



THE NEW WINE PRESS

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

SOME ASSEMBLY NEEDED

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

The Kansas City Province held its 33rd Provincial Assembly on April 12–14 at Annunciation Parish in Kearney, MO. The gathering began with a social and dinner on Monday evening, followed by a prayer service remembering the deceased members, amici and companions of the province. We were assisted in our prayer by the Mata-chines dancers from Sacred Heart-Guadalupe Parish in Kansas City, MO.

Tuesday morning, Fr. Steve Bevans, S.V.D., a professor at CTU, gave a presentation titled *Mission as Prophetic Dialogue*. As a followup to his presentation, we spent Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning listening to the various offices and ministries of the province give oral reports which complemented their previously published written reports. Each one spoke of their ministry in the context of two questions which were prompted by the earlier talk on mission: Where do you see the clearest signs of life in this ministry? and, What needs to be done to enhance this ministry's growth in the future?

Wednesday afternoon we gathered for table conversation, during which we surfaced values that we hold as essential for carrying out our mission, living our spirituality and sharing community life. This session concluded with members of the leadership team speaking about what they had heard as they listened for a clearer sense of what the community is thinking regarding our present and future mission.

At the Tuesday evening Eucharist, a number of companions made first covenants and others renewed their covenants. At the end of the liturgy, Br. Nick Renner was presented with a gift from the province and a special blessing in recognition of his four years of service as Director of Companions.

At the Wednesday afternoon Eucharist we celebrated Definitive Incorporation for Mark Yates. We were pleased to welcome to the celebration members of Mark's family and also some members and candidates from the Cincinnati Province. At the banquet which followed, we honored our two jubilarians, Fr. Al Herber (60 years of ordination) and Fr. Bill Dineen (50 years of incorporation). Neither was able to be present, but we toasted them with numerous and memorable stories. At the conclusion of the banquet, the 2010 Precious Blood scholarships were awarded to 11 young people, four of whom were able to be present.

To help you get a better flavor of the assembly, this issue contains summaries of the office reports, quotes from Steve Bevan's talk (the full text is on our website), reflections from several participants, more information about the scholarship recipients and our newest member, along with many photos.



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LEADERSHIP NOTES

Decisions & Choices

Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S.

A long time ago in another life, I taught high school religion. I still remember one particular exercise we had the students do. Each student was to imagine being the pilot of the first Space Shuttle airliner transporting people from Earth to Mars. The passengers included a wide variety of people: a famous actor, a woman who was pregnant, a well known politician, a family with 3 small children, a priest, a brain surgeon, a person with terminal cancer, etc. During this imaginary, futuristic flight, a problem arises with the system supplying oxygen to the passengers. It is determined that there is enough oxygen to enable only half the passengers to survive the trip. As the pilot, each student was to decide who he/she would save and who would be jettisoned into space. If no choice was made, all the passengers would suffocate.

This rather macabre scenario was meant to help students examine and prioritize the values by which they make decisions. For example, they would have to decide if the skills of the brain surgeon were more important to them than the work of the politician, and if the life of an unborn child was more important than that of an adult. Of course all the students wanted to save all the passengers. But they were able to identify which values were most important to them only when they were forced to choose whom to save.

Our Provincial Assembly in April focused on mission, which can be defined as what we do and why we do it. When asked why they do something, most people will say something about their values, e.g., because it is economical, because it is what Jesus would do, because it will get me more money, etc.

At the assembly we named many values which guide our decisions. We named values like honesty, the importance of prayer, inclusivity, respect, the sanctity of life, humility, compassion, and many others. These are all aspects of the one main Christian value—love. No one would argue against basing our decisions on any and all of these values.

Unfortunately, in choosing what to do, life often puts us in the position of the students in the Space Shuttle example. We find ourselves having to choose how and whom to love, knowing that in doing so, we are choosing how and whom not to love. For example, if I give money to the relief services for the earthquake victims in Haiti, I have chosen not to give that money to the victims of the earthquake in Chile. Consciously or unconsciously, we make such decisions based on which values are most important to us in that situation.

As provincial leadership, we are charged with making decisions about what we do as a province. But what values should guide those decisions? It would be easy to say that those decisions should be guided by the values we named at the assembly,



Fr. Garry Richmeier getting things started

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Missionaries of the Precious Blood
Kansas City Province
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 refunding. We accept and encourage unsolicited manuscripts and letters to the editor.

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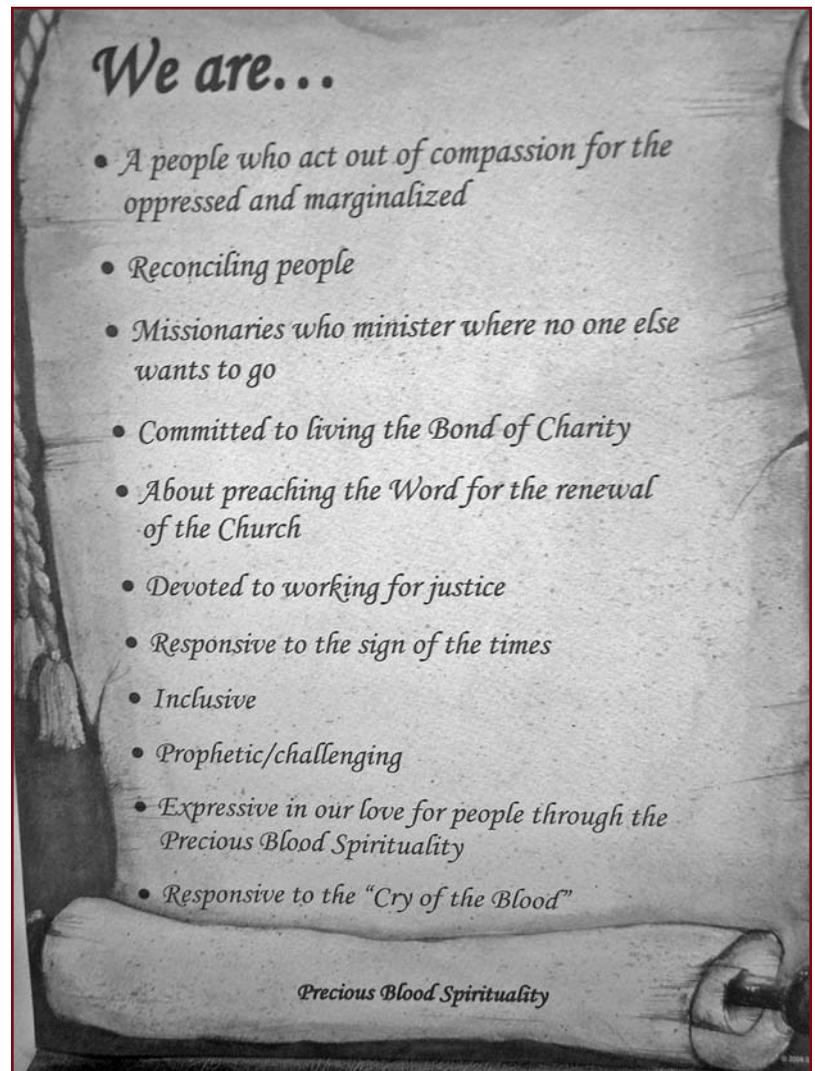
like compassion. But simply saying we should be compassionate in making decisions doesn't help much, just like it wouldn't be of great help in guiding the students in the Space Shuttle situation. We'd like to be compassionate to everyone by giving them our time, attention, and resources, but like the students in the exercise we don't have unlimited resources and we have to choose to whom we show compassion and to whom we won't.

It was the hope of the Assembly Planning Team that the assembly discussions would help leadership hear more clearly what are the most important values to us as a community. This, we thought, would help guide leadership in making day to day decisions for the province, which often means choosing one course of action over another, upholding one value over another. But apparently we did not ask the right questions at the assembly in order to get that result.

With provincial elections coming up next Spring, it is more important than ever that we as a community be clear about which values are most important to us in guiding leadership decisions. To help us discern that, it might be helpful to have people answer a number of forced-choice questions, similar to the Space Shuttle example above. One example of such a question:

Suppose you are part of leadership. A professed member asks to become involved in a particular ministry and you have to say yes or no. Rank the following list of considerations from 1 to 5 according to which would be most important to you in making your decision (1=most important, 5=least important).

