

# The NEW WINE PRESS

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

October-November 2008

VOLUME 18 No. 2

## EVERY LIFE IS SACRED

*Elaine Randolph*

*[Editor's note: The Catholic Churches of South Odessa, staffed by Frs. Joe Uecker and Mark Miller, hold a silent vigil each evening of an execution in the State of Texas. This is in response to our Community's public stance against the death penalty and a witness to one of the last words of Jesus on the Cross, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."]*

I belong to a Cursillo friendship group that meets every Wednesday—a total of six ladies including myself. One of our members recently suggested that we participate in the silent witness/prayer service in front of St. Joseph Church—held on the evening of each execution carried out by the state of Texas. We all agreed to try this, since none of us had participated and part of our commitment after our Cursillo three years ago was to evangelize and remain faithful in prayer for our brothers and sisters, even those we do not know personally.

It was a cool 101 degrees on the Wednesday we met for the silent witness. I pulled in running a little late and was given a poster by one of the ladies. At that point, I read the poster: EVERY LIFE IS SACRED. I don't know if one of the ladies in my group made it or if the group that faithfully meets made it. I must admit I have always known life is sacred, but it really hit me on this particular day. The life of the person to be killed by the state of Texas is just as sacred as the one he took.

I took my poster and positioned myself on the side of the street. I suddenly felt a bit out of my comfort zone and I could not understand why, because I usually never hesitate to be a witness for the faith, for the Church, for the truth. I asked the Holy Spirit for courage and I received it. I positioned my poster and moved it accordingly for the people in the cars that I could see reading the many posters lining the street. I prayed for the people who passed us by and pretended we did not exist. I could understand to some degree that this was uncomfortable for some, because they do not want to be involved at any level of any issue. I prayed for the person that the state of Texas was going to kill on this day.

Inevitably, my mind could not help but wonder what the family of the victim might say or think if they saw all of us here holding various signs stating that this person's life is important, valuable, and sacred. Would the family be angry? Puzzled? Confused? I prayed then for the victim's family. I thought, No one wins in this situation. How can this be justice? One man kills and we kill this one man? This does not bring the victim back to life and it simply seems to perpetuate the cycle of pain. Now, instead of one death, we have two.

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## THE NEW WINE PRESS

Missionaries of the Precious Blood  
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, 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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## LEADERSHIP NOTES

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

Years ago during a political campaign, three candidates—a Democratic, a Republican and an Independent were traveling together across country by train. At one point on the trip, seeing the crowds awaiting them, the Republican said, “I’m going to throw a \$20 bill out the window and make someone happy.” The Democrat countered, “I’m going to throw twenty \$1 bills out the window and make twenty people happy.” The Independent replied, “Why don’t you both throw yourselves out the window, and make everyone happy.”

“Blessed are the poor in spirit...” (also translated, “Happy are...”) So we hear in the gospel for November 1<sup>st</sup>, All Saints. But of course Jesus’ prescription is not necessarily ours. Several years ago while in Amarillo, TX, a headline from the local paper caught my eye: “THE TICKET TO HAPPINESS COSTS ONE DOLLAR.” On closer inspection of course, one could see the more explanatory subtitle: “LOTTO FEVER STRIKES AREA.” The payoff was 70 million, and tickets were selling at the rate of 33,000 a minute.

To be blessed (happy) probably requires letting go of what I think *guarantees* happiness, since it is likely wrong. Too much of life can be lived out of “if only...then I would be happy.” The values found in the beatitudes stand us on our cultural heads. Blessed are the poor in spirit, as opposed to shop, consume, accumulate; blessed are the merciful, in a culture that likes to publicize sin and take revenge; blessed are the peacemakers, when so many promote war and profit from it. Blessed (happy) are they who know what is important.

The month of November this year comes to a close just after Thanksgiving Day. While this holiday is sometimes observed by giving thanks and then seeing just how much one can eat and drink, the liturgy of the day can point us elsewhere. I especially like the gospel parable of the person who had accumulated too much stuff. His solution was to put up more buildings (Jesus: “Sorry, wrong answer!”). Storage facilities are big business. One company in their advertisement promises: “We play music to your things so they won’t get lonely.” Nothing but the best for my stuff, climate controlled, and of course the best security money can buy. All for things people don’t have room (use?) for.

*“Happiness is not getting what you want; it’s wanting what you already got.”*  
Garth Brooks



Thanksgiving resonates with one of the stories that make up our national memory—pilgrims who responded to the blessing of survival and plenty by making a choice to give thanks and share the abundance. While gratitude is not an attitude best produced by comparing ourselves to others or finding someone else worse off, it is true that we are not poor. For most of us, there is nothing which we need that we don’t already have. That’s not necessarily the basis for giving thanks, but it is important to acknowledge. The website [www.globalrichlist.com](http://www.globalrichlist.com) provides a calculator that tells where one stands in relation to the world’s population based on yearly income. For example, if you make \$5000 a year, you are in the top 14.39% richest people in the world; \$50,000 bumps you up to the top .98%. Most people around the globe live in dwellings smaller than most living rooms here.

Eleven years ago this month, *The New Wine Press* ran an article which addressed the many “paradigm shifts” in religious life in general and the Kansas City Province

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How does legalized murder bring healing? It can only perpetuate feelings of vengeance and anger. As the time passed, my mind had so much to think about, I forgot about the heat. All life is sacred. Yes it is. I tell myself: My ways are not God's ways. God sees what I may never understand. What kind of childhood did this person have? Did he suffer a traumatic event? Did he experience profound pain? God knows. I do know this for certain, that no one grows up saying: "I want to kill someone so I can then in turn be killed." A few cars pass and honk in support of the messages. Thirty minutes pass quickly between the prayers and flood of thoughts. It is time to put our posters away and time to pray for this person, the one which the state of Texas—that includes me—will kill today.

We walk into the church still speechless. It is clear that all of us from the friendship group have had a profound experience. We were silent witnesses for life. Some of us are deep in thought, some of us on the brink of tears. The prayer service begins. How the prayer begins shakes me and reminds me we are here for one person who is staring death in the face. I hear the name of the person. I hear details about him. I hear about the crime he committed and what he did. He is a person. He is my brother in Christ. Yes, Christ even died for him. This man becomes real. He is someone's son, maybe someone's brother or uncle. This man is real.

