

The NEW WINE PRESS

Motivated by the Spirituality of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ

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SACRED HEART CELEBRATION

James Betzen, C.P.P.S.

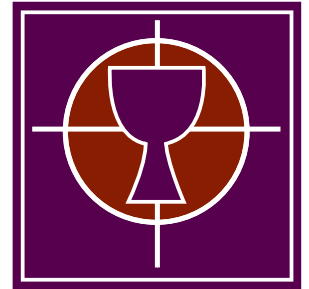
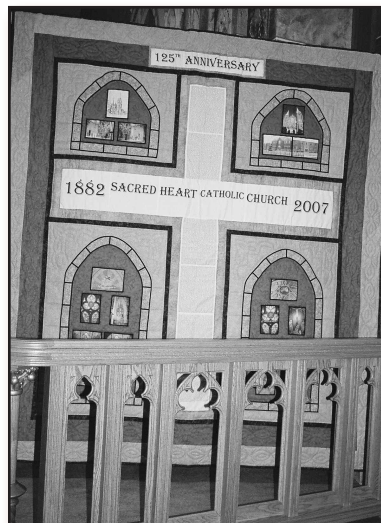
This year has been a busy one for Sacred Heart Parish. Both Sacred Heart and St. Patrick's in Sedalia have been busy promoting the diocesan capital campaign in the spring and summer. At the beginning of August, six parishioners and I began to plan the celebration of the 125th anniversary of our parish. We decided to celebrate near the annual bazaar, but a week before, so that those active in the bazaar could celebrate the anniversary. We also decided that our celebration was for the communities who have had a long history of service to our parish. The Society of the Precious Blood has served since the beginning of our parish; the Sisters of the Precious Blood from Dayton served from the beginning until June of 1973, a total of 91 years. It was decided that we would have a Mass of Thanksgiving in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and a banquet at the Armory in the Fairgrounds.

The following is the history of Sacred Heart Parish. Ministry to Catholics in Sedalia began before the beginning of Sacred Heart Parish in Sedalia. In 1838, St. John the Evangelist in Bahner became the first Catholic mission in this area, and supplied ministry to the Sedalia area. St. Vincent's Church in Sedalia (later named St. Patrick's Church) began in 1865. Sacred Heart was founded in 1882 by a group of German Catholics who left St. Vincent's to form a parish where they could have services in German. The Precious Blood community from Ohio sent German-speaking priests to serve Sacred Heart, beginning with Fr. Bernard Dickmann. The Precious Blood Sisters of Dayton, Ohio came to teach in Sacred Heart School.

Sacred Heart's first church was a two-story building that housed a church, school and convent. As the town's population increased, the small structure was unable to serve the needs of the growing parish population. Construction of the new church began in 1891. The cornerstone was laid May 8, 1892, and the church was dedicated and occupied in April 20, 1893. The church is

See Celebration, continued on page 4...

*The anniversary quilt on display in the church.
Following the celebration it was moved to its new
home in the adoration chapel.*



SAME OLD SAME OLD
page 2

ALWAYS OUR CHILDREN
page 3

THERE WAS A TIME
page 6

COURTESY OF THE HEART
page 7

OBJECTING TO WAR
PLAYING OUT OF POSITION
page 8

WE PLANT SEEDS
VOCATION OFFICE
page 9

REMEMBERING
pages 10 & 11

“SAME OLD, SAME OLD”

Al Ebach, C.P.P.S.

A group of members and companions gathered recently at Marillac Center in Leavenworth, KS, to vision the future of the province and the community. Hundreds of ideas, dreams and opinions were shared during this time, many of them similar to those we discussed during our April assembly.

Of all that was shared during those two gatherings, there is one question that must be the driving force: “What is it that God wants of us?” To many people this may be stating the obvious; however, it is easy to be so consumed with what each individual wants and needs, that the response can become self-serving. When God is the focus it includes such aspects as faith, tradition, charism, others’ gifts, and especially Word and Sacrament.

When our visioning is spiritually motivated, then people begin to listen with different ears and look through eyes as if for the first time. This is not unlike the ninety year old man who had been afflicted with cataracts for many years. Following cataract surgery he went out into his yard in the country and stood under a tree, taking each leaf he could reach, and staring at each one for minutes at a time. He was filled with joy and excitement, spending all day outside observing God's creation with brand new eyes. This is the kind of vision(ing) it will take if the community is serious about its future.

Those leaves had been on that tree from the beginning of its existence, but after his surgery the man likely saw the color green like never before, the texture and shape of the leaves as if never previously observed. Members and companions need cataracts removed in order to see God’s presence—as if they were viewing aspects of community for the first time, not just glancing at it, but

taking the time to study and observe every aspect.