- Whether or not we as a province have been involved in that ministry before
- Whether or not the institutional church approves of that ministry
- Whether or not it would be life-giving to the individual
- Whether or not it would be financially beneficial to the community
- Whether or not it would mean leaving another ministry that the community has been involved in for a long time (e.g., leaving a parish)



Difficult decisions are never easy, and leadership will continue to make the difficult decisions that face us as a community. But we all have a role and a voice in saying which direction our province should go. Leadership has a responsibility to listen to the many voices in our community. It is a major part of collaboration.

We now begin the discernment process for election of new leadership in the Spring. This process hopefully will help us clarify which values we most want to guide us as a community, and which people are most able to lead us in embodying those values.

COMPANION PATRICIA FLEMING FOLEY 1939-2010

Jim Sloan, C.P.P.S.

*[From the homily at the Mass of Christian Burial
at St. Barnabas Church, Alameda CA]*

During these last months of Pat's long struggle with cancer and Parkinson's Disease I have kept a photo of her on my desk. It has always been a favorite of mine. The photo was taken in the 1980s and shows her arriving at the St. Barnabas parish festival holding two plants that she had grown from seedlings, her contributions to the festival.

I have always thought of that photo as emblematic of the gifts Pat has offered throughout her life, to her children and family, to her church, to her friends, to the community of People with Parkinson's which she was part of. Without a doubt, concern for others was Pat's defining characteristic.

Pat was a very intelligent, talented, thoughtful woman. Her own spiritual journey was of utmost importance to her—as was the path the church, the country, and the world was on. She had a questioning, inquiring mind, not satisfied with simple answers to complex questions. The French Jesuit Paleontologist/Theologian Teilhard de Chardin was one of her favorite thinkers and writers. His words were a comfort to her especially as she struggled with her illnesses.



Companion Patricia Foley

Pat was a poet, often published in Precious Blood periodicals and elsewhere. I loved the cover letter she wrote to me accompanying two of her short poems: "I love to sit in the dark with my tea and listen to the birds wake the world. Yesterday was my last radiation treatment at UCSF Mt. Zion. Jayne was in Chicago all week so she arranged transport for me. To my amazement and chagrin a shiny black limousine pulled up in front of the house at nine twenty. As we started toward the city the driver proceeded to educate me on

many things: global warming, media failures in Iraq, water wars in Latin America, etc. I gave him an eight dollar tip. It hardly seemed enough for the information received."

I got to know Pat back in 1983, when I was associate pastor here at St. Barnabas and participated in the Alameda Ministerial Association meetings. They sometimes met at Court Street Methodist Church where she was a member.

Prayer for the Autumn of Life

Let us live well,
this small remnant of time,
uncommonly rich,
and favored in design,
completing the pattern
conceived in your mind.

Morning Prayer

Let me be light and salt today,
Brighten the path in some small way,
Flavor the world in some small way,
Let me be light and salt today.

Patricia Foley

A year or so later she entered the RCIA program at St. Barnabas to investigate the Catholic Church, and then at the end of that process she became a Catholic. It was my pleasure and honor to shepherd her and her group through the process.

Since then Pat has been an active member of the church. She sang in the choir, she was a lector, a Bible study participant, a member of the parish council, and a few years later became a lay associate of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood—along with more than twenty others from the parish. She took her involvement as a Companion very seriously.

In our gatherings of the Precious Blood Family you could depend on her offering valuable insights, sometimes things we might not otherwise think about. She was simply part of us—a valuable member of the family.

Patricia had a deep concern for others, whether it was others in her Parkinson's support group, for mothers and mothers-to-be at Casa Vincentia, or for the work that women were doing helping people in poor countries like Guatemala to be treated justly and live a better life. A special cause was *Safe Passage in Guatemala*, an outreach to hundreds of families,

mainly women and children, who spend their days scavenging the largest garbage dump in Central America

I know that some of her concern for others rubbed off on her daughters and her son—in a big way—concern for people harmed by a society that ignores them, puts them down, denies them basic human rights—concern for people with devastating illnesses.

Patricia had very many friends in the Bay Area who will miss her presence. Whenever you had lunch with her you would inevitably hear about what work her children were doing, what third-world country they might be in—along with some worry perhaps about their safety. You always knew how proud she was of them.

Over the years she always sent a card for Christmas and a card for Easter. She would sign them simply “Pat.” Three weeks ago I received an Easter Card signed “Always, Pat.” She knew that before long she would be crossing the threshold into eternity. So “always” takes on special significance. Our relationship with God *is* always. Our relationship with family and friends *is* always.

There was a great struggle as Patricia dealt—for such a long time—with what both cancer and Parkinsons’ Disease were doing to her body. It seemed beyond what anyone could endure—painful too for everyone who loved her, especially her children who cared for her.

I am sure many wondered: How does Pat sustain her faith in the midst of all this suffering? They were like the trials of Job in the Old Testament. “I know God is there even if I cannot hear him”. She unfailingly, no matter how sick she was, began each day in her small apartment with her morning prayers and hymns she would sing in her beautiful voice. Others in the building would hear her singing.

Patricia never lost her faith in God—whom she believed was always there with her, though at times God seemed hidden. She could not hear him, she could not feel his presence as she formerly did—as though she had misplaced God somehow and didn’t know how to find him. But she always believed he was there with her.



Patricia Maureen Fleming, of Alameda, CA, passed away after a courageous battle with breast cancer on April 24, 2010.

She was 71.

Patricia will be remembered first and foremost as a devoted mother and grandmother. Her character attributes of strength in the face of adversity, faith, intellectual curiosity, the love of language and an obligation to right injustice are values that she modeled to her children and grandchildren. We are grateful.

Patricia was a poet and a writer. She received her RN degree from Merrit College of Nursing and her bachelor’s degree in Speech Communication from California State University Hayward. The most influential person in her life was philosopher and Jesuit priest Teilhard de Chardin. She demonstrated her devotion to Teilhard’s philosophy through her unwavering spirit of generosity and deep compassion for all those around her. She was a member of St. Joseph’s Basilica Parish in Alameda and a Companion of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

[From *Alameda Times-Star*]

This photo was taken at a recent gathering of the California companions. Patricia is seated in the front on the right. Joining the group were Fr. Jim Urbanic (back, left), Br. Nick Renner (back, fourth from left), Fr. Jim Sloan (back, second from right), and Marie Trout (far right, middle).

2010 PRECIOUS BLOOD SCHOLARSHIPS

The second annual Precious Blood Scholarships were awarded during the Kansas City Province Assembly, April 14, 2010. Students were nominated by members, companions, and staff, and the names were submitted to the scholarship committee. The members are Frs. Al Ebach and Jack McClure and Companions Lynda Quistorff and Tom Pankiewicz. The following are the recipients of the scholarships.

Jose Antonio Bautista, Kearney MO, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to the University of St. Mary, Leavenworth, KS. Antonio shared about St. Gaspar del Bufalo's vision of dedicating his life to the Precious Blood of Christ and inviting men and women to live that spirituality with him. Antonio was impressed with all the priests, brothers, sisters and companions who continue to live this spirituality through their ministries.

Alicia Bettis, Albia IA, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to Creighton University, Omaha, NE. Alicia shared that it was a priority for her to attend a Catholic college. Through her research about St. Gaspar she feels called to attend a retreat this year. She feels that the Precious Blood priests who have ministered at St. Mary in Albia have truly served the people with the spirit of St. Gaspar, attending especially to the sick and the marginalized. She has heard many homilies from the Precious Blood priests regarding renewal of faith and reconciliation. After learning about St. Gaspar she has found a new appreciation for the Eucharist.

Meredith Brunkow, Kearney MO, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to Loras College, Dubuque IA. Meredith has had many experiences in the work field and an impressive number of community service projects, along with a number of honors and achievements. Meredith chose to attend a Catholic college to continue practicing her faith and be of service in the church and community. Meredith interviewed Ann Tucker, a companion. Ann shared about the importance of growing in faith and using God's gifts in ministry. Ann also shared that as a companion she has learned much about reconciliation by seeing the good in others. Meredith was impressed with Ann who shared that her "Precious Blood Spirituality is not what I do but who I am and who I am still becoming."