As I hear about his crime, my mind goes to the victim again. I pray for the victim's soul, reminding myself that being murdered is not a free ticket into heaven. It is a bittersweet moment because I feel torn between the victim and the young man we are here for today. I experience sadness for the victim and her family. I experience sadness for the young man who will die as the result of a legal murder.

This is such an oxymoron. Just because we have a legal term for murder does not make it morally acceptable. It cannot be right! I think of how many take "an eye for an eye" out of context, forgetting the part in the scripture that says this is to be no more. I am moved to tears as the music is sung. I long for peace in the victim's family and I long for peace in the young man who will face his murder today.

All lives are sacred. Regardless of poor decisions, all lives are sacred. All of us are created in the image of God. I can only find consolation during this time in prayer. I begin to pray for the state of Texas. I pray for the conversion of hearts for all those who support legalized murder. I begin to pray for the soul of this young man. I pray for the pain his family will experience. I pray for healing, for peace. I pray once again for the victim and her family.

I can only find comfort in the storm of sadness and heaviness in prayer. I must surrender all judgmental thoughts about the victim's family, the victim, the young man, and his family. I must pray, for only prayer subsides the whirlwind of emotions. I am reminded not only of how fragile life can be but of how each and every life is sacred.

The prayer service comes to an end, and yet it feels as if no resolution has been reached. Someone will still die tonight. I must pray for his soul. I must pray for those he leaves behind. I arrived with a heaviness and leave with a different type of heaviness. There is a double standard. Murder is not allowed under any circumstances unless the state of Texas says so. I must pray. You must pray. We must pray. 🙏

*Elaine Randolph is a parishioner of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Odessa, TX.*

On June 11, 1998, the Kansas City Province took a corporate stand in opposition to the death penalty.

# THE VIEW FROM VIETNAM

Dominic Nhan Bui, C.P.P.S.

I arrived in the U.S. on the last day of May 2008. What I had only heard about the community previously, I could now see with my own eyes. During the Assembly I saw how amicably and seriously the two groups of people, incorporated members and Companions, worked together. In Vietnam, the separation between the religious and the laity is very clear and obvious, but it's not so here. I noticed that many Companions participated in, led, presided and shared their opinions at the joint meetings and discussions and liturgies. Though my comprehension was limited by the language barrier, the four days at the Assembly were a wonderful opportunity for me to meet with and talk to the many members and Companions.

This U.S. trip became more interesting when I participated in the Special Formation Program. Bob Jansen was the only candidate of the three North American provinces in this year's program, so my participation made it a group of two, like Jesus' commissioning of disciples, two by two (Lk 10:1). Through this program I had opportunities to review community history, particularly its formative and expanding periods in the U.S. This was also an opportunity for me to recall and study more deeply the spirituality and charism of the community.

Many times as I observed Father Dan and Bob discussing. Although not able to understand fully the contents of their exchanges, I learned many things through the ways they talked to each other. They talked and exchanged opinions in a frank, friendly and on equal terms. Upon special occasions such as when the S.V.D. seminarians, Joseph Tam and Peter Phong, were present to interpret, I had opportunities to understand more clearly the things Father Dan presented, and Father Dan and Bob got to know more about the people, the Church and the cultures in Vietnam. I received the C.P.P.S. energy from the Cincinnati brethren during the days living with the Woodlawn community in Chicago; they offered me a broader view of the international C.P.P.S. world.

During the days in the U.S. I also had opportunities to visit a few Vietnamese communities in Houston, Seattle, Chicago, and

Kansas City. There was a high spirit among these communities. The fact that these families went to church together, husbands and wives and their children sitting together, presented a beautiful picture that I could never see in Vietnam. Today's Vietnam is increasingly transformed and influenced by the industrialized and westernized cultures. I tried to fathom this trend through the times I interacted with these Vietnamese Americans. I tried to understand the ways in which they are living, and how they are living out their faith. The clergy and religious in the U.S., like pastors searching out their flocks, as demanded by their vocation, are more intimate, open, friendly and equal with their parishioners. The churches of the Vietnamese in the U.S. are often small, simple, tending more towards

practicality (like air conditioning) than the external architectural appearance. Such is also the architectural styles of most people in the U.S.

It was delightful to experience the living environment and high quality of living that the American society has developed. Though the living environment is yet to be developed to its ideals, the people's community awareness is more advanced. They planted lots of trees, covered their yards with green grass, making the air much cleaner and healthier. Several months before arriving, I took a course titled *Spirituality of Environment*, in which the class discussed many things—but they all seemed to be just theoretical.

In America I saw more clearly environmental issues and how seriously human living is impacted by the quality of the environment. This is a particular characteristic of an environmentally aware society that has respect for and lives in harmony with nature.

This is also true in regard to religion. Religious life and living out one's religion also



*Bob Jansen and Dominic Bui during their Special Formation Program this past summer.*



need to be exercised naturally; there is no need for having to coerce oneself into living religion. There seemed to be more than 24 hours a day living in the U.S., for people could sleep longer—unlike in Vietnam where people force themselves to get up at 4:30 A.M. to arrive at church on time for morning Mass. In the U.S., Mass is often celebrated later, around 9 or 10 A.M., so that when people arrive in church they appear more rested and relaxed as they attend the liturgy. An economically advanced living impels people toward more suitable ways of living faith. Hopefully, someday the people in Vietnam will no longer have to celebrate Mass so early.

Like the three disciples seeing the glory of God on the mountain top, and wanting to set up tents there to adore and enjoy glories (Lk 9:28-36), from the top of the Sears Tower I saw parts of the prosperity and impressiveness of America, where material life is said to be consummated. I was challenged by such abundance to remain there longer. But such temptation could not overcome my awareness of who I am, of where I am called to live and be of witness. A Gospel passage came to my mind, “One day while standing in front of the Temple, while the disciples were admiring its grandeur Jesus said ‘... there will come the day when not a stone stands on top of the other’” (Mk 13:1-2).

When the plane entered Vietnam’s airspace I felt like wanting to scream out with all my might, “Oh, Vietnam, my poor country!” As a C.P.P.S. I still need to love, to live out my vocation and mission at the very place where renewal and reconciliation are becoming ever more seething and urgent. It is as if because the land in Vietnam is at a lower altitude than that of the U.S., the blood of redemption must flow into it and spread deeper. Now I see and appreciate more the mission that Frs. Dien and Lac are trying to carry out in Vietnam.