In order to see what God wants, in order to discover a richness like never before, members and companions need to hear and see the “same old” Word, the charism that seems to be routine, and the gifts of others that can easily be taken for granted. It takes time and patience to really look at community life. It is too easy to say, “we have been there and have done that!” What if someone would have said to the old man with new eyes, “Those are just leaves which return every year, so move on.” He would have missed so much in the process. It is important sometimes to return to that which seems common, ordinary and routine and really take the time to look and observe.

In the last few years the community has invited members and companions to “dare to go where others will not go”—definitely a call for some. However, it may also be important in the province visioning to go back and look at the “same old,” which may also be where God is calling the members and companions. Part of visioning has to include going into one’s back yard to really look and experience that which has been part of the community for many years.

It is very important to invite people to look at the future with their eyes. It is also important to journey with each other holding a common vision. It seems that some people have a spirited vision, but do not have the patience to walk with others who need to look at situations with their eyes. There certainly is nothing wrong with following one’s call, but visioning becomes difficult when someone does not want to wait for others to experience community as they may need. It is difficult to vision when someone

See *Same*, continued on page 5...

THE NEW WINE PRESS Kansas City Province

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, 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, together with Precious Blood Companions, we strive to serve all people—especially the poor—with care and compassion, hope and hospitality.

The New Wine Press seeks to remain faithful to the charism of our founder, St. Gaspar, and the spirituality of the Blood of Christ with its emphasis on reconciliation, renewal and refounding. We accept and encourage unsolicited manuscripts and letters to the editor. *The New Wine Press* is published monthly. The submission deadline is the 20th of the month.

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ALWAYS OUR CHILDREN

Joyce Kable, C.P.P.S.

“God does not love someone any less simply because he or she is homosexual. God’s love is always and everywhere offered to those who are open to receiving it.” This quote is from a document called *Always Our Children* written in 1997 by a committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. I wish that had been the teaching of the Catholic Church when I was growing up here in Cincinnati!

I went all through Catholic schools, and everything I learned that had anything to do with sexuality was somehow connected to the sixth commandment, adultery, impure thoughts and mortal sin. Homosexuality was grouped with all the so-called evils of the flesh.

Although when in high school I dated boys and went to the proms because it was the expected thing to do, I never could picture myself being married. I really preferred hanging out with the nuns after school, and so most people were not surprised when I responded to an inner call from God to enter religious life. I went to the convent of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Dayton, Ohio after I graduated. Now, over 40 years later, I’m still a member of that congregation of wonderful women and have no regrets about that decision.

It wasn’t until I was in my late 20s that I had the slightest awareness that I might be a lesbian woman. I realized that I was in love with one of the Sisters. She had no idea how I felt about her and I couldn’t talk about it with anyone. I was filled with fear and shame, based on what I had been taught—that homosexuality was sinful. I seriously contemplated suicide, had a plan, and almost carried it out, because I figured that I was going to go to hell anyway. But God brought me through that very low time in my life. For many years, I blocked most of my feelings, tried not to think much about sexuality, and in conversations on the topic, I would say something like, “I’m a nun, I’m celibate, so it doesn’t really matter whether I’m gay or straight.” But inside of me, it did matter a great deal. I explored the topic various times with spiritual directors and therapists.

It took me almost 20 years before I finally woke up one morning in the early 1990s and said to myself, “Joyce, you’re a lesbian woman.” That is not to say that I was happy about that realization at the time, or that I accepted myself for who I was. After all, the Catholic Church was calling me “intrinsically disordered.” I did have the courage to come out to a few close friends in my

congregation, and little by little, to others on a very selective basis. Then in 1997, three major events changed my life and gave me hope.

The first was a conference in Pittsburg sponsored by New Ways Ministry, an organization founded to serve as a reconciling bridge between the lesbian and gay community and the official Roman Catholic Church. I had received three separate announcements about that conference and decided that God was encouraging me to attend! There were over 600 people there, women and men, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transgendered persons, pastoral ministers, parents and friends of gay and lesbian people, priests, nuns, laity.

It was a fantastic experience and dialogue, and many things stand out. The most significant of those for me was a presentation by Roman Catholic Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, who told the story of what it was like for him and his family when his brother Dan came out to them as a gay man. He told of his own struggle and his own conversion, his change of heart, when he realized that Dan had not

changed—he wasn’t a different person now that this new information was known. He knew that Dan was the same brother he grew up with and loved. He realized that God had

He told of his own struggle and his own conversion, his change of heart, when he realized that Dan had not changed. . . He knew that Dan was the same brother he grew up with and loved.

created Dan to be a gay man, that God’s creation was good, and that God loved Dan just the way he was. He believed the same was true for Dan’s partner. And he believed that Dan had a God-given right to be happy, to love deeply and fully, and to be loved intimately in return.

Then Bishop Gumbleton challenged those of us who were lesbian nuns or gay priests to stop hiding behind our vow of celibacy, to come out of the closet and support our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters who were taking all the heat of discrimination in society and in the Catholic Church. He said it was a matter of justice to no longer be silent in the face of homophobia.

