



The New Wine Press

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

Volume 23 No. 9
May 2014



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Celebrating Faith with Sarah!

by Gerry Downs, Precious Blood Companion



*“These are the new olive plants that surround the altar...
and God is glorified and blessed.”*

- St. Gaspar, from letter 1270.

Even though St. Gaspar was not speaking of those who come to the Catholic faith through RCIA, this phrase speaks to me of the journey of the participants and their acceptance by the Church. For several years and in several different parishes, I was privileged to lead those seeking entry to the Church in their pursuit of a closer relationship with Jesus. However, now that my own granddaughter Sarah at age 14 is experiencing the RCIA herself, as well as Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation at the Easter Vigil, I am more appreciative and especially aware of those who seek and find a relationship with Christ through the Catholic Church.

When Sarah was just a few months old, her parents decided not to have her baptized, but wanted some sort of blessing and welcome for her. Together we arranged a date and invited family to be with us. We prayed for her and asked each family member to bless her and to show some sign of support for her. I will never forget how much it meant to all of us to welcome Sarah in this way, and to promise to love her and keep her safe.

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Sarah with her grandmother and author, Gerry Downs.

Sarah is the 5th of my seven granddaughters, 6th of my eight grandchildren. She was not raised in any religious tradition. My son, her father, was raised in the Catholic faith, is a 20-year member of AA, and believes in a Higher Power, but does not attend any church.

Sarah's mother, who was raised Mormon, was looking for a place to belong, and became an Inquirer. When I asked Sarah why she decided to become Catholic, she said: "The main thing that helped me decide to be Catholic was my mom. She was looking for a religion to belong to, and I

was being really badly bullied at school. I needed a Higher Power to help me through. Mom invited me to Mass, and I fell in love right away."

I asked Sarah what she liked best about being Catholic, and she replied, "The thing I like most is how seriously we take being Catholic. I love how everyone I know in the Church is so proud of being Catholic." She has enjoyed her RCIA sessions and her preparation for First Communion, and she truly appreciates her session leader, Louie, who has a passion for helping others find God.

On the first Sunday of Lent, Sarah and her mother went to the Rite of Election at the Cathedral of their diocese and Mom got to do the "Signing of the Senses." Mom told me that she was so honored to be there with Sarah and so privileged to bless her daughter that she was in tears. If I had been there I know I would have been in tears as well.

I asked Sarah what she was feeling when she received ashes for the first time on Ash Wednesday. "My school's last home basketball game was on Ash Wednesday. All my fellow cheerleaders were sad that it was the end of the season, or glad not to have crazy schedules. I was excited to go to Mass later that evening. It was an amazing feeling of grace and love that rushed over me as I got ashes for the first time."

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Days of Prayer & Reflection

Precious Blood Center

2130 Saint Gaspar Way
Liberty, MO 64068

Second Saturday of the Month

Next dates: May 10 and June 13

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

May 10th Presentation:

Mary

by Rena Tulipana

Precious Blood Companion



Questions?

Contact Br. Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S.

816-781-4344 x126

816-835-0344, cell

Stabat Mater: Pilgrim Virgin

by Gretchen Bailey, *Precious Blood Companion*

“Oh, how much we owe to the cross of Jesus Christ. It is the standard of our salvation, the mystical tree of life” Gaspar del Bufalo to Fr. Vincenzo Maria Fontana, February, 1824, #834).

We are shaped by moments; God is in each one. Crosses sometimes come into our lives within a moment, perhaps a moment we will never forget. I remember the moment I heard of my brother's death: I was sitting under a pine tree in the backyard. My uncle came and stood by me; he paused far too long for the news to be good. Finally he told me, “Your brother's been shot.”

I had no words. I just stared up at the top of the pine tree I was sitting under, thinking, “This tree is not the same as it was a moment ago. The tree is different and the sky too.” It had been a brilliant blue, but for me the color was gone. I watched my parents in the days and weeks that followed: I watched them cry at the funeral, I listened to them encourage one another to eat something at mealtime. There were long periods of silence in the rooms of our house.

But a few weeks after the funeral, a group of parishioners appeared at our door, unannounced. They held a large statue of the Blessed Mother; they had come to say the rosary in our living room. People invaded the silence of our home daily with Hail Marys, and on Friday the sorrowful mysteries arrived. My mother was the Stabat Mater. The Pilgrim Virgin and the parishioners from St. Boniface brought the gift of Presence, and that Presence brought with it the gifts of the Spirit. The sound of people sharing stories over cookies and coffee at our dining room table replaced the silence. Through the sharing of the Passion, my mother began to find healing; I found the blue of the sky.

My mother remained a staunch opponent of the death penalty. On the eve of a Supreme Court hearing on the cruelty of the death penalty in California, a news reporter called our home to see how our family stood in the issue. My mother answered the phone. She told him, “We have to forgive and move on.” He never called again. Precious Blood people know that the real story is in reconciliation.