I know that the persons responsible for my trip to the U.S. had carefully arranged the trip—like having interpreters available so that I could learn more English, and not be shocked by the differences of culture, language and ways of living. All details of the tasks undertaken, noticeable as well as invisible, bespoke of the Precious Blood spirituality, a heritage from generations of hard work that we enjoy today.

As Vietnamese wisdom sayings observe: “Hundreds of hearing equal not one seeing,” or “One day’s travel is a bushel of wisdom.” The 60 days in the U.S. had gained me 60 bushels of wisdom.

All through the days in the U.S., I had enjoyed peace, safety, not having to fear traffic accidents, being mugged, pockets slit, not being awakened in the middle of the night for residency permit control checks. I thank sincerely the members and companions of the community who were so friendly in welcoming me. Each time I remember you I feel the warmth of human and fraternal love of the C.P.P.S. family in my heart. 🙏

*“I saw parts of the prosperity and impressiveness of America, where material life is said to be consummated. I was challenged by such abundance to remain there longer. But such temptation could not overcome my awareness of who I am, of where I am called to live and be of witness.”*

## +REMEMBERING COMPANION RALPH WHEELER

Ralph was so humble and would think himself not worthy of this. He was such a kind and gentle spirit but also liked to have fun. I loved hearing the stories told when he gathered with the priests and brothers on our trips back to Ohio. They always welcomed our family, and our kids have great memories of those trips.

He was thrilled when we were able to be Companions and he made special efforts to get to North Dakota during those first years. We had 37 wonderful years and there are so many good memories with family, friends and especially Precious Blood people. His legacy will be in Rainbow Lodge Retreat and the wonderful area he built for all to come and enjoy the peace and beauty of the prairie. His priorities were in order with the two chapels he built for all faiths to worship. He was a wonderful husband, father and friend.

Ralph was born May 28, 1935 to Russell and Elizabeth (Gstohl) Wheeler. He spent his growing up years on the farm in Potter County, going to school at the country school across from their home and in Hoven for two years of Catholic school, graduating from high school in Hoven. Precious Blood priests were stationed at Seneca for some years and spent time at the Wheeler home. Ralph joined the Precious Blood order as a brother and spent nine years in Ohio and Liberty. He especially enjoyed his time at Fleetwood where he made many lasting friendships and had lots of good times.

On June 3, 1971 Ralph and I were married at the Gettysburg Hospital Chapel. We moved to his cabin at Latham Lake and raised our family there. He worked as a meat cutter and cheese maker, and in 1990 we established Rainbow Lodge Retreat Area at Latham Lake. He was humbled when we could have Mass in one of our chapels, in particular when someone from the Precious Blood community would be visiting. People of many other faiths used the chapels as well and they would often be in awe of the statues and meditation areas, even though it was definitely Catholic.

Ralph died Sept 15, 2008. The funeral was Sept 18<sup>th</sup> at St. Thomas Church in Faulkton, SD with Fr. Joji presiding. Fr. Jim Urbanic was the concelebrant. Burial was in the family Rainbow Cemetery by the Guadalupe Chapel. Ralph's brother Lawrence was buried there in April of 2006. He was also preceded in death by his parents, brother Edward, and infant brother Joseph. Our children are Lisa Marie Wheeler (Lincoln, NB), Robert Joseph (Melissa) Tasia, Cody, Dustin and Keegan (Milbank, SD,) Nicole Elizabeth ( Lee ) Sumner, Zach, Madison and Gabriel (Aberdeen, SD), and Nathan Ralph of Sioux Falls, SD. 🌹

*Claire Ann Wheeler*

Ralph Wheeler was a Brother Candidate with our Novitiate class at St. Mary's Novitiate in Burkettsville, OH in 1956-57 in preparation for our Temporary Profession for membership in the Society of the Precious Blood. His affable spirit, along with his "green thumb" and gift with flowers nurtured by Br. Jude Brown, are still vivid in my mind.

After novitiate "Br. Julian" (aka "Julie") lived and worked at St. Charles Seminary at Carthagena, OH. One of his assignments whereby he shared his warm hospitality with the community members was as caretaker and

host of nearby Fleetwood on Lake St. Marys at Celina.

He was the first cook at Precious Blood Seminary in Liberty, MO when it opened in 1963.

When I was at St. Anthony Parish in Linton, ND, I spent several Thanksgivings at the Wheeler home in Seneca, SD—with

Ralph, Claire Ann, and children leading the music at a home Mass before the dinner. On another occasion I offered Mass in the shelter where they hosted retreat groups at their Bed & Breakfast. I felt so at home at the grotto in the little thicket modeled after the grotto which had been at St. Mary's Novitiate. On the grounds around the lake were also a greenhouse and a little chapel.

Learning that Ralph and Claire Ann had become Precious Blood Companions deepened my sense of kinship with them. I grieved when I became aware he was suffering in recent years from depression. I regretted I was unable to be at his Funeral Mass and with family and friends on September 18. May his gifts and loving care continue to give glory to God and bring enrichment to us on our pilgrim journey. 🌹

*Bill Miller, C.P.P.S.*



*Ralph Wheeler in his greenhouse.*

# LIGHT FOR EVERYONE

Jim Sloan, C.P.P.S.

Mario Bucci is my favorite Italian and was my favorite professor when I was a student in Florence. He taught Romanesque architecture and sculpture as well as 14<sup>th</sup> century Tuscan frescoes. He was unsure of what to call this priest who was his student so at first he called me *professore*. When I insisted that he was the *professore* and I was the *studente*, he then called me *monsignore*, and finally settled on *padre*. The day I graduated with a masters in Italian Art History he beamed broadly as he said: Now I call you *dottore*.

I thought of my friend Mario Bucci when, at the garden party following the dedication of Oakland's new cathedral, Bishop emeritus John Cummins saw me walking towards him as he spoke with some people and said with a smile on his face: "Here comes the architect." Of course I am not an architect, as he well knows, but during the years I was on his building committee for the diocese of Oakland, dealing with real architects, he made me feel that I belonged in their company.

When asked to share something of my 27 years as a C.P.P.S. priest in the San Francisco Bay Area, I would have to say that this God-given interest in church architecture—in all kinds of architecture really—has been part of the picture, though normally in the background. Parish ministry has been my main focus, along with C.P.P.S. leadership, seminary formation and work with Companions.