See *Children*, continued on page 5. . .

Celebration, continued from page 1...

one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in the area, and has retained its unique characteristics through many changes, including the installation of the high altar in 1898 and the addition of the side altars in 1902. Electric lights were not installed until 1914. In 1926, the present Sacred Heart rectory was built. Major restoration in the church took place in the late 1970s while Fr. Vince Hoying was pastor. The entire project took three years to complete and was finished just in time for the celebration of the parish centennial in 1982. In the late 90s, the convent was renovated to become a parish center. Most recently, while Fr. Tom Albers was pastor, the sanctuary was renovated and painted. In addition, all of the statues were repaired and repainted. There are plans for the complete renovation of the church in the coming years.

Sacred Heart Parish has had a school throughout its 125 years. The elementary school began in 1882, staffed by the Sisters of the Precious Blood from Dayton. In 1938, Sacred Heart Parish started a Black Mission in Sedalia and it was staffed by the Precious Blood Sisters until its closing in 1954. Sacred Heart High School began in 1941 under the pastorate of Fr. Andrew Brunswick. In 1956, a new addition was added on the east side of the school. In 2005, a new addition of gymnasium and classrooms was added on the west side of the school. Today, there are 445 students; 197 in elementary, 121 in junior high and 127 in high school. Of the student body, 25% are of other Christian denominations. Dr. Mark Register is principal of the high school and Bonnie Diefendorf is principal of the elementary school.

Sacred Heart has played a major role in our Precious Blood community. Former pastors who are still living are Frs. Vince Hoying, Bill Miller, Bill Walters, Dennis Schaab, Mike Volkmer and Tom Albers. Former associates living are Frs. Joe Miller, Jim Schrader, Mark Miller, Joe Nassal, Linus Evers, Garry Richmeier, Jack Behen and Timothy Guthridge. Br. Robert Hermann also served at Sacred Heart. My earliest memories of Sacred Heart are as a student at Precious Blood Seminary. Each basketball season, we would come to Sacred Heart to play basketball on Friday and Otterville on Saturday. We would stay the weekend with host families of Sacred Heart Parish.

Many of the priests returned for the Mass of Thanksgiving on September 30th. Also, present were Fr. Timothy Armbruster from St. Patrick's

Church and Fr. Tom Seifner, a diocesan priest from Pilot Grove. The Sisters of the Precious Blood from Dayton could not attend, but sent a letter and history about their service to Sacred Heart Parish. Also present were Sr. Eileen Schieber, currently doing Hispanic ministry in Sedalia and Sr. Ellen Orf, former Hispanic minister in Sedalia, both Precious Blood Sisters of O'Fallon. Fr. Jim Urbanic presided and preached at Mass with Jerry Connery serving as deacon. The choir led the congregation in music with hymns in English, Latin and one in German. Also, a special historic quilt was made for the occasion of the 125th anniversary and will remain in the adoration chapel of the church.

After the Mass, parishioners and invited guests shared a meal at the Armory catered by the Country Bumpkins, parishioners of the parish. Following the meal, I invited former pastors and associates to share stories of their time at Sacred Heart. Several spoke about the support that the parishioners gave to them in their priesthood. Like me, they were grateful for the guidance that parishioners gave to them as pastors. Also present at the banquet was a history table and a parish historian read the list of the founding families of the parish. After the celebration, many parishioners remarked how special and wonderful the celebration was. We have memorial cards marking the celebration of our 125th anniversary and many photos of the occasion. My thanks to all from our Precious Blood community who came to celebrate with us. 🍷



Back, l to r: Frs. Keith Branson, James Schrader, Tom Albers, Tom Seifner, James Betzen, William Hubmann, and Ron Will. Middle: Frs. James Urbanic, William Walter, Dennis Schaab, Timothy Armbruster, Joseph Miller, and William Miller. Front: Deacon Jerry Connery and wife, Jayne, Srs. Ellen Orf and Eileen Schieber.

Same, continued from page 2...

may want to seek his or her own style of spirituality, or may not be too concerned about financial responsibility, or may not support others in their gifts, or even choose a life style that does not invite the fidelity that the “old” bond of charity calls the community to live.

The process of visioning also needs the spirit of joy—to be able to take time to look at those leaves and be enthused and excited about the experience. Visioning should invite opportunities to celebrate. It can turn into a painful experience because it can so easily become negative in nature, as if nothing good or positive has happened in the last two hundred years. Visioning is not about fixing something because there is a crisis. Visioning is about taking what is and what has been, and seeing what it is God wants of the community, responding to it with new eyes, and celebrating it with renewed life.

This truly is a time to share success stories, from the present and the past. In a visioning process it is also important to applaud apostolates people have been involved in through the years, including the present apostolates, and those yet to be chosen. This visioning is not necessarily creating something new, but rather it is an invitation for everyone to look at community as if it is the first time people have ever looked at it, and to become excited about what God may want of community members and companions. 🌿

Children, continued from page 3...