*Appeared originally on the **Gaspar Virtual Spirituality Center**,
October 17, 2013.*

Celebrating Faith, continued from page 2

Sarah is beyond excited to be Baptized, Confirmed, and receive Communion for the first time. In her preparation session, she was taught how the bread and wine are not symbols, but that they truly are the Body and Blood of Christ that only appear as bread and wine. The fact she understands this basic teaching of the Church at her age, simply tells to me how mature and ready and open she is to becoming a Catholic. I will be present at Holy Week services with Sarah, and at the Easter Vigil along with Sarah's Mom and Dad and older sister. I will make sure I have an abundant supply of tissues and will be so proud of Sarah and her Mom. I know God will bless both them and their family as they continue their journey onward in the love of Jesus and His Church.

The New Wine Press

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 refounding. We accept and encourage unsolicited manuscripts and letters to the editor.

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Springtime: A Time for Hope

by Fr. Tom Welk, C.P.P.S., Leadership Team Member

I am writing this during the first week of April. The calendar says it should be warmer. Didn't it say spring arrived on March 20? But the temperature this morning was still below freezing here in southern Kansas. It seems as if winter just does not want to let go. As has been voiced many times: "Will winter never end!?" In many parts of the country it has been a harsh winter. "Will this cold never end!?"

We know, of course, that eventually winter will give way to spring, and not just on the page of a calendar. New life is already poking through the still somewhat cool soil. It won't be long before there is an abundance of new life in the world of nature. We know also that not too far down the road we will be asking, "Will this heat never end?"

Such it is in the world of nature.

So it can also be in our lives. There can be some very wintry times. The darkness can be overwhelming. For some it can be so overwhelming, they decide life is no longer worth living. Will the darkness never end? Why even try to keep going? There is nothing worse than despair.

It is still the Lenten season as I write this article. The word *Lent* is from the Anglo-Saxon word *lengthen*, "to make longer"; it is the Old English word for spring. During this time of the year the days become longer. The darkness of winter is giving way to ever-increasing light.

A ritual we engaged in every year during my childhood years on a North Dakota farm was spring housecleaning. It was quite a cleaning! No item or room in the house was spared this cleaning.

Liturgically, Lent is a time of waiting; a time of preparation. It is a time for some personal housecleaning; a time to prepare for the gift of new life at Easter. In our hearts we know that new life cannot grow within us

without making room. Lenten disciplines are intended to clean out those places that have become stale and old.

No matter how cold, harsh, dark, and long the winter may be spring tells us that new life is right around the corner. The stale and old are being overcome.

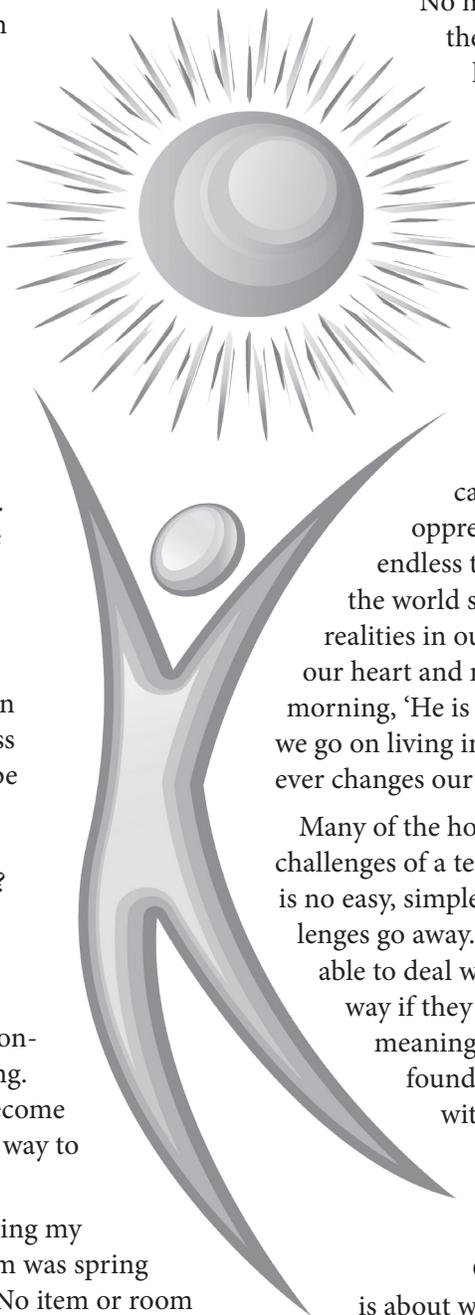
In the wider world of our deeper experiences we also need reminders that when things seem unendingly hopeless, stale and old, new life is possible.

Easter is that reminder. Jim Wallis wrote in *Sojourners* on April 3, 2014, "No matter what happens, or what seems to be in control, or how politically hopeless things seem to be, or how oppressive the state of the world is, how endless the suffering of the most vulnerable in the world seems to be—or despite how the painful realities in our own lives, families, or health occupy our heart and minds—Christians will affirm on Easter morning, 'He is Risen, He is Risen Indeed.' And then we go on living in that hope, which is the only thing that ever changes our lives or the world."