Coming to greater understanding of the spirituality of the Blood of Christ is something that has evolved over the years. There has been a growing understanding that what we are already about is influenced by this spirituality. Certainly this has been true of the main outreach of the C.P.P.S. in the Bay Area and in the Los Angeles area, which has been increasingly an outreach to immigrants—not just bringing them near through the Blood of Christ but realizing that they are already near through the Blood of Christ.

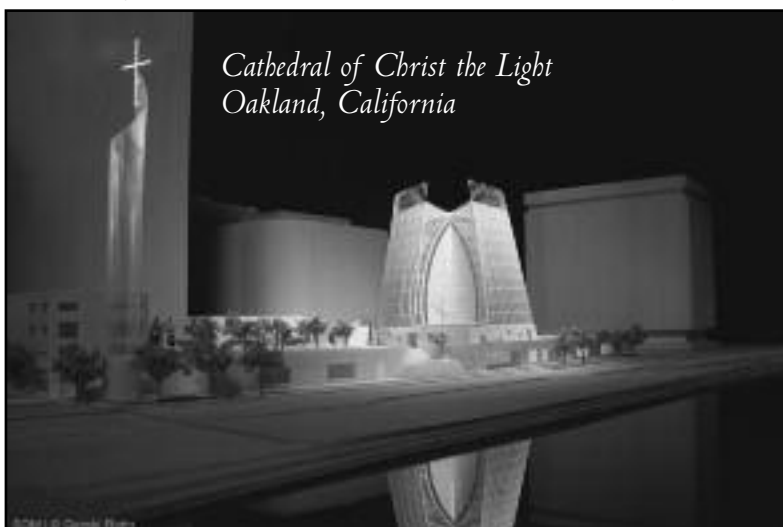
*One Pentecost Sunday. . . I listed the countries of origin of the people in our pews: Italy, the Philippines, China, Portugal, Mexico, Vietnam, Poland, Germany, Belgium, Argentina, to name just some. I then asked if I had missed anyone's country of origin. No one put up their hand, but after Mass a lady came to the sacristy and shyly said "I am Inga Garcia and I am from Iceland."*

During the thirteen years when I was associate and then pastor of St. Barnabas Church in Alameda, I had not only the Naval Air Station within the parish boundaries, but the largest physical presence was the enormous aircraft carrier *Enterprise*, towering over the west end of the island. The navy presence brought thousands of personnel and workers to the Naval Air Station and scores of children to the parish school.

Over and above these navy-related people there was the mix of nationalities that made Alameda such a vibrant place. One Pentecost Sunday while commenting on the account from the Book of Acts regarding the great many foreigners who heard the apostles each speak in their own language, I listed the countries of origin of the people in our pews: Italy, the Philippines, China, Portugal, Mexico, Vietnam, Poland, Germany, Belgium, Argentina, to name just some. I then asked if I had missed anyone's country of origin. No one put up their hand, but after Mass a lady came to the sacristy and shyly said "I am Inga Garcia and I am from Iceland."

There was a C.P.P.S. presence at St. Barnabas for nearly 50 years. There still is, in the Alameda Companions. We were welcoming immigrant people for all those years, especially a large number of Filipinos who came to St. Barnabas and to the entire Bay Area. I would say that the inclusivity and sense

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





# PRECIOUS BLOOD LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Sr. Eva Janning, C.P.S.

The 2008 PBLC Autumn Gathering was held October 2-4 at the A.S.C. Precious Blood Spiritual Center in Columbia, Pennsylvania. Present were: Fr. Jim Urbanic, C.P.P.S., Liberty, MO (Chairperson); Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S., Dayton, OH; Sr. Florence Seifert, C.P.P.S., Dayton, OH; Sr. Mary Whited, C.P.P.S., O'Fallon, MO; Sr. Joni Belford, C.P.P.S., executive director; Sr. Eva Janning, C.P.S., Reading, PA/ Toronto, ON; and Fr. Mario Cafarelli, C.P.P.S., Toronto, ON

The first evening we met for prayer and faith-sharing. Our business meeting filled all of Friday and part of Saturday. Sr. Joni navigated us expertly through a full agenda including:

1. Reviewing our finances and investments, we were very much aware of the impact of the roller coaster ride of this year's market. We deferred making changes in the hope of a more stabilized economy by the time of our spring meeting.
2. We enjoyed perusing a printout of the Precious Blood Prayer Book draft and look forward to see it in print in the very near future.
3. The Precious Blood Convocation, as previously announced, will be held July 26-29, 2010 at St. Louis University in St. Louis, MO under the title: "*Who will speak the word to rouse them? I can, I must, I will. Will you?*" The convocation is to gather the Precious Blood family in order to deepen our understanding of Precious Blood theology; to witness the Gospel; and to embrace the anguish of the church and the world with redeeming love.

The committee has chosen the story of the Samaritan woman (John 4) as its scripture passage, with an emphasis on the Precious Blood themes of the prophetic, reconciliation, evangelization, conversion and covenant. Keynote speakers will be Barbara Reid, O.P. and Charles Bouchard, O.P. A process of reflection and conversation will be included. In the spring of 2009 we can expect a pre-registration.

4. Sr. Joni shared with us highlights of the National Precious Blood Associates Conference held September 5-7 in Liberty, MO. The group is considering scheduling their meetings after respective NACAR (North American Conference of Associates and Religious) meetings and they set up a tentative meeting in 2010 at the venue of our PB Convocation.

Sr. Joni also shared news from the PBVFC (Precious Blood Vocation/Formation Conference) which met September 25-28 at the U.S.C. Wichita Center. The next gathering will be February 20-22, 2009 at the A.S.C. Columbia Center.

5. We will continue our Advent and Lenten reflections for 2008/2009.

After finishing the agenda for the PBLC sponsored projects, we opened the meeting to the sharing of information regarding several initiatives that are of interest to our Precious Blood family.

1. Fr. Angelo Anthony shared information about the Precious Blood Spirituality Center website. Quoting from his letter of August 27, 2008 to the PBLC: "The spirituality of the Blood of Christ calls us to be a reconciling and hope-filled presence in the world today. So great is this gift that we feel compelled to share it with all. The website is meant to introduce this spirituality to a greater audience, and invite all who visit it to bring an awareness of the power of the Precious Blood into their daily lives. We will offer easy-to-use resources, including prayers and prayer services, articles, bibliographies, homilies, music, art and video, all meant to help people enter more fully into this wonderful redeeming gift that we share."
2. Four of our congregations have joined a participatory Pilot Program offered by Sr. Lucianne Siers, O.P. with the Partnership for Global Justice NGO. A fifth congregation may soon come on board as well.
3. Fr. Jim Urbanic gave us an update on the Kansas City Province Volunteer Program which will encourage lay persons to work with us in Precious Blood ministries.