I drove home from that conference with those words echoing in my mind—a matter of justice. I made a decision to take up that challenge to no longer be silent. Little did I know where that decision would lead me.

The second event was the printing of the document *Always Our Children*, subtitled *A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children*. That document took a very important step. It acknowledged in print what medical science had been saying for years, that homosexuality is not a choice, but a given. It also says clearly that “...the fundamental rights of homosexual persons must be defended and that all of us must strive to eliminate any forms of injustice, oppression, or violence against them.” It goes on to say that “Homosexual persons must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity.” This at least was a beginning and it gave me hope!

The third event that changed my life was the formation of a local group here in Cincinnati called Concerned Catholics for Gay/Lesbian Inclusion. I became a member shortly after it was formed. It was started by a group of men and women, lay, religious and clergy, who had attended the conference in Pittsburg with Bishop Gumbleton, who were encouraged by the document *Always Our Children* and wanted to make the vision set forth there a living reality in our Archdiocesan church communities. As a group, we give seminars to congregations to educate members on the Church teaching on homosexuality as written in *Always Our Children*, to share and witness the faith journey of gay and lesbian persons and their families, and to begin the

much-needed dialogue so that we may become a more welcoming, loving, caring Church.

Together, these three events, along with many years of both therapy and spiritual direction, brought me out of the closet completely, even to the Archbishop of Cincinnati! There have been times throughout this journey that I have been hurt, angry and strongly tempted to walk away from the Roman Catholic Church. Fortunately, I belong to a group of Catholic Sisters who love me just the way I am and who support me in my ministries. Leaving the Catholic Church, which I love in spite of all of its institutional flaws, would have meant also leaving that group of women.

I have found hope and tremendous support in the beautiful people who are my gay and lesbian friends, in my small faith community at Bellarmine Chapel where I am a member, in the Reconciling Congregation of Clifton United Methodist Church where I have the privilege to serve as their parish nurse, and in an internet group of lesbian nuns throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. When I get discouraged, it helps me to remember the last paragraph of *Always Our Children*, in which the bishops offer a concluding word to their homosexual brothers and sisters. I share it with you now in closing. It reads: “Though at times you may feel discouraged, hurt, or angry, do not walk away from your families, from the Christian community, from all those who love you. In you God’s love is revealed. You are always our children.” To that I say: Amen! 🌿

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN...

Mark Miller, C.P.P.S.

It doesn't matter much which newspapers or magazines one reads, they all seem to express some dismay over the direction of the church and who is in charge and what is wrong with the "other" side. At some point, one begins to wonder if we have all forgotten that our salvation has been achieved through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not by following a systematic set of rituals as if they have the power to save.

Did we forget what is expressed in Hebrews? (Chapter 9) Have we forgotten the message of Jesus? (Mt. 7:21-27) Have we dismissed the prologue of John? (Jn. 1:12-13)

When I was Pastor of St. James in Kansas City, I was constantly reminded of its first pastor and his style of leadership. He was an Irish immigrant. I won't go into all of his practices but he had an expression that "there are many tracks but they all lead to the same destination." He was referring to the many churches in Kansas City at the time. He was ahead of his time in terms of ecumenism. However, we have just recently been reminded (in a papal statement) that seemingly only one set of tracks will offer us salvation. Have we confused the Institution of the Church with the Reign of God?

Perhaps some examples will illustrate my point. Recently there has been a whole series of approved rituals within our Church. The Tridentine Mass is now being encouraged throughout the world, a new ritual for celebrating quinceañeras has just been published, and people are being trained to be prayer leaders for the Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest. (SCAP) (By the way, why didn't they call it the Sunday celebration in the absence of the Eucharist?)

If one reads the prophet Amos, we know that his main concern was how the rich were cheating the poor by setting their scales toward the benefit of the rich and powerful. Why are our Bishops not responding to the effects of NAFTA and CAFTA upon the poor? If one reads the prophet Joel, one realizes that he raged against those who felt their religious practices of fasting would forgive their sins against the poor and widows. If we read the prophet Jeremiah, we recognize his greatest suffering came from the religious leaders because he confronted their arrogance. If we read the Gospels, we see Jesus chastising the scribes and Pharisees and bringing comfort to the poor, the alienated, the marginalized, and the little

ones. But no one dare confront the leaders of the church today for fear of being silenced. The most recent voice to be silenced is Fr. Peter Phan, a Vietnamese theologian.

Is the voice of the hierarchy crowding out the cries of the poor? There was a time when the Church spoke on behalf of the rights of workers (*Rerum Novarum*); now the Church speaks about who has the right to purify the sacred vessels. There was a time when the Church spoke about collaboration that exists among all the baptized (*Lumen Gentium*); now the Church speaks of collaboration only among ecclesial ministers (*Co-Workers in the Vineyard*). There was a time when the Church was the voice of the voiceless; now the Church has decreed whose voice can be heard.