Many of the hospice patients I work with find the challenges of a terminal illness difficult to bear. There is no easy, simple, or magical way to make these challenges go away. What I have found is that patients are able to deal with their pain and suffering in a better way if they can find meaning in them. Not finding meaning in pain and death can lead to a profound suffering of despair. No one can live without hope.

Liturgically, this can be likened to the great feasts we celebrate as Christians at this time of the year: Good Friday and Easter. Good Friday is about winter; it is about death. Easter relates to spring; it is about new life. There can be no new life without letting go of the stale and the old. There can be no Easter without a Good Friday. Good Friday without an Easter makes no sense.

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Kneading Into Possibilities

by Sr. Donna Liette, C.P.P.S., PBMR Staff Member

The doorbell rings, the door opens and a new face appears—the little you can see, as his dreadlocks hide a lot of his story. “I’m Michael,” he says.

“Your last name?”

“Brunner”...BRUNNER! Poor Michael did not know why Sister Carolyn and I got so excited. We began to tell him our story of Mother Brunner and I can only imagine he wondered who else works here!

Michael is one of the boys Mike Donovan referred to as “The Lost Boys of Chicago” (*The New Wine Press*, March 2014, pg. 7). Michael’s father died suddenly when he was three; his life changed and he lacked the things many of us take for granted: family vacations, table talk, faith, security, and hope for a future. So at an early age he began to search for meaning in his life. He took to the streets, made some bad choices, dropped out of school, saw friends shot and killed, had a brother in prison. Seeing the darkness ahead of him, like many of our “boys” he felt alone, doomed to face years in prison or death on the streets.

Mother Brunner or Father Brunner must have been watching out for Michael, because through some probation requirements he was sent to our Precious Blood Center. As soon as he mentioned he liked cooking and had enjoyed his culinary arts class, Father Dave assigned him to Sister Carolyn, and “Mother Brunner Hoying” took him under her wing, embraced him and immediately put him to work. Soon Michael was cutting onions and tomatoes, planning menus, and shopping for groceries. As staff we sneak into the kitchen to get a cup of coffee and are delighted to watch the transformation in young Brunner. He feels secure, responsible, he belongs. He drops his street persona and little by little tells his story, knowing he will not be judged. He smiles and offers hugs; he feels safe and accepted.

Two days ago we knew the PBMR kitchen had turned into the little Swiss chalet of Mother Brunner. Sister Carolyn had Michael kneading dough: “Michael, you need to use you the palm of your hand, like this.” And soon Michael is doing just that with great seriousness.

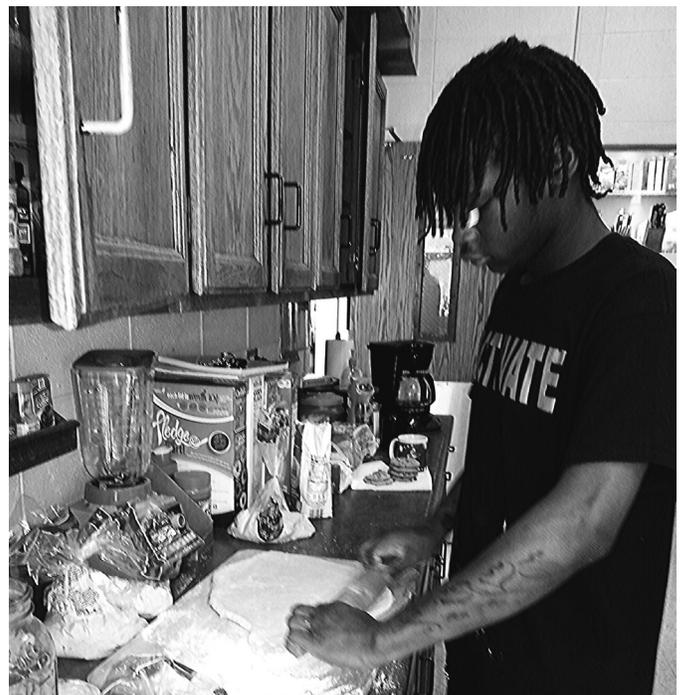
As I write this, it is Palm Sunday and I reflect on the similarities between Jesus and Michael: they stand

alone, accused; they fall and they get up, stripped and shamed. Michael has had a difficult journey, broken and scared; we cannot help but weep for him. Michael lives on the edge, on the precipice of destruction. Will he be one of the many black youth locked up or one of the dead? We live in hope that he will not be either, but rather one of those with a future.

Sister Carolyn has been a life-giving presence for him, helping him carry the weight of his cross. As Michael tells of his journey while kneading dough, she is kneading Michael, working with his stories, folding in lots of affirmation and stretching him beyond his imagination. In between, they sauté vegetables and do the dishes.

Each day Sister Carolyn welcomes Michael after school with a big hug and often takes him home so he will not be harmed on the way. She leaves him saying, “Michael, may God bless your heart! See you tomorrow.”