Clarissa Fierro-Cheda, Kansas City MO, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to Bishop Ward High School, Kansas City, KS. Clarissa shared that she was impressed in the Precious Blood Volunteer program that is being developed. She expressed that these volunteers, like St. Gaspar, can continue to serve the poor, victims of violence, the imprisoned, and anyone in need of God's love. She feels this is a good opportunity for people to live out their passion to do God's will.

Meg Davis, St. Joseph MO, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to Avila University, Kansas City MO. Meg shared that she interviewed her grandmother, Connie Swymeler, who works at St. Francis Parish in St. Joseph MO. She has always been impressed with her grandmother's sense of Precious Blood hospitality. Because of her grandmother's example she hopes that she can some day also become a Precious Blood companion.

Krizette Garcia, San Francisco CA, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to Immaculate Conception High School. Krizette lives with her mother and grandmother, whom she considers to be strong independent women. She enjoys serving for the local bishop. She shared how Fr. Matt Link, C.P.P.S. seems to be there for people who are hurting. She feels that she lives Precious Blood spirituality because she too finds it important to serve those most in need.

Gerardo Henriquez, Los Angeles CA, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to Cathedral High School, Los Angeles CA. Gerardo is interested in Catholic education because of his experience at St. Agnes grade school, which has helped him to be strong in faith. He considers the priests involved in his school are truly present to those most in need. He considers the missionaries to be committed and dedicated to their ministries. He understands Precious Blood spirituality through the example of the Precious Blood priests in the church he attends.



Clarissa Fierro-Cheda receiving her scholarship from Lynda Quistorff. Clarissa's proud parents are on her left.

Jazmin Leon, Los Angeles CA, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to Holy Family High School, Glendale CA. Jazmin is very involved in her parish and school. She is very impressed with Fr. Steve Dos Santos, C.PP.S. who commits his time in the classrooms in the school on a daily basis and assists with the confirmation program. She feels that he is committed to what he is called to be.

Alma Martinez, Kansas City MO, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to Loyola University in Chicago. Alma is choosing to attend a Catholic institution for a chance to grow deeper in her faith. Alma shared about the three pillars of the Society of Apostolic Life: mission, community and spirituality. She was excited to possibly learn more about the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation since she will be going to college in Chicago. She was impressed with the ministry they are doing for families and in prisons.

Jessica Reyes, Los Angeles CA, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to Holy Family High School, Glendale CA. Emily appreciates Catholic education because it has invited her to learn about making good choices and has strengthened her faith. Jessica has learned about the Missionaries of the Precious Blood through Fr. Steve Dos Santos' dedication to the youth of the parish. To her he is truly a spiritual guide who gives so much of his time to the young people of the parish and the school.

Magdalena Wagner, Kansas City MO, is receiving a \$1000 scholarship to Bishop Ward High School, Kansas City, KS. Magdalena interviewed Fr. Al Ebach, C.PP.S. who shared that he appreciates being part of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood because they are about reconciliation and the word of God. He shared that he has been blessed to be in a parish that serves a Latino community. This worshipping community has taught him about word and sacrament. Magdalena shared that she is impressed by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood members and companions who commit themselves in ministry to the poor.

Al Ebach, C.PP.S.

COMPANION COVENANTS

[At Tuesday evening Eucharist many companions made first covenant and received their insignia pin; others renewed their covenants. Printed here are brief excerpts from four of the covenants, shared with permission but without attribution.]

"It is my intention, as I write this covenant to become much more dedicated to my own spiritual growth and prayer life. I want to set aside a time each day to spend in quiet prayer...where I can sit and listen to whatever God has in mind for that day and that situation."

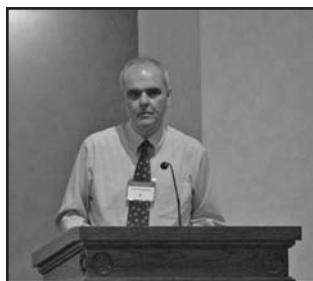


Lisa Dunn receives her insignia pin from Fr. Richard Bayuk.

"As I go forth into the world my covenant will remind me that I take this spirituality into whatever situation I find myself in that day. Living a call to Precious Blood spirituality will help me respond with hospitality and love to all those I encounter. It will center me and invite me to be more to others in my church and world."

"Due to my advanced age, I am limited in my being active in the ministries I was formerly a part of. I hope to continue to grow in my spiritual life and trust that the spirit of St. Gaspar will be a source of strength in the time to come."

"When I am drinking of the blood of Christ, I feel that it opens my heart so I am able to transform my Mom's sufferings into the cup that gives her peace, love of Jesus, a saving cup for her mental trials and tribulations. The Blood gives me strength to deal with this crippling illness of the mind and gives to me a loving heart to care for my Mom. It allows me to joke with her about her illness, give her the daily love, kisses and prayers and assist her in recognizing that her cross is bearable."



Tom Pankiewicz offered a reflection on the gospel.



Marie Trout offered Br. Nick Renner a new pair of running shoes.

MISSION AS PROPHETIC DIALOGUE

[The full text of the paper on which Fr. Steve Bevans based his talk at the Assembly can be found on the province website. These are selected quotes from that document.]

Mission, indeed, does not belong to us, but is done as we participate in the very mission of God. It is not simply about the expansion of the church, but about the transformation of the world, hoping for the day when God will establish God's Reign within the whole of creation. But nor is mission simply working for justice, or cooperating with the other great faiths of humanity, or committing oneself to human solidarity. Mission is the witness and proclamation of God's love and action revealed in the concrete history of Jesus of Nazareth, and is an invitation to relationship and partnership with God through relationship with him, in the power of his Holy Spirit.



God's mission-in-dialogue, always present through the Spirit and incarnate and concrete in Jesus, has now been entrusted to the church. Through Baptism, Christians share the very life and of the Trinity, and so they are enjoined to carry out God's mission in the same dialogical way. Concretely, this means that Christians who engage in mission need to make real efforts to "bond" with the people among whom they minister. They need to do this by constantly working to master the language of the people they work among. They need to respect and be challenged and changed by the local people's culture. They need to recognize the holiness of their religious traditions—traditions that reflect, as Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate* put it, "a ray of that Truth which enlightens all peoples." They need to practice the asceticism of real listening and of letting go of many of their presuppositions about correct behavior and delicious food.



Mission as dialogue means doing ministry with a "hermeneutics of generosity," or, as Filipino theologian José de Mesa puts it, with a "hermeneutics of appreciation." It means practicing what my colleague Claude Marie Barbour speaks of as "mission in reverse"—letting the people among whom we work be our teachers and even evangelizers. It means, in the famous words of British missiologist Max Warren, recognizing that when we enter into anyone else's territory we must learn to "take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy."



Mission can be imaged, first, as a hunt for treasure that is buried in the soil of the context in which one engages in mission. The minister or missionary serves the community not by bringing

in her or his own treasure, but by being one who leads the search for this treasure. As such, she or he engages the community, learns to read the "maps" that are available, encourages the community with the assurance that if they dig deep enough, they will find the treasure that can be enhanced and explained by the good news that the missionary does indeed bring.

But the missionary always recognizes that she or he is a stranger and guest. As a stranger he or she needs to realize how little he or she knows, and how much she or he needs to rely on the local people for knowledge in that place. And as a good guest, missionaries should not presume too much. Even presuming to help out by doing the dishes or something like that could be an insult to the hosts. The missionary needs to look and listen long and hard so as not to abuse the privilege of being hosted by the people of a certain place. One does not enter another's garden lightly. One enters first of all to gaze and admire, to enjoy the beauty of what is there. Maybe after getting the trust of the gardener the visitor might be able to give advice about planting or watering or arranging—but even then it should probably be done gingerly.



If, then, God is a God of prophecy, and the church shares in God's mission, mission must be lived out as prophecy as well. It is our task, as members of Christ's body and conformed to him in Baptism, to preach, demonstrate and embody the Reign of God in our ecclesial and individual lives.