How do these recent responses of the church leadership display the reign of God? Which command or teaching of Jesus validates these responses? Is the behavior of the leadership of the Church giving an adequate interpretation of what Jesus meant when he told Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church"?

I have many more questions these days than answers. I am assuming that it is still okay to ask questions. 🌻

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PRACTICING THE “COURTESY OF THE HEART”

Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S.

The German poet Goethe called gratitude the “courtesy of the heart.” This courtesy is hidden somewhere deep within the human heart as when we thank another “from the bottom of our hearts.” This familiar phrase suggests gratitude is grounded. It is buried in the holy ground of our hearts and rises to the surface when someone does something for us that is so unexpected, so surprising, so remarkable that no matter how much bitterness has seeped into the heart’s soil or how many sharp pieces of broken dreams and shattered relationships clutter the bottom of our hearts and cause the heart to bleed from time to time, this courtesy breaks through the rubble and ruin to whisper, “Thank you.”

In the biblical tradition, this courtesy of the heart meant that a person who receives divine intervention—for example, is healed of an affliction—offers a public expression of gratitude to God. It is this public expression of gratitude, for example, that Jesus expects from the ten lepers in Luke’s gospel. He is not offended because they don’t come back to thank him personally. That is what we might call the “discourtesy of the heart”—we do something for someone else and receive no thank you in return, not a note or a card or an expression of gratitude. “She did not give me the courtesy of a thank you,” we might say, without a hint of animosity or acrimony, of course! We just tuck away the lack of gratitude in the back of our minds and then cross that person off the Christmas card list!

But Jesus’ feelings are not hurt because they don’t send him a thank you note. He’s not going to cross them off his Hanukkah card list—not that they were on the list anyway since they meet Jesus for the first time as he was traveling through Samaria and Galilee on his way to Jerusalem. These ten lepers hanging around the entrance to the village are not members of the Chamber of Commerce serving as the welcoming committee. They are on the outskirts of the village, keeping their distance, because they are not allowed inside the city due to their condition. Not only is their illness highly contagious, but they are also considered ritually unclean because their disease is thought to be the result of their sinfulness. So they shout to Jesus from the fringe, “Master, have pity on us!”

As people on the margins of life often do, these ten identify the presence of God in their midst. But they had to be more than a little confused when Jesus tells them,

“Go show yourselves to the priests.” Though this is a necessary condition to be welcomed back into the community, when they start out they are still filled with leprosy and know they are not allowed anywhere near priests or anyone else for that matter. So their starting out in the direction of the temple is itself an act of faith and they are healed as they walk into town.

One of them, though, recognizes that he is healed and returns to Jesus “glorifying God in a loud voice.” This Samaritan is a member of a nation who is on Israel’s enemy list, a member of a people who by birth and by blood is considered an outsider. This one alone returns to offer a public acknowledgement of gratitude and praise of God. Perhaps the Samaritan returns to thank Jesus because he knows rejection, alienation and the feeling of being ostracized not only because of his leprosy but because of his identity as a Samaritan. The suffering he endures, the distance he keeps, the exclusion he carries with him at all times no doubt helped to cultivate the courtesy of the heart he lives. As Jesus extends the courtesy of healing to him so he extends the courtesy of heart to Jesus, falling at his feet and thanking him.

But it is also true that the Samaritan would not have been welcome at the temple with the other nine anyway. Even though he is free of leprosy, he would not be included because of who he is, where he is from, his blood, his background, and his belief. So maybe he returns to give thanks to Jesus not only to practice the courtesy of the heart but also because he knew that he would not be included until Jesus extended the ultimate courtesy of extending his hands on the cross and drawing all peoples near through his blood.

As we celebrate the season of giving thanks, this tenth leper might inspire a new movement of gratitude and grace that can lead us to a place of reconciliation. We’ve heard of people “taking the fifth,” refusing to testify under oath on the grounds of that any testimony he gives could be used against him. It is drawn, of course, from the

See *Courtesy*, continued on page 10...



The New Creation
REFLECTIONS FROM THE
PRECIOUS BLOOD MINISTRY
OF RECONCILIATION

OBJECTING TO WAR

Alan Hartway, C.P.P.S.

The profile of the Precious Blood missionary calls us to promote “peace, justice, and reconciliation,” and to allow God’s Word to “transform the patterns of human living.” One often overlooked ministry is an outreach to youth who seek conscientious objector status.

The Military Selective Service Act is still in place. If and when needed, the president can immediately invoke and put this law into effect. Following its suspension by Congress in 1975, it was re-authorized in 1980 partially in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Since March of 2006 military recruitment has at times failed to meet monthly quotas, causing some to suggest a need for a return to the draft.