Mother Brunner, hear our prayer! Do not let Michael be lost to the streets. May he experience his own coming out of the tomb—his Resurrection!



Michael Brunner. Picture by Sister Carolyn Hoying, C.P.P.S.

Our Presenters

2014 Provincial Assembly



Joyce Rupp, O.S.M., international speaker and retreat director, describes herself as a “spiritual midwife.” Her ministry includes writing, national and international speaking, and companioning others as a spiritual guide. Joyce is co-director of The Institute of Compassionate Presence and

teaches conferences on the topic of compassion. She is the author of over twenty popular books on such topics as loss and grief, midlife, a memoir about her 450-mile walk across Spain, and several books of poetry, including her latest: *My Soul Feels Lean: Poems of Loss and Restoration*.

Joyce is a transpersonal psychologist, a member of the religious community Servants of Mary, and has been a volunteer for Hospice. She currently mentors a young girl at the Children and Family Urban Movement. Joyce resides in Des Moines, Iowa.

David A. Kelly, C.P.P.S. is Catholic priest of the



Missionaries of the Precious Blood. He has worked for Kolbe House at Assumption, a parish-based jail ministry of the Archdiocese of Chicago, since 1985. For more than thirty years he has worked as a chaplain in Cook County Jail and Cook County Juvenile

Temporary Detention Center. He has had experience working in jails/prisons in Ohio and Florida.

In 2000 David Kelly, along with other members of his religious congregation, began the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) as a safe place for those who have been impacted by violence and conflict. The Precious Blood Center of Reconciliation reaches out to the one who has been harmed, the one who has done harm and the community. PBMR also strives to be a resource to other groups and communities who seek reconciliation. David Kelly is also active in Peacemaking Circle training.

David Kelly received his B.S. in Bio-Chemistry from St. Joseph’s College and a Master of Divinity, a Master of Arts in Cross Cultural Studies and a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. His doctoral thesis is entitled: “Responding to Violence among Urban Youth: a Restorative Approach.”

He has been trained and certified as a mediator from DePaul University and has received training in the restorative practice of Peacemaking Circles. He has published articles and spoken on reconciliation, restorative justice and jail/detention ministry.

Leadership, continued from page 4

As a religious community espousing a spirituality of the blood of Christ, we are constantly called to live in this tension: letting go to have more. Letting go is not easy; we all know that. Letting go with no meaning can only lead to despair.

The cycle of the seasons (especially winter and spring) in the world of nature can teach us a great lesson. As new life springs up all around us, let us be reminded in the midst of whatever struggles and challenges we may have that these winter moments of our lives will eventually give way to new life within us.

Yes, this winter season seems like it has been interminably long. Take courage; it is coming to an end. At times it seems our struggles and the resulting darkness seem interminably long. Take courage; they, too, will come to an end.

May your hope spring eternal.

Happy Easter!