Finally, we held a discernment process to surface a new PBLC chairperson. We are most grateful to Fr. Jim Urbanic for two years of expertly chairing the PBLC. Our new chairperson is Fr. Mario Cafarelli. We thank Fr. Mario for accepting this added responsibility.

We spent Saturday afternoon on the battlefield as we visited the historic town of Gettysburg. The museum and visitor center have recently been rebuilt in a magnificent way. We took the self-guided auto-tour to gain an overview and a deep appreciation of the site where 51,000 soldiers were left dead, wounded or missing between July 1 and July 4 of 1863.

See PBLC, continued on page 14...



# VOCATIONS OFFICE

Sharon Crall



*"We have a sense of "passing the torch" of faith from generation to generation. We talk with pride about our founding ancestors who endured many hardships—including long, rough and crowded passagess across the Atlantic Ocean, covered wagon journeys through wilderness lands, homesteading the wild prairie, and leaving loved ones behind. This was the price they paid to be able to practice a faith that was being oppressed."*


With fall and November come thoughts of those who have gone before us in faith. During the month that begins with All Saints and All Souls and concludes with the end of another liturgical year and it's focus on endings, we "remember." There are family members, friends, ancestors, neighbors, and of course, for our Precious Blood family, members and companions whom we bring to mind and pray for in remembrance.

I come from my home parish in South Central Iowa that was founded in the early 1850s by Irish immigrants who were escaping a famine and the persecution of their faith in Ireland. My ancestors were among these immigrants—which makes me a sixth-generation Irish-American Catholic. Since we emphasize and uphold our Irish heritage at St. Patrick's Parish in Georgetown, Iowa, I have inherited a wonderful sense of tradition which centers around our Catholic faith.

We have a sense of "passing the torch" of faith from generation to generation. We talk with pride about our founding ancestors who endured many hardships—including long, rough and crowded passagess across the Atlantic Ocean, covered wagon journeys through wilderness lands, homesteading the wild prairie, and leaving loved ones behind. This was the price they paid to be able to practice a faith that was being oppressed. The very first thing they did was establish a log cabin church and arrange for a priest to visit once a month.

As soon as they could afford it, they built a "Cathedral in the Wilderness" with their own sweat and labor—in the model of the Irish churches left behind. In Georgetown we remember and hold up in honor our founding fathers and mothers, and we do our part to "bear the torch" of our Catholic faith as we pass it along to the next generation. We sing the hymn, *Faith of Our Fathers*, often.

As Precious Blood people we should remember our faith ancestors. Do we have a sense of "passing the torch" in regards to our Precious Blood spirituality? Of course, we remember our founder, St. Gaspar, and his follower, Fr. Francis Brunner, who brought the faith of the Precious Blood to a young United States. They endured many hardships for a spirituality to which they had a deep devotion. Then there are the fathers, brothers, sisters, companions, and friends who have borne the torch down through the years in service to spread the Precious Blood spirituality far and wide. We owe them much appreciation, and we should make sure that we are doing our part to "pass the torch" on to those who will carry the message of the Precious Blood on down the road to come.

The Precious Blood Vocation Office invites you to "remember" Vocations in a special way during the month of November. Please pray for our ancestors in the Precious Blood way of life, but also pray for those people who may be a part of our future. They may not even be aware of their "torchbearer" mission yet, but they will insure that we keep the flame of Precious Blood spirituality burning in the the future. Better yet, if you know of a potential "torchbearer" please extend an invitation to them to consider being part of a lineage that was founded and kept bright and alive by wonderful ancestors through hard work, devotion, compassion, care, and works of charity. We too will be able to sing: "Faith of Our Fathers [and Mothers], living still..." 

*Sharon Crall serves as associate Province Vocations Director.*

Not all that long ago we wrote in one of our newsletters about a young man who recently graduated from Boys Town in Nebraska. The article included a photo of the smiling face of Brayan and Mike Donovan, a staff person from the PBMR who went to the graduation. It was one of the little successes that we firmly hold on to—the good story of a young man who had succeeded in spite of many obstacles: in and out of the detention center, a family who struggled, and a younger brother who had been killed due to the violence that is so much a part of our community.

At Boys Town he found an environment that allowed him to focus on his studies, on his gifts and talents, and on just being a kid. His struggle, living away from home and family, leaving behind friends and familiar surroundings, seemingly paid off. He was the first in his family to graduate from high school. There was reason to celebrate. That's why when we found out last week that he had an accident and was in a coma for a number of days before he died, caused us some pause. He was 18 years old—a kid with a promising future.

To speak the truth, his death seems frankly unfair. He had made something of himself. He had survived! And so his death seems all that much more tragic. To leave Chicago's south side neighborhood, where violent death is far too common, and fall victim to death in Nebraska with all its safety seems, well, unfair.

It is in these moments, when there seems little to say, that we cling more firmly to the gift of the spirituality of reconciliation. Reconciliation—which is not a strategy, but a spirituality—calls us to allow God to do his part. Reconciliation offers us a place to stand, a place to allow our faith to speak, a place to feel as though we are not alone.

The fact that we cannot make sense out of the death of a child doesn't make our work any

less important. I had a discussion with someone who spoke of the good that comes from these tragedies. I cringe when I hear that somehow this is God's will or that good comes out of tragedies. I don't think good comes from a tragedy. There is nothing good about pain. There is nothing good about a life cut far too short. I do believe, however, that good can come out of us when we wrestle with disappointment and suffering. I do not believe that there is good that comes out of the tragedy, but that the good comes out of us in spite of the tragedy. I do believe that we can come out

of all this a stronger people, not because of the tragedy, but because of our relationship with a God who is so very present in the suffering—which includes our relationship with one another.

For the Israelites, there was nothing good about their years of slavery. Slavery is evil. But in their slavery they cried out to God and God heard their cries. God brought them out of slavery and accompanied them on their journey to a new land with a new promise.