...being a prophet means to be someone who is rooted in dialogue: someone who listens, who is attentive, who sees, who has a sensitivity to the world and to women and men.... Second...a prophet is someone who "speaks forth".... In a first sense, once having heard or discerned the Word of God, the prophet faithfully announces a message, either in words...or in deeds.... In a second sense more associated with popular notions of a prophet, the prophet "speaks forth"

the future. Such predictions of the future, however, is not mere “fortune telling,” but the setting out a vision of what God has in store for people in God’s plan of salvation.... Third, prophets speak out in God’s name when people refuse to live lives worthy of their calling.



“The Church does not have a mission. God’s mission has a Church.”—Fr. Steve Bevans

Pope Paul VI says that the “first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life.” In the same document, the pope speaks famously about the power of witness. People today, he says, do not listen very much to what people say—to teachers. They listen rather to witnesses. And if they do listen to teachers, “it is because they are witnesses.”



Christian community, being church, is also countercultural and prophetic. This is the people who by their prayer, their life together in community, their attempts to live as reconciled and reconciling, their efforts to mirror the justice for which they work in society form what Gerhard Lohfink calls a “contrast society.”



In accomplishing its prophetic mission Christians speak out against any form of injustice, and against any form of what John Paul II called “the culture of death”.... As the “father of liberation theology,” Gustavo Gutiérrez famously argued, the annunciation of the gospel involves at the same time the denunciation of anything that is contrary to it, in society or in the church itself. As John Paul II put it, the “gospel of life” is the

“good news” that the church needs to preach with “dauntless courage.” But such good news has to be preached and lived out in confrontation with the “culture of death.”



Mission might be characterized by good teaching. Christians in mission have to know what they “speak forth” in prophecy. They have to be convinced of it, love it, and model it in their lives.... Their task is to awaken curiosity in people...and they have to challenge those who seem impervious or indifferent to the precious knowledge that they have to offer. Their “prophecy” must always be tempered with dialogue, but they must always be convinced that they do indeed have something to teach.



Mission might be characterized as telling a story—the story of Jesus, the story of Israel, the story of the church. Like a good storyteller, missionaries need to know their audience, and they need to find ways of “entertaining” those who hear them. Their witness, their deeds tell a story. Their words, when they are asked, tell a story. The story is informative, it is formative as well.... The missionary tells the story with the conviction that it is everyone’s story, that—if the story is told well—any person from any culture and context will recognize that it is her or his own story, and can give light and depth to that person’s life.



Mission is done in dialogue. Mission is done in prophecy. The two go together. While we can distinguish them to better understand the whole, we cannot and are not to separate them. Mission is prophetic dialogue. It is dialogical prophecy. The question is not “is it one or the other?” The question is rather when should the dialogical aspect of missionary service be emphasized or employed more fully, when should one act or speak prophetically in action, in words, in confrontation. Like life itself, engaging in God’s mission is art. One needs to be in touch with the sources of creativity, the Holy Spirit, to know just how to proceed. It is the Spirit who opens our ears to listen, and who anoints our tongues to speak, who enflames our hearts to witness.

*Fr. Stephen Bevans, S.V.D. is currently Louis J. Luzbetak, S.V.D. Professor of Mission and Culture at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. He is a member of the Society of the Divine Word, an international missionary congregation, and served for nine years (1972-1981) as a missionary in the Philippines. His publications include: *Models of Contextual Theology* (2002), *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (2004, with Roger Schroeder), *Evangelization and Freedom* (2009, with Jeffrey Gros), and *Introduction to Theology in Global Perspective* (2009).*

REPORTS TO THE ASSEMBLY

PRECIOUS BLOOD MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

To grow in our ministry with and for LGBT persons our committee feels that we still need to do basic education for people and provide dialectic tools which will empower ourselves to dialogue in both religious and secular circles in regards to creating safe places for LGBT persons and their friends and families to speak their truths. We spoke about implementing the Reconciliation Ministry's use of the circle to aid us in listening, discerning and speaking the truth of our lives. In light of the political and religious controversies, as this ministry grows, the Society will have to dialogue about the challenges inherent in taking a more "prophetic" stance of justice in the Church and Society. Currently, the Church is not a safe place for persons who are LGBT. As our spirituality calls us to stand in that breach with those who are rejected and excluded from our tables and communities based on sexual orientation and prejudice, we experience concrete struggles between threatening institutional responses and pastoral responses steeped in Christ's love. Yet, we are called by God to risk entering into relationships that will cause us to be changed and transformed in the ways we are community to one another.

The clearest signs of life are the people who connect with us as we give voice to the various stories of LGBT persons, their families and their friends which illustrates the prejudice, hatred and violence in church and society but yet are real stories of challenge

and transformation as we become prophets who participate and proclaim the "inclusive" Reign of God. Marie Trout shared of how many people have connected with her since the publication of her article in *The New Wine Press*. In this coming year, the committee is working on a workshop to be offered at the Precious Blood Convocation in July, the "Homosexuality: Facts and Fiction" workshops to be offers to Districts and Companion Groups. Nationally, our participation in the round table discussions sponsored by the Arcus Foundation have connected us to national advocacy groups, theologians, and other LGBT Catholic persons who are struggling for justices. The greatest treasure for us as a committee are the stories told by persons, families and friends who have found a way through the hatred, prejudice and violence and have found a voice of faith that prophetically proclaims that all persons have a place around the table of Jesus Christ.

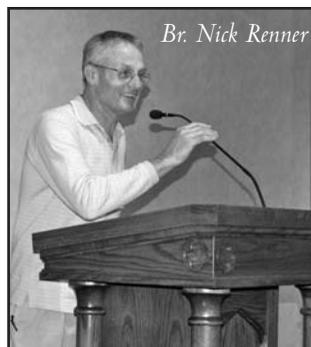
Dave Matz, C.PP.S., Coordinator



Al Ebach & Dave Matz



Lucy Reznicek, Fr. Dennis Schaab, Fr. Mike Volkmer, Rollie Reznicek



Br. Nick Renner



Chris Hoyt

COMPANIONS

The clearest signs of life in the Companion movement is that we understand that the “Mission of God” is something we are a part of, not something we do. Companions take ownership of our call; it is not just something we were asked to be part of, we truly understand that we have responded to a call to Precious Blood spirituality. The companion groups are requesting input on how to be more nourishing, how to re-energize their groups. They are asking how to grow and invite others to explore this call; they are requesting more material. They understand they are sent into their world by Precious Blood spirituality, which gives them purpose and centers them.

What needs to be done to enhance the companion movement in the future? The companion movement is God’s work and a response to the signs of the times. The makeup of the assembly reflects this change. From the beginning, the movement has been about prophetic dialogue and relationship. In the future we hope to invite and empower a strong lay leadership, while also maintaining a strong connection to community. Based on Steve’s talk, we need to become treasure hunters, be given the freedom to learn more about and share their gifts with the church and world. As we enter peoples’ gardens, we observe, ask, question, appreciate. We should not walk in thinking we have all the answers; rather we recognize the treasures already present. We hope to continue to take risks, to think outside the box, to vision into the future.

Marie Trout
Province Companion Director
Nick Renner, C.P.P.S.
Director of Companions

FORMATION

We are currently working to obtain student visas for three Vietnamese candidates. The plan is for them to study and develop their English skills in preparation for theology studies at CTU. They will study at DePaul University English Language Academy and live at the Gaspar House of Initial Formation.

We believe bringing the candidates from Vietnam will foster a closer relationship between the Province and the Mission. A close relationship between the sponsoring province and the mission has been shown to be a key factor in the long term success of the mission.

We are continuing to grow into the relationship we have formed between the Cincinnati and Kansas City Provinces in formation matters. In addition to the joint formation programs already in place, this coming year the Joint Formation Committee will explore possible ways the Vocation Offices might work more closely towards a joint effort. A report is due to the Provincial Council by the end of 2010.

A primary goal of formation is community life. The CARA study which was conducted on behalf of the NRVC and published in the Fall of 2009 pointed out several things: a) there is an interest in religious life; b) young people are willing to make a long-term commitment; c) people looking at religious life are especially attracted to community life (in fact what a particular community’s charism is less important than the quality of its community life); and d) candidates’ spiritual practices and beliefs may be more traditional but they demonstrate a strong commitment to social justice—making them politically more liberal.