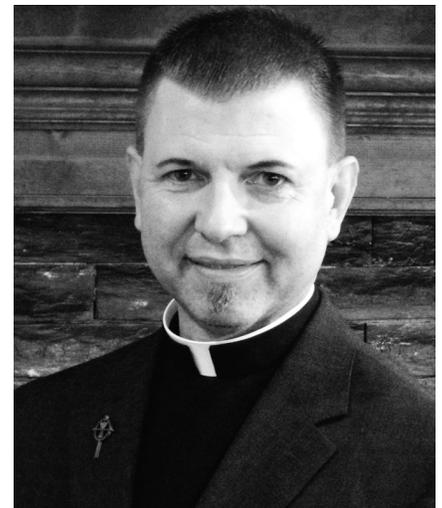
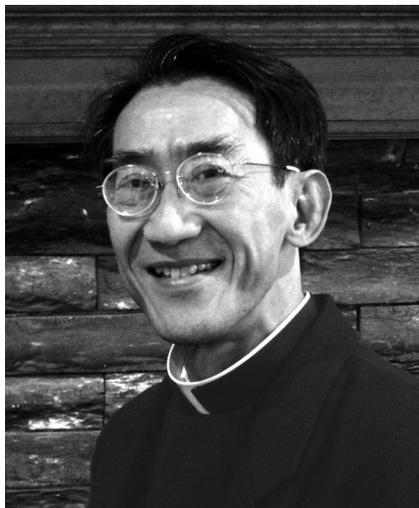
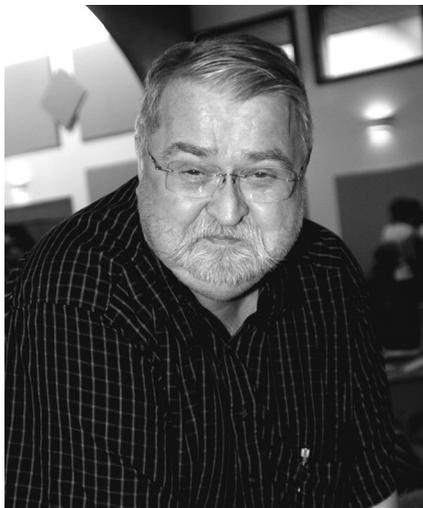
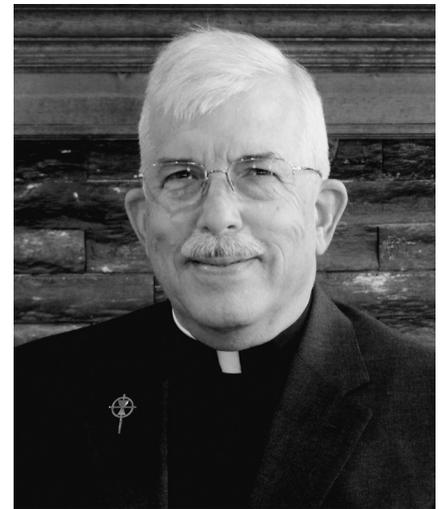
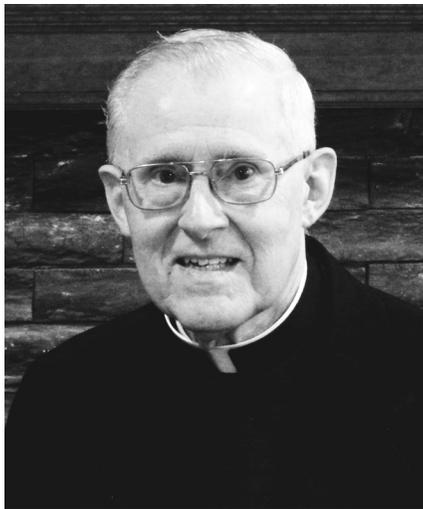
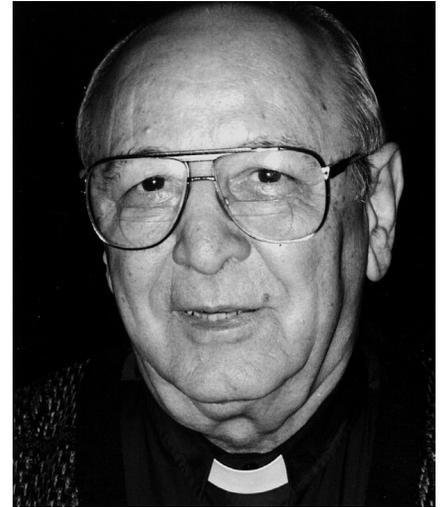
Jubilarians: Provincial Assembly 2014

The 2014 Jubilarians are:

Top row: Fr. Lawrence Cyr, C.P.P.S., 70 years of Ordination

Middle row (L-R): Fr. Edward Oen, C.P.P.S., 50 years of Ordination
Fr. Aloys Ebach, C.P.P.S., 40 years of Ordination
Fr. Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S., 40 years of Incorporation

Bottom row (L-R): Fr. Alan Hartway, C.P.P.S., 40 years of Incorporation
Fr. Lac Pham, C.P.P.S., 25 years of Ordination
Fr. Daniel Torson, C.P.P.S., 25 years of Incorporation





God—With Skin On

John Bockelman, September 20, 1926 - February 23, 2014

by Tren Meyers, Precious Blood Amicus

I can hear Jane, my long time spiritual director, saying to me, “At times you need to have God show up through the clear presence of another person—touch and warm expressions—sometimes we simply need what could be called ‘God with skin on.’” It’s true. If you’re really lucky, God shows up in the presence of two people at the same time. So often, in so many ways, God has showed up in the persons of companion John Bockelman and his loving wife, Mary. As many of you know, they almost always came as a team. With John and Mary, it was a team of love, of fervent prayer, of generosity, of joy and oh yes, of food.

I think John’s former pastor, Fr. Keith Branson, said it best when he said that John was “a true man of the heart.” I would like to say a few things about John’s heart if I might. Being a cousin of his beloved wife, Mary, I have known John my entire life. Little would I know that one day I would have the privilege to serve as his pastor as well (back in the 1980s). I will quickly say that he was the one more likely “pastoring” me than me pastoring him. In his humility, John would never imagine this to be the case but hundreds of times it happened in the most subtle and often non-verbal ways. Thankfully, God showed up with skin on quite a lot during those years.

John served as a corporal in the military in Japan and the Philippines; in 1952, he married Mary Meyer (they met at a barn dance) and also converted to Catholicism.

He worked for the railroad, had various mechanical and construction jobs, and was a meat cutter. John restored antique cars and tractors displaying them in area parades. He was a 4th degree Knight and very active in his parish as a server, Eucharistic minister and usher. I remember for some years John leading an “Our Journey in Faith” group in their home helping parishioners to sense Christ showing up in their own lives using scripture, faith sharing, prayer and food. That group really respected John’s gentle, sensitive and insightful spiritual leadership.