St. Gaspar recognized that the mission of reconciliation was difficult and demanding. He and his missionaries went out—with the cross strapped to their chests—to confront the violence and conflicts within the church and beyond with a message of hope. They knew that God was present in the midst of the pain and suffering. The cross which Gaspar carried with him became the symbol of his message of reconciliation. He held it high, as many images

of him show, calling attention to the solidarity of Christ with the suffering of the world. Gaspar put himself in the midst of the messiness of life and witnessed to the hope found in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Even before this article was finished, I was called again to the hospital. Another young man shot. I am grateful, though, that I do not stand alone. I am grateful for Gaspar and his missionaries. I am grateful for all who have journeyed faithfully and who have witnessed to the gift of reconciliation. 🙏



## THE GIFT OF RECONCILIATION

Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S.



John Fanestil, executive director of the San Diego Foundation for Change, was arrested recently for serving communion at the U.S.-Mexico border fence in Friendship Park. In the October 7, 2008 issue of *The Christian Century*, Fanestil writes, “For generations residents of San Diego and Tijuana have gathered at Friendship Park to visit with family and friends through the border fence.” Every Sunday afternoon since June 1<sup>st</sup>, Fanestil has served communion through the chain-link fence—until recently, when “passing the bread through the fence” became “a customs violation.”

We live in a world where it is “us” against “them.” Certainly in the last several years with the war on terrorism, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the cultural and political divisions in the United States, and the battle over immigration resulting in the construction of the fence at the

we are thinking and acting contrary to the kingdom of God. As Thomas Keating writes, “In the kingdom of God, communion is more important than worship. Worship is hypocrisy and a pious sham if we have not first passed through the gate of reconciliation. Thus mutual forgiveness is presented as the top priority in the gospel. I am not speaking of the feeling of forgiveness, which requires certain psychological steps, but the intention and will to forgive, which may be the best that we can do for now.”

Our challenge as people of faith who believe all “who once were far off have been brought near through the blood of Christ...who made the two of us one by breaking down the barrier of hostility that kept us apart” (Ephesians 2, 13-14), is to make forgiveness the rule rather than the exception. Recently I read about an African tribe that makes forgiveness a fundamental practice of their common life. When a person does something that hurts another or ruptures a relationship or damages the fabric of love that fashions their communal life, the work of the village comes to a halt and the perpetrator is brought before the entire tribe. The people of the village encircle the “offender,” and “one

by one they begin to recite everything he has done right in his life; every good deed, thoughtful behavior, and act of social responsibility.”

It is just the opposite of the old “chapter of faults” once practiced in religious life, or the catalogue of catastrophic failures many still recite when celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation, making a list and checking it twice like a shadow Santa more focused on the naughty than the nice.

By what he has done or failed to do, the offender has drawn a line of division in the community. But in this ritual of reconciliation, this line is redrawn

into a circle of respect as members of the community recall the acts of kindness the person has shown in the past. This is a circle of truth because the stories must be true and spoken with sincerity and conviction. But the purpose is to help the person who perpetrated the behavior that was harmful to another person or damaged the bonds of family or community life to embrace his better self and remember why his presence is essential to the life of the community.

See *Lines*, continued on page 12...



## REDRAWING THE LINES

Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S.

border between the U.S. and Mexico, the lines are drawn on the landscape of our lives more clearly than ever. Whether it is the color of their skin, their ethnic origin, the content of their creed, their sexual orientation or gender, their political affiliation or ideology, people in one camp may say of another, “He’s one of them.”

In a divided world, when we demonize what we fear and fail to see anything good in the other,



*Lines, continued from page 11...*

This ritual reveals that while forgiveness is “a process, not a moment,” according to Harvard psychiatrist Edward M. Hallowell in his book *Dare to Forgive*, “forgiveness has to be cultivated because it goes against a natural human tendency to seek revenge.” That is why Hallowell recommends we need help—“of friends, a therapist, or through prayer”—to practice forgiveness or else the wisdom of Confucius will be realized: “If you devote your life to seeking revenge, first dig two graves.”

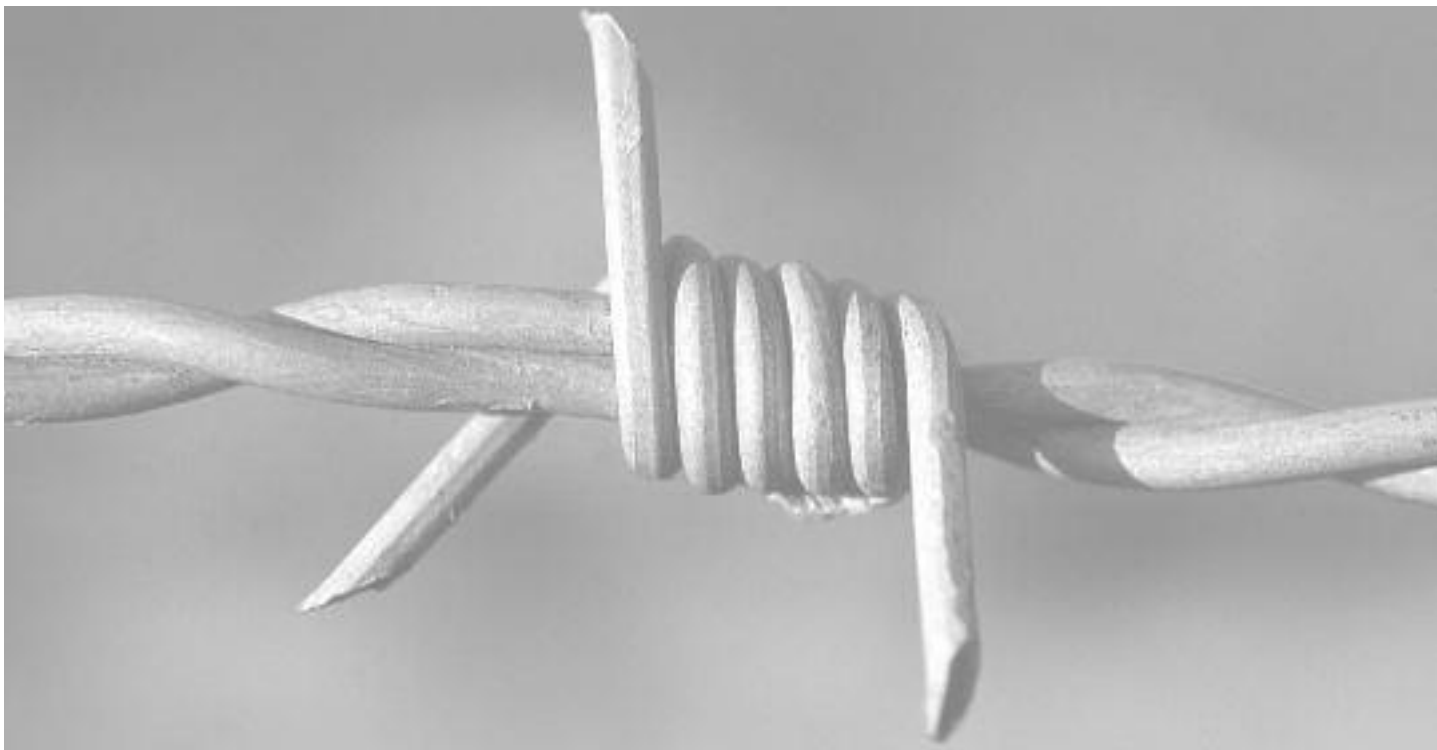
Earlier this year on National Public Radio’s “Story Corp,” Hector Black reflected the process and power of forgiveness in telling the story of his daughter Patricia Ann who was murdered. She came home from work and surprised a burglar hiding in the closet. When she opened the closet door, he jumped out and tied her up. Then, according to Hector, his daughter and this man, Ivan Simpson, had a conversation. Ivan told her she should put bars on her windows and always leave a light on. Patricia Ann told him he should get treatment for his drug problem. Then, when Patricia Ann refused Ivan’s demand for sex saying, “You’d have to kill me first,” Ivan did.

