



# THE New Wine PRESS

**Volume 25 No. 1 • September 2015**

**Bicentennial Celebration**

August 16, 2015 at Precious Blood Center

**A Mission of Service**

Fr. Truc Vu's Ordination

**Elevations and Anniversaries,**

**A Warm Welcome and Fond Farewells**



## Creating Effective Policies to Prevent Gun Violence

**October 17, 2015**

**St. James Church  
3909 Harrison Street  
Kansas City, MO 64110**

9am to 3pm  
Luncheon included

Contact: Br. Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S.,  
daryl.charron@yahoo.com or 816-835-0344

Mr. DeMarco will discuss effective policies which keep guns out of the wrong hands and save lives and how faith leaders are helping to make these policies a reality. He will discuss the history of Faiths United To Prevent Gun Violence, a coalition of over fifty national faith denominations and organizations which has been working since 2010 to promote effective gun violence prevention policies at the national and state level. He will focus on the success that faith leaders had in helping to enact the landmark Firearms Safety Act of 2013 in Maryland which is doing much to save lives from gun violence in that state. He will discuss the key provisions of that law, particularly requiring fingerprint licensing for handgun purchasers, and talk about how faith leaders can help to promote these life-saving measures across the country.

Vincent DeMarco is the President of the Maryland Citizen's Health Initiative, a coalition of over 1000 organizations seeking to insure quality, affordable health care for all Marylanders. The Initiative was the lead organization working for the Governor's Working Families and Small Business Health Care Coverage Act of 2007 which expanded health care to over 100,000 uninsured Marylanders. He is also the National Coordinator of Faiths United To Prevent Gun Violence and President of Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence, which was the lead organization advocating for Maryland's landmark gun violence prevention law enacted in 2013.



**Missionaries of the Precious Blood  
Kansas City Province  
kcprovince.org**



Celebrating 200 Years

6 A Revolution in the Blood of Christ  
Fr. Joe Nassal's homily

12 A Mission of Service  
Fr. Truc Vu's ordination

13 To Lay Down One's Life  
A trip to Acuto, Italy

14 Return to Crownpoint  
A Reflection

4 Vocations  
Preparing for NCYC

6 Wine Tasting  
-Formation  
-Precious Blood Volunteers

10 Province History  
Elevations and Anniversaries

15 PBMR: The New Creation  
-Embrace Grace, & Grace is  
a Gamble  
-Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious

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

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

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

**THE New Wine PRESS**  
**Missionaries of the Precious Blood**  
Kansas City Province

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## Changes

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

“I still don't know what I was waiting for/And my time was running wild/A million dead-end streets/And every time I thought I'd got it made/It seemed the taste was not so sweet/So I turned myself to face me/But I've never caught a glimpse/Of how the others must see the faker/I'm much too fast to take that test...

“Ch-ch-ch-Changes (Turn and face the strain) Ch-ch-ch-Changes/Don't want to be a richer man/Ch-ch-ch-Changes (Turn and face the strain)/Ch-ch-ch-Changes/Just gonna have to be a different man/Time may change me/But I can't trace time” (*Changes*, by David Bowie).

I think we'd be better off celebrating the New Year holiday in the fall rather than in January. School starts, football gets underway, people finish their summer adventures, and baseball season gets very interesting. It's time for new programs, new projects, and new dreams as a world of possibilities opens up again. For many of us, a new school year is a time of new beginnings for more than just academic careers. It's definitely a season of changes.

This issue of *The New Wine Press* sees a new beginning as we present a new look. We've gone from a newsletter look to a magazine, yet the heart of *The New Wine Press* will continue to be the same: drawing from the life giving stream of Christ's Blood. The lineup of our presentations will be a bit different, particularly for me, as the editorials move from the back to the front. Our Leadership message will start us off, followed by news from our various ministries, with our cover article and other features taking different places.

Although we may have to take David Bowie's advice to “Turn and face the strain,” our hope is in the mission that Gaspar began over 200 years ago and that we are privileged to be part of today. We are servants of the Blood of Christ, and *The New Wine Press* will continue to help us reflect on our journey as we walk the Blood-soaked path.

## Open Dialogue

by Fr. Mark Miller, C.P.P.S., Provincial Councilor

As I viewed the DVD that was published for the 200th anniversary of our Community and listened to the various voices describing our spirituality, our history, and our expansion throughout the world over the past 200 years, it occurred to me that perhaps it is time for us to revisit our mission in response to the “Signs of our times.”

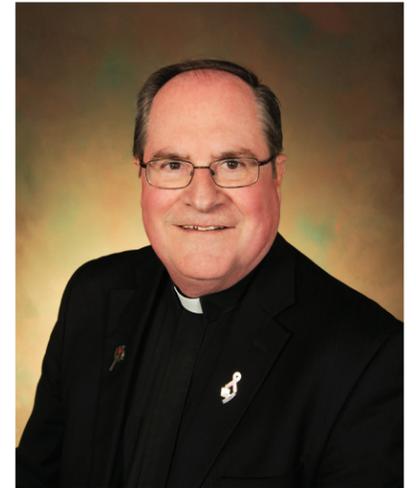
As we reflect upon what is happening in our world and nation today, we find there are many issues dividing people. They include how people feel about Muslims in light of what is happening within the radical fundamentalist movement, how to respond to the Supreme Court's decision regarding same sex marriage, how to respond to the transgendered, even how people are responding to the latest encyclical by Pope Francis.