I have memories of competing with John to see who could eat the most hotdogs, fried chicken, ice cream or pieces of pie. He was a man of the heart, but he and I were not too heart conscious in our many eating escapades. He could play a mean hand of UNO and I can vividly hear his deep chuckle that broke out into a huge almost uncontrollable laugh as he handed me a Draw Four card or when he had beaten me at the game. When I think about it, I cannot remember anyone whose smile and laugh warmed me any more than his. John was the kind of person who would shake all over when he felt joy. I envied that in him. I sensed that on some deeper spiritual level he sensed God’s delight and allowed himself to feel it and express it fully. I suppose that is part of being a man of the heart.

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Sponsoring the Florida Companions

by Vince Wirtner, C.P.P.S., National Vocation Director, Cincinnati Province

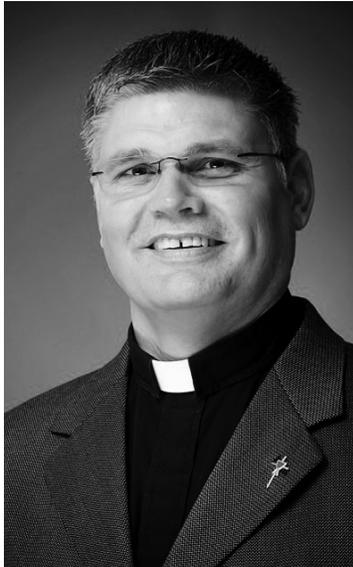
Back in 2005, the Cincinnati Province began an appreciative discernment process in which each member was asked to think about his commitment to and participation in the life of the Community. We were to list areas where we thought we could grow in the Community.

One of my personal goals was to be more active with the Companion Movement. The companions in Florida were an important part of my journey when I was in Special Formation at the Church of the Nativity in Lake Mary, Florida. Once I was ordained a priest and became director of vocation ministries, I had other responsibilities and couldn't really be a part of their lives as I had been.

Companions stayed on my mind and in my heart, though. I always saw the value in having covenanted lay associates living out Precious Blood spirituality wherever they are. I have a lot of respect for someone who can live it in their daily life, in the workplace, or with their family.

I have spent time with companions in the intervening years. I presented a day of reflection for the companions in Florida a few years ago. I would also visit with companions whenever I was in Florida. They are so much fun—and as much as I value the social time I spend with them, it's even better to pray with them. There's such a desire within them to deepen their own spirituality, and they are so committed to our Community, to being a part of the Precious Blood family. For them, Precious Blood spirituality is not an achievement; through their prayer and study, it continues to develop. And ideally, that's how life is: we continue to evolve.

When Fr. David Matz asked me if I would consider becoming the sponsor of the two companion groups in Florida, it didn't take me but a minute to say yes. The time that I spent with companions while I was in



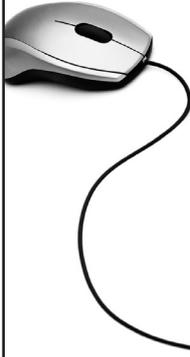
Fr. Vince Wirtner, C.P.P.S.

formation fed my desire to be more involved in the Companion Movement, not just to support companions, but to become more actively involved.

In March, I met with the companions and conveners in Florida so that we could explore how this new relationship will work. As always, we celebrated liturgy together and shared a lively meal. They realize that I live in and minister out of Dayton, Ohio, and know I can't be at every gathering. They told me, "Anytime you plan to come to Florida, let us know, and we will get together. We'll change our plans to include you." They will be companions whether they have a sponsor or not—but they are also willing to do whatever it takes to welcome me into their groups.

I also appreciate the effort that they have to make whenever any of them take part in larger Community events. The economics are different for them because they live so far away. For them to come to an assembly or retreat is a big financial commitment in travel expenses. They do it because community is so important to them. The simple things in Community life that some of us might take for granted can be very difficult for them.

They've had to do so much on their own in their time between sponsors, and they've done it all admirably, but I am happy to be their Community connection for as long as I am able. I know I will get as much or more out of the relationship than they will—and I'm hoping that they will feel the same way about me.



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- The New Wine Press
- Gaspar Virtual Spirituality Center

and more!

An Amaryllis Moment

by Cathy Pankiewicz, *Precious Blood Companion*

I am no superhero, but I am determined to save lives. Be they stray animals, babies in the womb, or wilting plants in the garden center at the end of planting season, they call my name and ask me to give them one more chance. Lives that many consider insignificant tug at my heartstrings. I feel compelled to make use of whatever resources I have and wait for God to bless my efforts. Sometimes I feel like I make a real difference and other times I don't. I just can't stop trying.

In the middle of February this year, I attended my first Precious Blood LGBT committee meeting. I had no idea what to expect but left the gathering energized and excited at having met some very interesting people. I even volunteered to write a brief summary of my impressions and ponderings. Soon after arriving home, I was surprised to note that an amaryllis bulb I had rescued from the trash bin at Earl May Garden Center shortly after Christmas had abruptly shot three beautiful green leaves from its homely root ball. Frankly, even I had begun to doubt my "rescue amaryllis" would amount to much. For weeks the ugly thing pouted in the sunny spot I made for it in a south window. It refused to reward my generosity with the awesome display of flowers of which I knew it capable. I feared it was too far gone, hopeless as a dead caterpillar in its cocoon. But, to my surprise, my sleepy amaryllis has awakened and in about six weeks I will marvel that something so beautiful is born of something so unattractive. Never did I imagine how much life stirred beneath the surface of what my limited vision saw. The plant had been alive all along!

