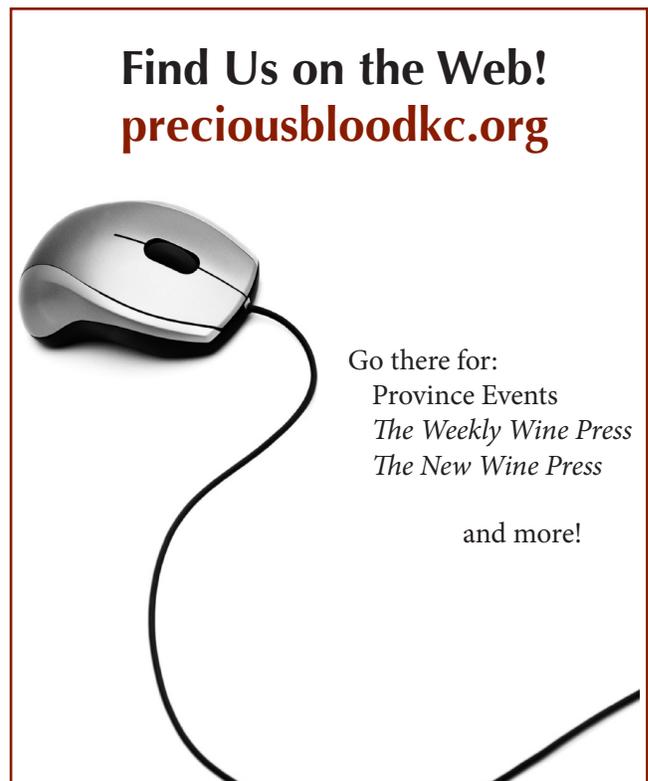
Growing up in my very Catholic family, my grandfather made sure we knew that helping others, especially those less privileged than we are, was just as important as prayer and going to Mass. So naturally, after about 10 years of Jesuit secondary and college education, garnished with volunteering experiences here and there, I toyed with the idea of a year of service. I had heard about the Catholic Volunteer Network from a close friend who was just completing her year of service, so I put up my profile. I wasn't even sure which group or what location I was particularly interested in. The very next day, I got an email from Tim Deveney, the Director of Precious Blood Volunteers. At first, I didn't think too much of it, just a really good recruiter who knows his job, right? But whenever I reflect on my time here, I realize that this was just another instance of God choosing me.

When I think about my orientation week, one thing stands out: prophetic voices. I remember all of us being somewhat confused and asking Tim to clarify what "prophetic voices" meant, and it basically came down to the ways and people with which God tries to get through to us. At least that's how I've chosen to interpret it. It's the #47 bus driver who has to sit through long hours of driving the same route everyday with all kinds of interesting characters, being part of conversations she'd probably rather not have if she did not have to be there. Patience. It's John Lee, my ex-housemate and fellow volunteer who picked out monthly challenges to make the most out of his experience and ended up starting a podcast that is currently on iTunes (I have never met anyone so insistent and intentional about self-development). It's one of my patients at the clinic, who I'm pretty confident is/was part of a gang, who came back just before leaving to say thank you for making him feel comfortable and cheering him up after he cried to me while I was taking his vitals. He was just like me! A person with feelings who cries when he gets emotional. Gratitude and oneness.

At the beginning, I was mostly concerned with what and how best I would be contributing to the people I would encounter during my service year. But this experience has turned out to be much more rewarding than I ever imagined. I have gotten to meet the most amazing set of people who are dedicated to living the best versions of themselves in the Precious Blood community. I have made tremendous strides in my personal spiritual journey. I spend most of my Sundays as part of the St. Francis Xavier Parish 10:30 a.m. Mass choir. And I will be coming out of this service year with a full-time job at the KC CARE Clinic, God willing.

I am so grateful that God has once again chosen me—to be part of this wonderful community and to have this life-changing experience. I sincerely hope and pray that all of us are more attentive to the ways in which God is continuously calling and choosing us to be better people.

(Oh, and just for the record, my family stuck both with names. My birth certificate actually has Lotachukwu Raluchukwu written on it. I have two first names! LOL!) ✦



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Register at info@pbrenewalcenter.org or 816.415.3745

For details: pbrenewalcenter.org/events-news.aspx

March 1, 6:00—8:30 PM Art Journaling as a Spiritual Practice led by Renee Bhatia

March 10, 9:00 AM—3:30 PM Your Own Contemplative Walk with Jesus through His Passion: A Lenten Day of Prayer led by Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S.

March 15th, 6:00—8:30 PM Growing in Awareness of Celtic Spirituality presented by Sr. Therese Elias, OSB

March 20, 6:00—7:45 PM Making Room for New Life: A Spring Equinox Celebration led by Fr. Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S.

March 24th, 8:30 AM—4:00 PM; March 25, 8:30 AM—5:00PM A Veteran Retreat: We Were Called to Serve Then and Now led by Fr. Ron Will, Fr. Gary Richmeier, Kathy Keary, Ann Roberts (Navy), and John Kopp (Navy)



PRECIOUS BLOOD
Renewal Center

a ministry of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood 

2130 St. Gaspar Way
Liberty, MO 64068
pbrenewalcenter.org



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

- St. Gaspar del Bufalo



Missionaries of the Precious Blood



Cincinnati Province
cpps-preciousblood.org
vocation@cpps-preciousblood.org



Kansas City Province
preciousbloodkc.org
vocations@preciousbloodkc.org

THE **New Wine** PRESS
Precious Blood Center
P.O. Box 339
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Contact Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S.,

vocations@preciousbloodkc.org for more information.