We will be staying in the Initial Formation residence (Gaspar House) for the coming academic year. There is a potential for an increase in the number of candidates who will be living in the house. One of the benefits of having an abundance of room has been the opportunity to host a number of visitors. I have joined with a number of formation directors of initial and pre-novitiate candidates to plan and present activities for the candidates as a means of building a larger formation community for the candidates and more opportunities for interaction and support. Our goal is to develop relationships among the initial and pre-novitiate candidates that will continue outside of these planned events.

Joe Bathke, C.P.P.S., Director of Formation



Rose Pacheco, Fr. Jim Betzen, Fr. Jim Schrader, Fr. Joe Bathke

VOLUNTEERS

What are the signs of life for this ministry? Last year, our sign of life was that the program existed. This year marks a shift from a conceptual to technical framework.

We traveled to and spoke to members and Companions and surveyed ministries, trying to understand them from a local perspective. We assessed their needs for volunteers, identified the communities they serve, and evaluated the volunteer skills necessary to serve those communities.

We have developed a program rooted in Precious Blood spirituality, that involves living with established Precious Blood communities, and working as volunteers at Precious Blood ministry sites.

As we moved into the more technical aspects, we developed the volunteer manual and the foundation for recruitment, screening, orientation and work processes. This was followed by assembling interview committees to ensure that volunteers are equipped with the necessary experiential, language, conflict-resolution, and faith-sharing skills. In all of this we are working to ensure that the program continually reflects the three pillars of the Precious Blood community as a Society of Apostolic Life, namely, spirituality, community life, and mission.

What needs to be done to enhance the signs of life in this ministry? We identify these activities:

- Following a volunteer program cycle
- Analyzing our manual from a legal and administrative perspective through the assistance of our Advisory Board in June
- Developing advertising strategies for parishes locally and in other dioceses
- Exploring avenues of fundraising with organizations who reflect Precious Blood spirituality
- Recruiting at new universities and colleges in fall; revisiting universities where relationships already exist
- Visiting Precious Blood communities to share our program with Companions and other individuals interested in participation

We believe that when living and working with the poor, our own talents come to light and are enriched by the experience. Anytime people live and work together and come back and break bread and share the Word, their lives are enriched. The volunteer experience can enhance the faith of the volunteers.

Chris Hoyt, Director of Volunteer Program

FINANCE

Steve Bevans described mission as something that happens among people and between people(s). It is a relationship, a sharing of deep convictions, and a response to the challenges of the gospel that flow from those convictions. The ministry of the Finance Office happens among ourselves as community and with and among those whom we serve. Our shared convictions affect the ways in which we earn and spend our money and use our assets. Our convictions can also challenge our earning and spending when needed.

Our greatest assets are the members, companions, and those we serve in our ministries. These relationships are of course supported by our financial assets of money and property; the latter are meant to serve the former.

The signs of life that we see in this ministry are: the good stewardship and generosity of members, transparency in all finances of the province, and the responsible way in which our assets are used (this includes members).

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S., Treasurer
Jan Agee, Director of Finance

COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Our communications and publications are varied. Emails to members and companions provide timely announcements and prayer requests. *The Weekly Wine Press*, which is sent to all members and companions and others who have requested it, helps keep us connected. It offers the news of the province in a timely manner, and provides an opportunity for members and companions to share with one another what is happening in their various parts of the province.

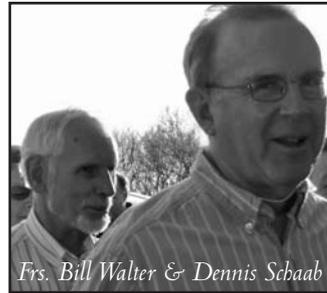
The New Wine Press, published six times a year, offers a more in depth expression of Precious Blood spirituality as lived and reflected upon in our many experiences of life and ministry, through articles, news, and opinion. It also reflects some of the aspects of mission that Steve Bevans spoke about. It fosters relationship and dialogue, engages at times in teaching or storytelling, and sometimes is a means of “speaking forth” and “speaking against.”

The Wine Cellar, published twice a year, is a more scholarly journal. It provides, as stated on each cover, “An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality.” This is also in service of our mission and the apostolate of the Word.

Finally, the province website (www.kcprovince.org) is a window into the community to the wider public, as well as giving another means of communication within the community itself. Among other things, it provides links to all the other websites in the worldwide Precious Blood community, as well as to a variety of sites dedicated to issues of peace and justice, preaching, and various aspects of Catholicism and mission.

One of the signs of life in this ministry is the involvement of so many people, through writing, editing, organizing and, yes, *reading* and sometimes offering feedback. There are at least two ways in which we hope to enhance this ministry in the future. The first is to involve even more people, especially those who have not yet had the opportunity or offer to contribute something for publication. Second would be further collaboration with the Cincinnati Province in communication efforts.

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S., Director



Frs. Bill Walter & Dennis Schaab



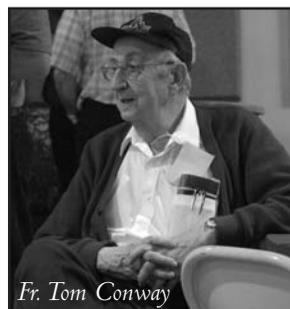
Linda Lewman & Jackie Maddy



Urban Miller & Fr. Mark Miller



Betty Roth & Patty Hayes



Fr. Tom Conway

VIETNAM MISSION

There are many signs of life in the Vietnam Mission. We now have twelve candidates in residence at our two houses in Saigon. We live very simply, although by Vietnamese standards we are better off than many. I believe it is an important aspect of formation that our students there do not think that they will be “taken care of.”

We emphasize hospitality, certainly another sign of life. Many members have visited over the years; a Vietnam veteran who does volunteer work in Vietnam stays with us at times and offers English tutoring to the students, Charlotte and Jim Noble visited us during their time in Southeast Asia. Our candidates are embracing hospitality as an essential value and charism of the community.

Recently they also encountered a situation where they put their safety on the line and potentially in danger. A member of another religious community, a friend of Dominic Bui, found himself in political trouble because of his ministry. Dominic explained the situation to the rest of the house and they all agreed to let him stay with us for a few months, to allow him to “lay low” until the situation was tempered. I believe our students are learning, seeing, practicing and living hospitality and what it means to help others.

We are pleased about the possibility of some students coming to Chicago for study. This will provide for community building and give members and candidates both here and over there a greater sense of ownership and connection.

We see signs of life in the Mission, in that we don't do recruiting. People come to us through word of mouth, through our example, through personal contacts. We see possibilities to expand the Mission in the future, through a presence in Cambodia or Laos, through involvement of Precious Blood volunteers and/or companions. Two future areas of ministry for our Mission (including volunteers or companions) are in HIV/AIDS pastoral care and ministering with migrant workers.

While there is still tension between the Church and the government in Vietnam, there is progress in this regard also. For example, there was a recent case of several religious organizations successfully taking the government to court to get properties returned that had been confiscated.

Fr. Dien Truong has moved from the rectory in the parish where he works to live with our students Saigon. Later this summer he will attend the workshop in Rome for Precious Blood formators from around the world. In September he will begin his participation in the Institute of Religious Formation at CTU, in preparation for his return to Vietnam to assume duties as the Director of Formation there.

Lac Pham, C.P.P.S., Director of the Vietnam Mission



VOCATIONS

We see signs of life as there is greater vocation awareness in the Kansas City Province. We are in dialogue with people all the time, and we are trying to create a “culture of vocations.” We meet and hear from people who ask about and are encouraging this vocation awareness. People we encounter believe there is a hopeful future for this community.

The contacts we have are very open to looking at our community. We listen to them and they listen to us, and then we help discern how God’s mission can be best carried out in their life. It is not about us finding a treasure chest (a future vocation), it’s about helping people read “maps” and then assisting them in finding their treasure chest—God’s mission for them. We are treasure hunters in vocation ministry, but it’s not for us to find the treasure if the person does not share and find the same treasure in themselves.