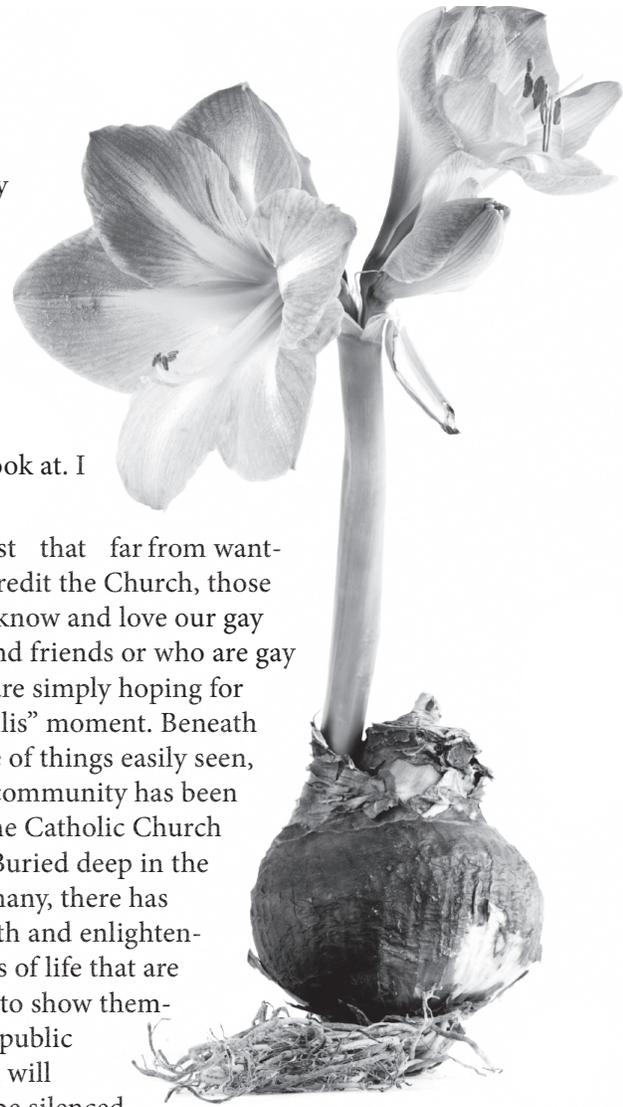
LGBT persons within the Church has have, like my amaryllis, their share of obstacles. For those who see the Church as being charged with drawing lines in the sand, making sure official Church teachings never waiver, and believing that is what Jesus wants, this ministry has caused an uncomfortable stir. I am sure that many of these good people are troubled or uncomfortable with the Church's position, but have been led to believe they have to accept it. Others may go so far as to see homosexuality as evil, an attempt to destroy the family and make a mockery of scripture. Still others just want to avoid the controversy all together and are annoyed that it won't go away. The young clerk at Earl May charged with post holiday clean out understandably wanted to

toss out my amaryllis and replace it with something easy to sell and pretty to look at. I get it.

I suggest that far from wanting to discredit the Church, those of us who know and love our gay children and friends or who are gay ourselves are simply hoping for an "amaryllis" moment. Beneath the surface of things easily seen, the LGBT community has been active in the Catholic Church for years. Buried deep in the hearts of many, there has been growth and enlightenment, signs of life that are beginning to show themselves in a public forum that will no longer be silenced.

Finally, many Catholics are becoming courageous enough to reach out to those who for far too long have felt different, who have loathed themselves, who have felt that their need for companionship and love would lead them straight to hell, who have felt they were "God's mistake," who felt unwelcome in Church and often in their own families.

Maybe it's Pope Francis, maybe it's the Holy Spirit, maybe it's both, but at our meeting, I felt something akin to what I feel looking at my rescued amaryllis. There is real growth and real hope for those in the Church who are willing to look more at the spirit of the law than the law itself. With time, they will see the LGBT Catholics with new vision and won't be afraid of them. Just as time and light have brought life from what appeared to be dead, real people, real education, and real experiences will bring about a new chapter in the Church's understanding of human beings whatever



their gender or sexual orientation. For me this holds the promise of beauty yet unseen in the days to come.

I have no idea what color my trash-to-treasure amaryllis will be. I don't know if it will have four blooms or eight. I don't know how long it will be before the actual buds appear and stand apart from the leaves. I do know that it will not release the delicate flowers until it is the appropriate time. In the same way, our LGBT sons and daughters will enjoy—in God's time—a bloom produced by the quiet perseverance of those who are hard at work in the Church and have been for longer than most of us are aware.