Simpson was arrested and convicted. Hector said he wanted Ivan to hurt as much as he was hurting. But he also wanted to know more about Ivan Simpson and “find out what kind of monster could have done such a thing like this.” He discovered Simpson was born in a mental hospital. When he was 11 years old, his mother took his older brother, younger sister, and Ivan to the swimming pool and tried to drown all three. He and his brother escaped but they could not keep their mother from drowning their younger sister.

When Hector Black was invited to address the court and speak directly to the man who murdered his daughter, he said, “I don’t hate you, Ivan Simpson, but I hate with all my soul what you did to my daughter.” Before he was led from the courtroom, Ivan asked to speak to Hector and his wife. With tears streaming down his face, Ivan told them, “I am so sorry for the pain I have caused you and your family.”

That night, Hector said, he couldn’t sleep. He tossed and turned and then he said he felt “a tremendous weight” lifting from his body. At that moment, he said, “I knew that I had forgiven him.” Through Hector’s openness to God’s grace, the yoke of hate that had weighed upon his heart broke, and he was free.

Whenever lines are drawn in the sand—or around the altar or at the border in the form of a 700-mile fence—there is division and not communion. And offering communion to another through the chain-link fence becomes an act of civil disobedience. These lines drawn on the landscape of our lives will only be erased when we draw those with whom we disagree, those who have hurt us, those with whom we are divided into the circle of our love through the power of forgiveness. 🍷



# A MOTHER SHARES HER BURDEN

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*This mother and I talked for several hours about the struggle she and her husband endured while coming to terms with their son who is gay. They raised him like their other children, they do not believe he chose to be gay; thus, their only conclusion is that he was born gay.*

*This is what is so difficult for the mother to comprehend as she mentions in her letter. If we are all created in God's image, if her son was created gay, then why does the Catholic Church characterize him as "intrinsically disordered"? And why would the Church demand that he live a "celibate" life?*

*The spirituality of the Precious Blood calls us to walk with these parents who are carrying a heavy cross because they feel their "secret" cannot be shared for fear of judgment. It is a heavy cross because not only do they have to hear the negative characterizations of their sons and daughters but they are also imprisoned with the inability to share their concerns for fear of being rejected.*

*Mark Miller, C.P.P.S.*

Recently I was encouraged to share my thoughts on being the mother of a gay son. My son is the oldest of six children and never once did we think about possibly having a gay or lesbian child. During our son's childhood, we noted his likes and dislikes for certain activities seemed out of character for a typical preschooler. He was very musical, preferred girl playmates, was interested in playing girl dress-up, was sensitive, did not enjoy contact sports, and always treated his siblings well.

I, as the mom, sensed that elementary school was socially difficult at times. He never seemed to fit in with the rough and tumble boys. And that surely can break your heart.

With junior high came the opportunity to be on the diving and swim team. Also band became an important extracurricular activity for our son's social life. With his love of music and his continued love of diving and swimming, he found his niche which led to a good high school experience. Upon graduation he could not hide the fact that he was extremely excited to leave home to attend college. Also, he dated some in high school and college—I think to appease us. It did give us hope, as we suspected that he might be gay; however, until your child "comes out," you tend to stay in denial of the issue.

While in college, he met the man he would share his life with as a couple. We soon met his significant other; our son was twenty-eight years old when he shared with us that his roommate was more than a friend. We and his five siblings love and accept him for who he is. There was never a doubt of our love for him.

We reared our family in the Catholic faith, attending regularly. And later our son told us of his attending a church affiliated with being gay.

I truly believe that a person is born gay and it is not environmental. So why would God give life and the Catholic Church then deny a gay person the blessing to share a loving and intimate relationship with another human being? We are all God's children! The Catholic Church makes the cross even heavier to bear. I look forward to our gay population being treated with the same respect as everyone inside the Catholic Church—and otherwise as well.

My husband and I enjoyed forty-one years of marriage, with his passing six years ago. My six children are very close and supportive of one another. I love each of them with all my heart. 🌹



PBLC, continued from page 8...

A special moment was visiting the Soldiers' Memorial Cemetery where President Lincoln gave his Gettysburg Address, pointing to "a new birth to freedom." After an excellent historic film in the new theatre we entered the Gettysburg Cyclodrama. Here the painter Paul Phillippoteaux has created a canvass of gigantic proportions. His 377-foot painting-in-the-round depicts the peak of the fighting. Coupled with modern sound and lighting effects, it allows visitors a near first-hand presence at this significant battle, a stunning, deeply moving and thought provoking experience.

We concluded our time together with celebrating Eucharist in the Chapel of the Columbia Spirituality Center. Allow me to end by quoting in part the convocation prayer composed by Fr. Jim Urbanic:

*Eternal God, Let us join with our ancestors, with Maria De Mattias, Gaspar del Bufalo, Maria Anna Brunner, Theresa Weber and Francis Pfanner, in proclaiming the Precious Blood of Jesus to a world in need of redemption... May the Holy Spirit set our direction, lighten our burdens, refresh us with your presence, and empower us to proclaim your Kingdom.* 🕊️



Light, continued from page 7...

of welcoming that springs from the spirituality of the Precious Blood helped open my eyes and my heart in dealing with these immigrants.