We see a positive and supportive spirit in most members. They enter into prophetic dialogue about vocation ministry with us. At discernment retreats and other events people have been invited and have responded. We all share our stories. As we listen and appreciate people and where they are in life, God speaks through them.

Resources and workshops we attend identify trends and strategies in our work. We note the trends have changed, and we are really about planting seeds at earlier ages, walking both with persons who are looking at a vocation early in life as well as persons who have been out in life and already pursued education and careers.

Positive and liberating discernment is a process that takes time. At first we have to get to know these persons; we come as a guest or visitor into their life. Over time we listen and walk with each other—a process of listening, discerning and “seeing.” We do not dump our dream on them. In this way we are called to be liberators, as we reach out to others and help them hear the call deep within themselves.

We experience the support and networking of fellow vocation ministers when we gather at workshops and meetings and there is much enthusiasm to be shared. In this way we enter into a joyful dialogue with people. In today’s world, God’s mission calls a person to a countercultural way of life. At times, annunciation of the gospel values involves denunciation of society and its ways. Yet, we share much hope for the future and we react to the signs of the times as we carry out Christ’s mission in an ever evolving Church.

Much can be done to enhance this ministry. *Vision Magazine* is the major advertising magazine for vocations in religious communities. We advertise there with the Cincinnati Province. The call from Steve Bevans to “speak forth without words” is very important. We witness to the truth by our actions, our joy, life-giving power, the witness of an authentic Christian life, with and without words.

We seek to share our Precious Blood spirituality at all times and to be proud of it. We participate in God’s mission, God’s movement in the world, and try to make it even more visible. Mission is something that happens among people and we are called to be relational. This is especially true in vocation ministry. Relational ministry, personal invitations, personal follow up, and continuous connections are essential.

We try to share who we are and what we do in ministry, whether within or outside the Precious Blood community. Inclusivity is very important to us in this ministry and we need help from all of you. We respond to all whom God sends to us, whether through yourselves, others, us, events, or our advertisements.

Last year we challenged you to submit at least two names of faith-filled men to our office. Thank you to those of you who have done that. Some of you even submitted more than two people. We invite you to consider doing that again this year. You know the people you serve better than someone like us who come in to give a presentation and may see them for only a brief short time.

Finally, we are continuing to provide information about and awareness of the Precious Blood community through brochures, posters, prayer cards, and ideas for bulletins inserts. We are planning on creating a DVD to share with people as well.

Joe Miller, C.P.P.S. & Sharon Crall
Vocation Ministry Directors

OUR NEWEST MEMBER

[Mark Yates was definitively incorporated at the Wednesday Eucharist during the assembly. He shares here some of his story and journey.]

I was born in Wichita, KS and went to St. Anne's Parish Grade School. My first contact with a Precious Blood community was the Adorers of the Blood of Christ who taught in that school. My first desire to become a priest was at young age when I would often play Mass, preaching to my neighborhood playmates.

I went to Precious Blood Seminary and Rockhurst College (now University), then to Special Formation in Linton, ND. I chose to go to Catholic Theological Union (CTU) for graduate studies (St. John's in Collegeville, MN was also a choice at that time) as I thought the urban environment would be challenging for me—and it was. After 2½ years, I decided to leave; you might say that I got cold feet.

I left Chicago for Kansas City where I worked at the UMKC Health Sciences Library in the Medical School attached to Truman Medical Center. While there I found out about a steam railroad, the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad in New Mexico. In 1989 I went out there for the first time to help in the volunteer program for a week. I continued going there and was hired on in May 1993 to work in the locomotive and car repair shop in Chama, NM. I also learned to work as a fireman. I became the shop clerk and purchasing agent when a new Chief Mechanical Officer (CMO) did not like paperwork. In time the train dispatching was also added to my job. Whenever we did not have a CMO, I filled in as the Shop Supervisor, which was the position—along with the others—that I held at the end of my stay in the fall of 2005.

Sometime in 2003 I again began to have thoughts of becoming a priest. This continued into 2005, becoming more intense. I refer to it as the nagging of the Holy Spirit. I finally talked with the pastor in Chama, who also thought I had a vocation. I wrote Fr. Al Ebach in May 2005, met with him, and moved to Gaspar Mission House in December 2005.

In the fall of 2006 I went to live at St. Francis Xavier Parish in St. Joseph, MO for Special Formation. After making my Pledged Candidacy in June 2007 I went to study again in Chicago at CTU. This past April during the Provincial Assembly I made my Definitive Incorporation. I am now completing my third year with one more to go. After graduation in May 2011 I will get ordained a deacon and ordained a priest in early 2012.

I would like to thank everyone for the hospitable welcome back I received and your prayers as I continue formation.

Mark (center) and his family, following the incorporation liturgy



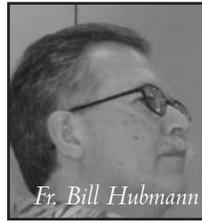
Mark receives his Mission Cross (previously used by the late Fr. Austin Hermann) from Fr. Jim Urbanic.



Frs. Joe Miller & Timothy Armbruster



Frs. John Wolf & Leonard Goettemoeller



Fr. Bill Hubmann



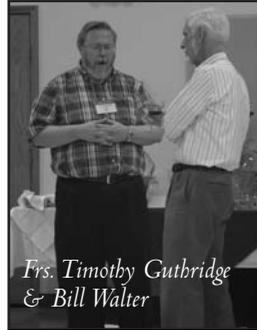
Fr. Keith Branson



Frs. Jim Schrader & John Wolf



Frs. Mark Peres & Mark Miller and Mark Yates



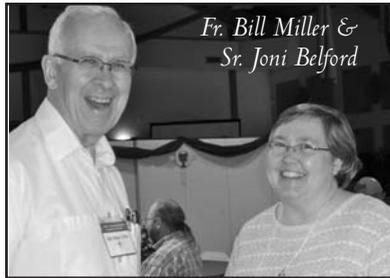
Frs. Timothy Guttridge & Bill Walter



Frs. Joe Nassal & Alan Hartway



Mary George & Frances Flanagan



Fr. Bill Miller & Sr. Joni Belford



Dewey McConville & Fr. Dennis Schaab



Frs. Joe Uecker & Vince Hoying

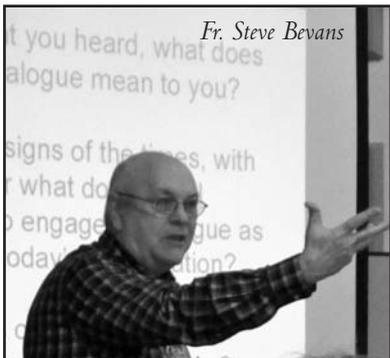


Fr. Al Ebach

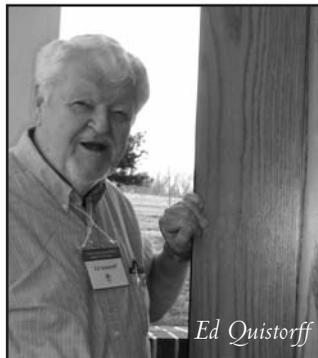


Fr. Jim Sloan

COMING TOGETHER APRIL 12-14



Fr. Steve Bevans



Ed Quistorff

Frs. Joe Nassal & Garry Richmeier



Fr. Leonard Goettemoeller & Marie Trout



Wynona Wildeman, Margie Brown, Patty Hayes, Betty Roth



Fr. Ed Oen

THE GRACE OF HOSPITALITY

Jim & Charlotte Noble

Precious Blood hospitality! As we began our involvement with a team of eight advisors for the Precious Blood Volunteer Program, hospitality was alive with wonderful welcoming and sharing.

Our first experience with the Society was meeting Fr. Jack McClure as our pastor in Harlan IA. Our amazing and interesting world was getting smaller. When we were traveling in Vietnam in 2003 Jack encouraged us to visit Fr. Lac Pham. He welcomed us and gave us a tour of Saigon and an understanding of the relationship between the church and the Vietnam communist government. We could see the difficulties Lac and Fr. Dien Truong were having. It amazed us to see their desire to spread Precious Blood spirituality, returning to their mother country and knowing the danger they could possibly face.