My hope is that after it blooms, I can save my throw-away amaryllis and it will flower again next year. I have no proof that it will. I do know that I can't make it bloom any more than I can make everyone support the Precious Blood or LGBT ministry in the Church. But as I try, I hope to remember what Saint James says, "The wrath of a man does not accomplish the righteousness of God." To rise above anger and fear, enables us to love each other in spite of our differences.

John Bockelman, continued from page 8

Some years ago, my wife and I were driving to visit Mary and John, and as we turned onto the secondary highway toward Cole Camp, we saw unattended bicycles under a tent with a for sale sign. I learned later John fixed up these bikes and asked folks to send him a check or cash using envelopes he left for them. It was all on the honor system. When we stopped there on the way out, the sign said that if they could not pay the full amount or could not pay at all—that was okay, too. Trust and generosity like that is sort of hard to find these days.

When I remember John and sense his presence, I will always feel that I got to know someone close to God. Perhaps I will learn from that and find a way to be more like him. John's way was unassuming, gentle, and never coercive. John's memory encourages me to love a little more, to trust more, to be a good deal more generous, and consider being somewhat more non-judgmental (as I do not ever remember him speaking ill of someone). I know God yearns to live through all of us—some folks just get the hang of it earlier in life and live it in very simple profound and non-flashy ways that points the spotlight away from themselves and to the other—and on the God who gave them the light in the first place!

I would say I have not ever met two people more proud and dedicated to be Precious Blood Companions than John and Mary. They have loved the Community deeply and dearly and loved serving as companions in their own ways often reaching out to support our members who served in Cole Camp, Warsaw, and others nearby. They have been "God with skin on" for many and I know they would say the members and companions gave the same to them.

Lastly, if you won't think me too odd, I want to share this image I have of John, along with his parents (Ivy and Alfred) and his folks-in-law (Great Aunt Maggie and Uncle Bill). They are all sitting at a big table with Jesus, St. Gaspar, the Blessed Mother, some resurrected C.P.P.S. and some other loved ones. I see lots of fried chicken, pie and ice cream, and it's possible they could be playing cards! I see them laughing so hard—bursting out with sweet enjoyment in one another's company—that they appear to be shaking all over, just like John used to.

Thank you, John, for teaching us more about God, about the power of prayer, about the precious sacrament of companionship and about joy! Please watch over your beloved Mary, your loved ones, and all of your Precious Blood family too. Thank you, brother. Please hear this prayer sent with love. Happy Easter life!

John's Mass of Resurrection was February 25, 2014 at Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Cole Camp with Fr. Bill Miller, C.P.P.S. and Fr. Mike Murphy officiating.

Call for Manuscripts

THE WINE CELLAR

Topic: Reconciliation.

Deadline for submissions: September 20, 2014.

Article length: 1500 words in Word format.

Poems, prayers and artwork are also welcome.

Please include a brief bio and four reflection questions with article submissions. Any member or lay associate of a Precious Blood community is invited to contribute.

Contact:

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The New Wine Press is committed to dialogue within the Church and charity toward all. Readers who wish to respond to the ideas shared in any issue is welcome to respond and continue the dialogue via an article or a Letter to the Editor.



Editor's Notes

Embrace or Tolerate?

by Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S., Publication Editor

How many churches do we drive past that proclaim “Everyone welcome”—when actually they aren’t? When I was growing up in a small town Protestant church, I think everyone there would have echoed the sentiment of universal welcome. However, anyone new appearing in the pews got the look of “why are you here?” This happened especially if they weren’t in their Sunday best.

Perhaps someone would have talked to them after worship, found out who they are and why they were there that day. Maybe an invitation to coffee and donuts was given, or to return next week, but there was an excuse if they never returned. If people come and don’t become like us, it’s easy to assume they aren’t getting the message or aren’t holy enough. After a first embrace, it’s assumed they’ll pick up our lead and blend in. If not, we’ll let them drift away, telling ourselves we did enough.

As Precious Blood people, we use the word “inclusion” a lot, and proclaim it as a key principle. We do a lot to reach out to those who are far off and try to bring them near. How deep does our welcome go, how much are we willing to let ourselves be changed by those who make us feel uncomfortable? Do we let ourselves get close and be touched by God’s grace living in all and open ourselves

to be converted by it? Do we give up on people we don’t think we can affect? Do we give up on people we don’t want to deal with?

It’s tempting to let the stranger in, show them a place by the fire, give them a bite to eat, and then ignore them. It’s tempting to sponsor someone from a distance, giving them a place we don’t plan to spend time in ourselves. It’s tempting to join in the condemnation of the judgmental, forgetting Martin Luther King, Jr.’s goal of converting the racist, the bigot. True hospitality is making room for people we feel uncomfortable with, people we’re at odds with, and doing more than letting them occupy space. As Precious Blood people, we called to speak the Truth from a close, common, family relationship. We all bear Christ’s Blood, we are bound to all, and seek charity for all, regardless. We do this after having been brought near by Christ, and speaking the Truth is another means to drawing closer, not pushing away.

This is as huge a challenge for me personally, as it is for anyone else. However, the call to discipleship is a huge challenge for all of us, and one we can embrace only with Christ’s help.