Every male American citizen and those with dual citizenship must register with the Selective Service System on the occasion of their 18th birthday and are liable for military service until they turn 26—unless they can demonstrate exemption. One exemption is to declare oneself a conscientious objector to war, which must be accepted and approved by a draft board court within thirty days of being called to service. Information on how to do this is difficult to access, detailed, and complex.

Googling “conscientious objector” results in thousands of options. Only at the seventh page, can a person find warresisters.org, linking to the War Resister’s League, and objector.org, linking to the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors. Both are reputable organizations with accurate information about conscientious objector status and how to present a case.

The easiest way to register for the draft is through one’s high school or the Post Office. (Few high schools provide any information about declaring oneself a conscientious objector to war.) While not on the registration form at either location, a young man can declare his c.o. status by writing it on the form in these words, “I declare that I conscientiously object to all war,” date, and sign his name. Then copy the form and mail one copy with a stamp to himself. This will secure for him a Post Office mark on the form and date. This becomes an important piece of a file or case he will build for himself should the draft ever be implemented again.

Through letters of reference, documented readings, church membership in a recognized “peace” church (such as Catholicism), participation in civic engagement,

See *War*, continued on page 11...

PLAYING OUT OF POSITION

Keith Branson, C.P.P.S.

Considering how my ministry in Benton County reflects Precious Blood spirituality, I’ve been reflecting on Mickey Stanley, center fielder for the 1968 Detroit Tigers—quite a lot in this World Series season.

The Tigers had four good hitting outfielders and a shortstop with a Gold Glove who couldn’t hit his weight. Mickey Stanley was asked to play short during the 1968 Series because his manager thought it was the best chance his team had. It worked: he only committed 2 meaningless errors, did all right at bat and in the field, and his team won.

The Spirit led me to return to Warsaw, because I discerned I was needed here and I cared about the wonderful people here enough that I couldn’t say no. As a pastor, I feel more out of position than Mickey Stanley in 1968. There is a bottomless well of humility for me here, and my usual prayer is, “When I kick a grounder, at least let it be in the direction of first base.” However, life as a Missionary of the Precious Blood doesn’t seem to be about being in the ideal place, and so I whack my glove and wait for the next pitch.

As a Precious Blood Missionary, I try to be attentive to the folks on the edge of the parish, the folks on the edge of the county, the folks on the edge of acceptability. There is poverty here beneath the surface, and old, deep-seated prejudices. My main pastoral strategy is to preach the Gospel, do what’s needed, and be what they need me to be.

There is a bottomless well of humility for me here, and my usual prayer is, “When I kick a grounder, at least let it be in the direction of first base.”

This is a beautiful place; I love driving around and drinking in the lovely landscape. The vision that I try to invoke here is that there is a world beyond these hills and lakesides: a world that we’re connected to through the Blood of Christ, a world we’re called to reach out to, a wounded world we’re called to heal. It’s not a vision that will come quickly; it will break slowly like the dawn. But it is a vision that I cannot forget and one I’m called to proclaim gently and persistently. It’s easy to forget when you’re playing in your home park, that there’s other places in the league you’ll be down the road. 🍷

WE PLANT SEEDS

Marie Trout

Earlier this summer my husband purchased a new gadget for our car—a GPS (Global Positioning System). You punch in the information for a desired destination and a courteous voice tells you your every move. When you don't follow the given instructions or you take a different path the voice kindly announces "recalculating" and gives you the new correct information you need to achieve your destination.

Life might be easier if we all had our own personal GPS systems. It could tell us exactly what to do and what direction our lives should take. I could have used one this past year as I found myself discerning in what direction my life should be heading. I took the time to discern where God was calling me and after much prayer and listening to that "still small voice," it is time for me to leave the Vocation Office.

It was a difficult decision because I feel strongly about the connection between the Companion and Vocation Offices. In both ministries we journey with people who are trying to determine to what God is calling them. We invite people to look at call in their life and determine if Precious Blood fits that call. I plan to continue to serve on the Vocation Committee to continue the relationship between both ministries and to support the new vocation team. I will continue to minister with the Companions. I hope to keep the connection strong between Vocations and Companions as we continue to offer Information Nights together.

Being part of the Vocation Ministry Office has been a blessing in my life. During these past years I have met many people. All of these contacts have strengthened me and made me a more open understanding person. I experienced many men who were looking at our community. As I journeyed with them I learned about my own call and how to journey with others trying to understand to what God was calling them. I was blessed to learn and minister with men and women from the various Precious Blood communities who are also part of their community's vocation ministry.

Our community was not inundated with new members during my time in the office, so vocation ministry is also a study of patience. Part of the lessons learned was that we plant seeds, trusting that in God's time they will come to life. I learned to not be afraid to

See *Seeds*, continued on page 10...

FROM THE VOCATION OFFICE

Joe Miller, C.P.P.S.