Jim & Charlotte Noble

From 1990-2003, our volunteer experience was limited to working with the homeless in Washington DC during the winter months. When we returned home from southeast Asia we applied and we were accepted by the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers for their short term (two to three months yearly) volunteer program. We volunteered in Thailand for two years and then 3 years in Burma (Myanmar). With our experience, we can visualize the Precious Blood Volunteer Program as an ideal way to spread Precious Blood spirituality—not only in the United States, but also as a workable program in Vietnam. The sharing of oneself with people of the third world, being in touch and understanding what others are going through, is a life changing experience.

Chris Hoyt scheduled our volunteer board meeting so we could take advantage of attending the 2010 assembly. This gave us an opportunity to renew our friendship with Jack and to meet so many wonderful and welcoming people.

When we talk about the Spirit moving us, we know we were placed there for a reason. It was not only joyful to be among the people, but we were deeply enriched with the activities and concerns of the Society. The openness of the community is very refreshing and brings a new depth to our prayer life.

The reports at the assembly certainly manifested compassion for the oppressed and marginalized, reconciling people, being committed to bonds of charity, working for justice (we were very impressed with the ministry with LGBT persons), being inclusive and challenging. It was encouraging to experience the love for people through the spirituality with concern for the renewal of the church.

Precious Blood spirituality should and needs to be shared with others, both for the giving and the receiving. We are thankful for the invitation to work on the volunteer program and our involvement with the community.

Jim & Charlotte Noble, from Johnston IA, serve on the Volunteer Program Advisory Board.



Fr. Jim Betzen greets one of the Matachines dancers.

ONE PERSON'S MISSION

Rose E. Pacheco

To gather with like minded souls is one of life's great pleasures—like what happened with the assembly of fathers, brothers, sisters and companions which we enjoyed this past April. Each of us came with our own missions and ways to express the charism that is Christ in the world today. We are all very different, but at the same time very much alike in some ways. All of us participate in the struggle to live a good life and to understand God's will for us as individuals and as community.

There was much talk about mission at the assembly, and ways in which mission is entered into and performed. I understand mission to be largely about relationships with others and with God. To share with others the wonderful gifts that Jesus has bestowed upon us and to recognize the gifts of others. The Precious Blood community participates in numerous aspects of mission. I want to share a little about one of mine with you.

For the last 32 years I have worked in one way or another as a nurse with those who have mental illness or drug and alcohol dependency or both. It has been a real privilege to serve this population which has taught me so much about life, about people who suffer in this way, about myself and the woabout

They taught me that struggle is not a bad thing because beauty and life can come from struggle. They taught me that respect opens doors so that work and relationship building can occur. They taught me that for some the mental anguish and despair are far too much to survive.

I have learned that love and compassion for others goes a long way. It is very humbling to see and hear what others have survived and to look at oneself and wonder how well one would do in similar circumstances. Often the answer is, probably not as well. I also learned that even when the brain has trouble logically sequencing thoughts and one's moods cannot maintain a normal variation, recognition of God and Spirit much of the time has remained.

I have also seen that mission is for all of us. I have seen those who have suffered much trying to prevent suffering for others. Compassion and charity are shared qualities that each of us can possess. God is also very present in the 12 steps to recovery which has helped many people—but not all—with addictions. Grace is present in the midst of chaos. We really are *all* connected in some way. Most of us do not have the ability to be sane in every moment of our lives and maybe this is not a bad thing as we can then recognize each other in our vulnerabilities.

I appreciate being a companion with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, where I can be myself, share my stories, listen to others and continue in the struggle to live a good life and to understand God's will for me and my community.

Rose Pacheco is a companion from Kansas City MO.



*Rose Pacheco (right)
watches the
Matachines dancers
with Rita McNally.*



Blindsided by Real Life

Mary Louise Degenhart, A.S.C.

As I began to reflect on my seven years with the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation, my eyes lighted on six message stones on my prayer table. In various types of circles we would use these as talking pieces; I will use them to focus my reflections.

Listen to your heart. This ministry began as four Missionaries of the Precious Blood responded to the dreams of their hearts to be a reconciling presence in a chosen neighborhood: Back of the Yards. As Mary Evelyn Jegen, S.N.D. states: the “task is to see with eyes of love all that is good, all that is wounded, all that is marred, all that is beautiful.” Even as the staff listens to their hearts they are listening to the God within them and in the ones with whom and to whom they minister. Soon after the Missionaries decided to move forward in realizing their dream, the Adorers of the Blood of Christ missioned me to collaborate with them.

Keep it simple. The basis for the ministry of reconciliation is presence—to be there for the other. It is clear that the work of reconciliation is God’s work. Staff is present to set the environment, a place of safety, for the participants to come and discuss and share what is going on in their lives. The mentor is present to listen and, if appropriate, to offer options. This ministry of presence requires respect for each person wherever they may be on the journey and a lot of patience as the youth struggle to make better choices. Staff possesses an underlying hope and trust that in God’s time the youth will come to know and live out the goodness within them.

You’re never alone. Shared contemplative prayer, regular staff meetings/planning retreats help ground staff in God’s plan and provide mutual support. Staff changes plans to adapt to the needs of the youth and experiences daily many changes in personal schedules. The

ministry is a collaborative effort among many individuals and groups: Missionaries, Adorers, and other staff members; Board of Directors; other agencies working toward restorative justice; various groups who share in circles; donors; and, friends. The ministers of some local Catholic entities meet on a monthly basis at the Center with PBMR staff to share with and support one another.

Peace. Great efforts are made to work toward restorative justice that allows for healing of wrongs rather than punitive efforts that cause further stress and pain. Periodically youth are present at the Center to fulfill community service requirements. It takes a lot of openness and tolerance on the part of staff to weather the ups and downs of the youths’ struggles. Prayer services at the sites of violence; participation at wakes and funeral services; circles of healing for families who have lost loved ones to violence; listening circles; and, the annual Mass for victims of violence all allow participants to be in touch with their pain and loss and at the same time to seek some sense of healing and peace.

Trust in miracles. There are times when staff truly experiences miracles among the youth. Sometimes these are small little victories like bringing a grade of F to a D. Other times it is getting them to register for school and supporting them to stay in school. It is getting a youth onto an airplane and off to Boys/Girls Town in Omaha. Another victory is a youth participating in circle training and then serving as a circle keeper both for the Center’s Making Choice group and outside groups. It is a beautiful mural that makes an ugly railroad overpass a place of beauty and, even more wonderfully, serves as a bridge between divided peoples.

Gratitude. As I leave the ministry in mid-May and plan to move to St. Louis, I take many shared memories and experiences with me. I am grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and the other members of the Center staff. I am grateful for the young men and women whom I have come to know throughout these years and who allowed me to share in their struggles and joys. I am grateful that all of this continues to call me to be a “reconciling presence” wherever life leads. Dreams become miracles simply and gratefully by God’s grace and the help of others.

Sr. Mary Louise Degenhart is an Adorer of the Precious Blood, and is concluding her time on the staff of PBMR this month.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRECIOUS BLOOD MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

Why Circles?

Denny Kinderman, C.P.P.S.

People of all ages gathered in seventy circles last December throughout the city of Chicago. Using the circle process they shared their stories about the violence that is so out of control in our city. It was called a Day of Healing and Understanding.

In January folks who live in or work in neighborhoods where youth are at risk because of poverty and lack of resources listened to one another trying to hear ways they might work together. The conference was titled Transformative Justice for Youth and Community which sounds more foreboding than what actually came to light in the inclusive circles that day. Parents and youth, judges, states attorneys, public defenders, probation officers, police officers, school principals, faith-based persons, service providers, government officials, and circle keepers from our restorative justice community were mixed into seven stimulating circles.

Youth both in the juvenile detention center as well as in our Precious Blood Center sit in circles eager to share some real talk. Whether for victims of violence or men released from incarceration, circles are occasions for healing and support. Two companion groups found out that days of reflection work well when communicating in circles.



Cardinal Francis George (far left) visits the Precious Blood Center and sits in circle with our youth and others from our neighborhood.