The California Companions, each in their own way, have been instrumental in helping to enlighten me and other C.P.P.S. members about how the spirituality works in practice. Companions each have their own ministry—acting on their God-given calling—to minister to the poor as St Vincent de Paul workers, or to people with HIV-AIDS, or to those in San Quentin Prison, or to Latino poor children in an inner-city public school, or as Retroville leaders dealing with troubled marriages, or as church volunteers, among many other ministries. Many of these Companions served in these ministries before they heard of Precious Blood spirituality, but have taken from it nourishment and an increased sense of purpose, as they become attuned to hearing the cry and the call of the blood.

I began by referring to the dedication of the new Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland. Have you ever noticed how very often light is mentioned in scripture in reference to Christ? Well, the light in this house of God is wonderful. The cathedral glows with natural filtered light. No artificial lighting is needed. This is clearly a stunning example of 21<sup>st</sup> century architecture, all glass, steel, and concrete with Douglas fir louvered panels that warmly encase the entire interior of the twelve story building. And because it has been built to last for three centuries in a place known for strong earthquakes, the entire building is able to move along with its foundation as much as three feet, so as to survive a quake.

What I found interesting is that the name was chosen, not only to bring to mind the countless scriptural references to Christ as light to the world, but also to make clear that this cathedral is for people of all backgrounds. In other words it was not named after anyone's favorite saint and could not be identified with any specific national or ethnic group. At the Mass of Dedication, with 1,300 in attendance on the inside and more out on the plaza, the first reading was proclaimed by a woman in a strong clear voice entirely in Vietnamese. The second reading was proclaimed in Spanish. It was a proud moment when the cantor and congregation sang the responsorial psalm composed for the occasion by Jeffrey Keyes, C.P.P.S.

For more than 50 years the C.P.P.S. has been at home in the dioceses of San Francisco, Oakland, Santa Rosa, Stockton, Monterey, and Los Angeles. Our prayer is that our presence in California will long endure. 🕊️

*Cathedral of Christ the Light.*



*Leadership*, continued from page 2...

in particular that were (and still are) and taking place. One of these was from “a sense of being a poor community” to “disposable income and wealth, investments, retirement plans, tithing.” We are not a poor community in terms of financial resources, even during this time of economic turmoil and anxiety. As a province we are indeed able not only to provide the basic necessities to members, including health care and a dignified retirement, but also to put our resources at the service of the mission in many ways that were not possible years ago.

All the individuals who make up the province membership are invited to make choices and sacrifices, to live simply, to be good stewards, and to live in community in a way that is just and accountable. As individuals we face the same struggles as any person, including the temptation to hang on to what we believe will bring us happiness. Given the financial stability of the province today, much of the past perceived need for sacrifice for the good of the whole is understandably less urgent. Perhaps less diligence is easier to justify. Yet none of this should depend on

*Being blessed means  
living in the gratitude  
that leads to generosity,  
good stewardship, and  
justice.*

how poor or wealthy we are as individuals or as a community.

During the season of Lent, it is customary to focus on three great spiritual practices from our religious tradition: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Another way to understand

these is “give some thanks, give something up, and give something away.” True gratitude flows from the knowledge that all is gift, grace is everywhere. Forget the glass-half-full-or-half-empty distinction. Ours is probably running over. Being blessed (happy) means living in the gratitude that leads to generosity, good stewardship, and justice.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810), great grandson of the founder of the Hasidic movement once wrote: “When asked how things are, don’t whine and grumble about your hardships. If you answer ‘Lousy,’ then God says, ‘You call this bad? I’ll show you what bad really is!’ When asked how things are and, despite the hardships or suffering, you answer, ‘Good,’ then God says, ‘You call this good? I’ll show you what good really is!’” ❧

## IN MEMORY

+Companion Ralph Wheeler,  
September 15, 2008

+Dee Christy Hartway,  
sister of Fr. Alan Hartway  
of the Kansas City Province.  
September 24, 2008.



*Let Evening Come*  
Jane Kenyon

Let the light of late afternoon  
shine through chinks in the barn, moving  
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing  
as a woman takes up her needles  
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned  
in long grass. Let the stars appear  
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.  
Let the wind die down. Let the shed  
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop  
in the oats, to the air in the lung  
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't  
be afraid. God does not leave  
us comfortless, so let evening come.

## MY BACK PAGES

Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

As has been evident, *The New Wine Press* is currently being published every other month rather than monthly. The primary reason is that our province is now publishing online a weekly newsletter. This seems to be a more appropriate way to communicate time sensitive material, and *The New Wine Press* then no longer has to have that purpose.

Instead, we have been slowly changing its focus to that of more substantial articles which articulate different experiences and reflections on lived Precious Blood spirituality. In addition, it continues to share news of the wider Precious Blood family, knowing that our readership goes well beyond just the province.

Currently, the online newsletter—known as *The Weekly Wine Press*—is being sent to all province members and Companions. Knowing that some of you are interested in what is happening in the province, we would like to offer you this weekly publication as well. If you wish to receive *The Weekly Wine Press*, please let us know which email address to send it to (it is sent out in pdf format).

If you do not have email access and would like to receive it by “snail mail,” let us know as well. To contact us, see page 2 which lists emails, phone numbers, and addresses.

*Finally, this is for all dog lovers.*

I am dog. I nudge. I look to you for abundance, for more and more and more. I dig my nose into your hands. I know where to push so you feel the power of my nudge. When your hand is empty, I do not show disappointment. I stay to receive what I think is there for me. I stay so you feel my hope grow. I nudge to dream of what more you have. I can tell when the nudge is welcomed. I nudge and stay so you can nudge me back. To be close is often enough. Your presence is my peace. My nudge is a wish that you have heard me. When you nudge back, then I am in you. I am dog. I nudge, I receive. I am contented. I am at rest.

God, stay close. You know I need more and more of what you give. I dig myself into your presence until I feel you hold me. I look for your promises. I bury myself into your mercy and might. You touch me, and I touch you back. Your presence is my peace. I nudge you, I find the palm of your hand, I am contented. You are here for me.

*Dog Psalms: Prayers My Dogs Have Taught Me*  
Herbert Brokering



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