Where are you at? Each one of us is at a different place in life. One of the challenges of a community, as I see it, is accepting people where they are in life. If they need to be challenged to grow or become better, we are called, as a community member, to do so. This helps us to become a better community if we do our challenging in the spirit of true Christian charity. As we grow as a community in charity, we will be a community that attracts people to us so together we can share the love of Christ.

College students are in a place all their own. The last Sunday in October, the William Jewell College Catholic students were invited to join St. James Parish in Liberty in helping out at St. Mary's Food Kitchen. It was good to hear the excitement and joy of the students who volunteered to go. They were very involved in the preparation of the food and in the serving of the food as well as the clean up. They worked hard. They did see they were needed and served a much needed purpose. It lifted my spirit to hear them continue to talk about their experience that evening at the William Jewell College Mass.

Last month, the Incorporated Members and the Conveners of the Companion Group received a letter from Marie and I encouraging them to share with others the importance of becoming more involved in the vocation ministry of our community. We may want to ask ourselves: How do we invite others to be a part of our community and what do we have for them when they get here?

Are we willing to tell people that we are a part of the Precious Blood Community? Are we willing to share our heritage? Let us continue to grow as a community bound together by the bond of charity as we pray for each other and for vocations. 🍷



As is the custom, members and companions are gathering at Precious Blood Center this month for a day of remembrance in honor of those members and companions who died this past year:

Fr. Austin Hermann

Fr. Michael Norton

Companion Virginia Beechler

Companion Oscar Ziesz
(photo not available)

There is a hush now while the hills rise up and God is going to sleep. He trusts the ship of Heaven to take over and proceed beautifully as he lies dreaming in the lap of the world. He knows the owls will guard the sweetness of the soul in their massive keep of silence, looking out with eyes open or closed over the length of Tomales Bay that the herons conform to, whitely broad in flight, white and slim in standing. God, who thinks about poetry all the time, breathes happily as He repeats to Himself: There are fish in the net, lots of fish this time in the net of the heart.

Linda Gregg

Fishing in the Keep of Silence

Courtesy, continued from page 7...

Fifth Amendment in the Bill of Rights. A ministry of reconciliation compels us to follow the example of the tenth leper and practice the courtesy of the heart by “taking the tenth.” Drawing from our own experiences of being excluded or feeling unwanted or unwelcome, we do not allow these memories to harden our hearts but rather use them to cultivate the holy ground of our hearts to uncover the seeds of gratitude buried there.

We “take the tenth” when we assess the soil of our souls and ask, “How many people are isolated and ostracized, pushed away or left out of our community of faith because of our fear, our mistrust or our misinformation? We are well aware how many people are excluded from the circle of community because of their creed or culture, the color of their skin or their sexual orientation, their guilt or disgrace, or what they have done or what they have failed to do. By “taking the tenth,” we commit ourselves to stand up for the truth of the expansive nature of Jesus’ message, mission, and ministry.

By “taking the tenth,” we commit ourselves to look beyond the labels and sound bites that so often cause separation and division and dare to go deeper into the mystery of the one with whom we disagree, the one who is different from us, the one we keep outside the purview of our care and compassion. By “taking the tenth,” we commit ourselves to be grounded in gratitude and to live from this holy ground of thanksgiving, treating each and every person with dignity and respect.

By taking the tenth, we extend this same courtesy of the heart that our generous and gracious God extends to us—a courtesy that does not place limits on God’s love but rather expands those limits in a boundless spirit of blessing and belonging—to all we meet, inviting all to take part in the journey of life where all can find a place and all can make themselves at home in the heart of God. 🌸

Seeds, continued from page 9...

ask people if they had ever considered a calling to religious life or to Precious Blood in particular. My nephews probably cringe when they know I am coming! We are all in contact with men and women that may be trying to understand how God is calling them. I encourage us all to look around to see the potential companions, brothers, priests or sisters in our lives.

My personal GPS is telling me it is “recalculating.” I haven’t quite figured out what the new destination is, but with continued prayer and being open to how God is calling me I trust there will be a clear direction.

I thank the many people who were so supportive of me and the vocation ministry as I learned and grew to understand how to journey with people. 🌸

The Human Development Fund (HDF) committee has chosen April 1 as the deadline to request a grant. This earlier date will hopefully make it possible for potential recipients to include the amount of their requests in their annual budgets. People can request forms at any time. Please send all inquiries and requests to Fr. Al Ebach, 5221 Rockhill Road., Kansas City, MO 64110.

THANK YOU

Greetings from La Paz! In the name of our Center Salud Integral. I want to express our profound gratitude for [the Human Development Fund] financing our work-study project. This will benefit our people so much, especially heads of households who need to both work and study. May God bless your generosity.

United in mission,
Sister Anita Fearday, A.S.C.