Circles are used in a variety of settings. Why circles? Perhaps whenever humans come together in a good way and sit with one another in truth and respect and confidentiality, they feel it is a safe place to open up and to listen? And what's more I like to think, each circle offers moments filled with the wonder and presence of God. In circle we find ourselves in a sacred place, on holy ground.

During a recent drumming circle in the juvenile detention center one of the youth who was soon to be transferred to the adult county jail said, "Let's all stand up and if you are man

enough hug one another." The guys' embracing one another wasn't something as emotional as it was real. Was it the circle, or was it God who "broke down the dividing wall of enmity" and these who too often are ready to fight one another found they had "become near by the blood of Christ."

Those attending the conference on transformative justice were placed in circles. It was the circle process offering a unique dynamic for adequately addressing a seemingly impossible call for change that enlightened many with new insights that day. Within a couple months judge Sharkey had youth from various neighborhoods and gangs who are on probation under his jurisdiction sitting in circles discovering how they are more alike than different.

Why sit in circles with elementary kids from four schools in our neighborhood during a Youth Summit Day? According to some it was the first time they felt that adults really listened to their concerns and fears.

Why sit in a circle with Cardinal Francis George when he came to visit our center? In circle he listened hearing one by one the stories of what our youth, the pastors, the community agency representatives have to deal with daily; and we heard about the different world in which his story lies.



After sitting in circle Cardinal Francis George receives a "Precious Blood Artisans for Peace" T-shirt from Lamonte.

Continued on the next page...

Why sit in circle? We have found it an effective way to be about reconciliation. Our spirituality calls us to move toward and not away from what seems impossible; to face conflict and find there a hidden treasure for facing the future. In circles all parties can come together and hear one another's stories.

I like to borrow a belief from Celtic spirituality called a "thin place" when thinking about the peacemaking steps I've witnessed in circles. In Celtic spirituality a thin place is a point in time, or an event in which for a very brief moment, our humanity is embraced by the mystery of the divine, and we are filled with the wonder of God.

So in circle God can sound like a gangbanger saying, "let's hug if you're man enough." In circle a cardinal can humbly place himself where admittedly all are equal and none better than another. In circle lies the potential for God to do what only God can do in mending relationships. In circle opportunities for transformation become a journey marked by many little victories, many moments of healing, and many thin places where God embraces human frailties.

It is only by the grace of God that the journey continues and healings come about. I believe God has given us circles to make his work all the more effective.

Aunt Margaret

She always sang in the shower each morning
and worked in her garden every afternoon she could,
at least until winter came, stiffening her knees.
The kids had gradually grown up and moved across town,
while her husband had gradually grown old in his recliner.
Some way she handled it.
Then in the fading light of a November evening
God spoke to her while she was mulching the roses.
He told her she'd better go inside before it got too dark.
They stayed inside the rest of the winter,
spending hour after hour in front of the fire
laughing a lot and listening to old Glen Miller records.
By spring her knees seemed better
and she stayed peaceful, even when her husband died.
Everyone at church said she handled it real well,
much better than her daughters did.
She had a lot to do that spring.
There was a garden to till,
a new shipment of geraniums at the nursery to inspect,
a daughter pregnant with her first grandchild,
and yes, there was that recliner she should maybe give away.

Bob McCray

Awakening

Once upon a time,
I dreamed the Land of Sleepy Nod,
I dreamed there really was,
A kind and friendly God;
A God who formed Creation,
With strong and expert hands,
And with His breath enlivened it,
To move to his command.

I dreamed no evil spirit,
Could harm the Master's work.
I dreamed no gall of suffering,
Within the shadows lurked.

My dream was fitting for a child,
Asleep on summer's breast,
But seasons pass,
And children's dreams,
Are soon put to the test.

The dream I dreamed,
Though much assailed,
In these my winter years,
By broken vows,
And fragile flesh,
And disappointed tears...

The dream abides,
Where love presides;
Never to let it go.
But wake from sleep,
Vigil keep, Heart steady,
Vision whole.

We are the dream He dreams of,
Breathed into birth,
Dreamed through all seasons,
Sons and Daughters of the earth.

So not disappoint Him;
Greet Him with each dawn.
Keep His dream alive.
Keep His vision strong.

Patricia Fleming Foley
April 2007



The Swan

Did you too see it, drifting, all night, on the black river?
Did you see it in the morning, rising into the silvery air—
 An armful of white blossoms,
 A perfect commotion of silk and linen as it leaned
 into the bondage of its wings; a snowbank, a bank of lilies,
 Biting the air with its black beak?
Did you hear it, fluting and whistling
A shrill dark music—like the rain pelting the trees—
 like a waterfall
 Knifing down the black ledges?
And did you see it, finally, just under the clouds -
 A white cross Streaming across the sky, its feet
Like black leaves, its wings Like the stretching light of the river?
And did you feel it, in your heart, how it pertained to everything?
And have you too finally figured out what beauty is for?
And have you changed your life?

Mary Oliver

The Snake (excerpt)

Still, what I want in my life
 is to be willing
 to be dazzled—
to cast aside the weight of facts
 and maybe even
 to float a little
 above this difficult world.
I want to believe I am looking
into the white fire of a great mystery.

Mary Oliver

LOOKING AHEAD

July 26–29, 2010
Precious Blood Convocation

St. Louis University,
St. Louis MO

May 2–5, 2011
Provincial Assembly

June 6–10, 2011
*Installation of Leadership
Community Retreat*

Savior of the World Center
Kansas City KS

WWW.KCPROVINCE.ORG

We invite you to visit our website
where you will find back issues of
The New Wine Press
as well as our weekly newsletter,
The Weekly Wine Press,
and the January 2010 issue of
The Wine Cellar.

COMMUNITY APPOINTMENTS

The Kansas City province has made
these recent appointments:

Fr. Tom Conway, to St. Charles Center,
Carthagen OH, retirement,
effective May 13, 2010.

Fr. Jack McClure, associate pastor
St. Thomas Aquinas parish, Ames IA and
SS. Peter and Paul parish, Gilbert IA,
effective July 13, 2010.

Please keep our members in your prayers during
this time of transition.

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MY BACK PAGES

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

Not everyone likes poetry. I do. It speaks to me like no other words can. My favorite poet is Mary Oliver. She writes with a keen observation of the natural world and with gratitude for its many gifts. Its cycles of life and death can seem brutal and unforgiving at times, but she writes often of the beauty that is at the heart of this mystery we call life.

We live in the midst of lots of ugliness these days. Some comes from us—in hateful and fearful immigration legislation, in public and political discourse that can only be described as vitriolic, for example. But it is also the underside of nature, as witnessed in destructive and fatal storms, or devastating oil spills (well, that’s mostly our doing, come to think of it).

I had the wonderful opportunity several weeks ago to attend a poetry reading by Mary Oliver, along with hundreds of other people. It was a welcome respite—the quiet beauty of words filled the auditorium as we entered her world, our world. Deeply. I’m tempted to say, “You had to be there,” because you did have to be there to appreciate it. Nevertheless, I recommend her writing to all of you, and I am sharing some of it here. The two poems on the previous page both speak to the presence of beauty. One could also read them in light of the topic of mission in this issue (try it).

Oliver has a dog named Percy, and has written a series of poems about her experiences of life with him. These are not just for dog lovers. They speak of things much deeper.

Little Dog’s Rhapsody in the Night

He puts his cheek against mine
and makes small, expressive sounds.
And when I’m awake, or awake enough
he turns upside down, his four paws
 in the air
and his eyes dark and fervent.
Tell me you love me, he says.

Tell me again.

Could there be a sweeter arrangement: Over and over
he gets to ask it.
I get to tell.

Percy Speaks While I Am Doing Taxes

First of all, I do not want to be doing this.
Second of all, Percy does not want me
 to be doing this,
hanging over my desk like a besieged person
 with a dull pencil and innumerable lists
 of numbers.

Outside the water is blue, the sky is clear,
 the tide rising.

Percy, I say, this has to be done. This is
 essential. I’ll be finished eventually.

Keep me in your thoughts, he replies. Just because
 I can’t count to ten doesn’t mean

I don’t remember yesterday, or anticipate today.

 I give you one more hour, then we step out
into the beautiful, money-deaf gift of the world
and run.