The Kansas City Province acknowledges with gratitude a generous gift of \$5,000 from the estate of Ronald and Angela Volkmer. At the request of Fr. Mike Volkmer who sent the donation, the gift will be used for the Vietnam Mission.

War, continued from page 8...

personal and dated journal, school work, and any number of other means recommended by the CCC or the WRL materials, a young man builds his case that he is a conscientious objector to war.

The case must be very clear that it is to all war, not just a particular war that is current. The case especially focuses on how one arrived at the beliefs and the influence one's beliefs have had on how one lives one's life. The c.o. status cannot be based on politics, expediency, personal convenience, or self interest. In building the case, a young man needs a community of allies in his family, among his peers, and from his church to stand by him and support him. Alternative forms of service then are available to be assigned by the selective service court to the c.o. person in conservation, education, and health care should the draft be reinstated.

The materials of the CCC or the WRL are available in public or university libraries. Frequently this work in a parish context can lead to liaisons with local colleges and high schools and enhance a part of a parish social justice committee's ministry. Conversations around this subject can lead to rich spiritual and faithfilled interactions with young men who may also then be considering a vocation. A Precious Blood missionary has opportunities through this work to live into our C.P.P.S. profile. 🌿

WE COMMEND TO GOD

- +Carl Micetich, brother of Companion Phyllis Tracy.
- +Leonard Brady, brother of Companion Laurene O'Connor.
- +Theresa Ann Pangle, sister of Companion Charlie Crotty.
- +Frances Baumgartner, sister of Companion Katie Miller.
- +Ashley Charron, great-niece of Bishop Joe Charron and cousin to Br. Daryl Charron.
- +Angela Rieves, mother of Carmen Wohler of the Center staff.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Maureen McNally, sister-in-law, and Jack McNally, father-in-law of Companion Rita McNally, both recovering from surgery.

Rose Caudill, daughter of Companion Catherine Caudill, surgery.

Theresa Hicks, daughter of Companion Virginia Shy, undergoing treatment following cancer surgery.

Virginia Richmeier, mother of Fr. Garry Richmeier, recovering from lung cancer surgery.

William Yates, father of candidate Mark Yates, knee replacement surgery.

Companion Patricia Foley, undergoing chemotherapy.

Companion Connie Swymeler, knee replacement surgery.

Larry Hershberger, husband of Companion Kathy Hershberger, recovering from heart bypass surgery.

Companion John Bockelman, cancer surgery.

MY BACK PAGES *Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.*

I write this early on November 1st, the Solemnity of All Saints; tomorrow is All Souls Day. The month of November in the northern hemisphere is a transition into winter; death and change is all around us in nature. Here in Kansas City the leaves are dropping fast, the pumpkin on our patio has succumbed to mercenary squirrels. Frost is waiting patiently just around the corner, as daylight shrinks. November is dark and gray and bare, unpretentious by snow and Christmas lights—an altogether appropriate time to reflect on death, remember those who have gone before us, and celebrate our place at the table.

Kathleen Norris, in *Amazing Grace*, tells of a friend who reassured her dying mother, “In heaven, everyone we love is there.” The elderly mother replied, “No, in heaven I will love everyone who’s there.” She reflects then on what she calls the “utter democracy of the heavenly feast.” The image of the banquet to which all may come and be fed is a strong one in scripture. Our place at the table, the communion of saints, occurs here for now—in eucharist and in service.

These days of All Saints and All Souls are a time to remember. The eucharist itself is an act of remembering, and in so doing, making present. Frederick Buechner, in *Whistling in the Dark*, says: “When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us... It means that even after I die, you can still see my face and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart.” “Remember me” is the prayer spoken to Jesus as he died,

it is the prayer we speak to the dying and the prayer the departing leave with us. Do not forget me is a plea for a life that does not end.

The communion of saints is made up of everyone, all those we have loved and lost, those we didn’t know we loved until we lost them, the ones we didn’t love at all, and people we never knew or heard of. Not everyone in this communion has moved to the table in the “company of heaven.” We are counted among the saints, even though we often we say, “I’m no saint.” It just means we’re not perfect, but that has never been a criteria for being holy. If it were, all our parishes would be named after either Jesus or Mary.

Ed Hays tells the story about a man who asked a hunter to teach him how to shoot birds. The hunter agreed, but the pupil not only failed to shoot a bird in flight, he could not even hit a stationary one. Finally, the hunter sent the discouraged man home, saying, “Just concentrate on firing at a piece of cardboard; when you have finished, you can draw a bird around each hole.”

Today and all month we remember the saints of our own families, whose blood flows in our veins today; we remember the saints of all families everywhere. As we remember them, we realize that in years to come others will think of us, remember us, and we will not forget them either. We may not feel like saints today; in fact we may feel much like the poor shot in parable. Perhaps we can let God do the drawing—a halo perhaps—around our efforts to live well. Not everyone we love is here any longer, but we can strive to love everyone who is—even as we remember those who went on ahead. 🍷

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