It seems we are in the midst of two distinct ways of responding to these issues. What appears to be the easiest and most prevalent is to use the old question and answer approach. You ask the question, I give the answer and we both go home. The difficulty with this approach is that it doesn't offer people a mechanism to sift through the questions and doubts and misconceptions that must be uncovered before one can reach a conclusion that is based on solid foundations. The other approach is more existential, but is often criticized as not offering enough direction or clear-cut answers.

If we study Scripture, we see Jesus hardly ever answered a question with a simple answer. Many times he would ask another question or present a parable, which would then allow the questioner to discover his or her own answer. This is the model we ought to follow, rather than telling people what to believe before they are allowed to wrestle with it within their own experience.

The issues we face are significant for the future of our Church and World but there doesn't seem to be a forum where people can discover the answers and principles that can help people maneuver through this minefield of confusion. Not everything has a clear-cut answer.

People need a safe place to come together to share their struggles without being judged; to express their lived experiences without being castigated; to seek guidance and support without the fear of being excommunicated. Perhaps Precious Blood Center can be the place for these conversations.



# NCYC Preparation

by Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S., Regional Vocation Director

This fall, over 23,000 high school age youth will gather for the 2015 National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), *Here I Am Lord*, three days of high energy, spirit-filled enthusiasm, and the young church alive.

Fifty-five Youth Animators gathered this past July for three long days of training to learn the songs, dances, skits and prayers they will be leading and performing during the keynote sessions. I, along with eleven other Vocation Directors, was asked to serve as a mentor for the Animators. We checked in with them at various breaks just to interact and hear how things were going, and led morning and evening prayer, ending our time with the celebration of the Eucharist. For many of them it was their first time as Animators, first time attending NCYC, and first time praying together with a community. Throughout the three days, we heard over and over again: "Keep practicing." If you want to get better at something, you must keep practicing.

From there, I traveled to Notre Dame to attend NDVision, a weeklong summer youth experience for high school students led by Notre Dame students. In addition to the youth experience, NDVision Catholic Youth Minister (CYM) adds an experience for the adults working with youth. This year's theme was *Discerning God's Call and Responding in Faith*. The talks revolved around how to practice and make discernment more a part of one's life. As I listened to the various presenters, I was reflecting upon my own experiences with young adults and thinking about their questions. Some of the first questions are: "Who are you and what do you do?" "How do I know if God is calling me?" and if so, "What do I do about it?"

The quick response is "Just pray about it," but it is more than that. Entering a time of discernment and learning how to listen to hear God's call is not always easy. It begins with prayer. It involves dialogue with someone the youth trust and respect. It encourages asking questions and wondering "What if?" It invites the individual to reflect on his or her talents and strengths. It draws upon the willingness to be open to possibilities.

When someone expresses an interest in the community and religious life, we invite them to enter

into a time of Inquiry with us. The Inquirer works with a member through the Inquiry Journal. In addition, the Inquirer is encouraged to find a Spiritual Director. On completion of the Inquiry Journal, the candidate is encouraged to begin the application process. Throughout this process, the candidate is invited and expected to learn more about the community and participate in its activities as much as possible. For those candidates who have completed the Inquiry Journal and wish to more fully experience community, another option is the House of Discernment. The House of Discernment offers the opportunity to live in a formation community for an extended period of time: becoming an active part of the formation community, joining in prayer and worship, participating in all the activities of the formation community and engaging in ministry and theological education.

This fall, Matt Perez will be joining us in the House of Discernment at the House of Formation in Chicago. Matt is from Garden City, Kansas, and has been working the past three years as Youth Director and Pastoral Administrator at St. Dominic Parish. We welcome Matt and look forward to continuing this journey with him.

These summer experiences of NCYC and NDVision reminded me of the need for discernment in each of our lives, as well as inviting young people into knowing and understanding what discernment is about, to provide opportunities for potential candidates to experience community and to interact with us. The Youth Animators were charged with the challenge to wake up, animate and inspire the young people who will be attending, to awaken within them the desire and flame



Inquirer Matt Perez

of faith. Each of us is also called to be an animator, to awaken within that Spirit of God.

This fall, we have an opportunity to invite young men, age 18-45, to experience our community and continue to discern with us. We will be hosting a Discernment Weekend at Precious Blood Center beginning Friday evening, October 23 through Sunday, October 25. I need your help in inviting others. If there is anyone you know who has expressed an interest in religious life, please invite him. Or, if you wish, share their name and information with me, and I will make the contact.

As the team worked with the Animators, they kept repeating, "Practice. If you want to get better you got to practice." ♦

## Precious Blood Volunteers Welcomes Jade Bowman

by Tim Deveney, Director of Precious Blood Volunteers



2015-16 Precious Blood Volunteer Jade Bowman

Our newest Precious Blood Volunteer is Jade Bowman from Oxnard, California. She is serving at KC CARE Clinic in Kansas City, Missouri and living in community at Gaspar Mission House through June 2016.

Following her time as a Precious Blood volunteer,

she plans to attend school to become a Physician's Assistant.

Jade is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame with a degree in anthropology and pre-health studies. At Notre Dame she was a part of the "Voices of Faith" choir and served in leadership roles in the choir. She has served as an aide at a public health center and was an undergraduate diversity educator at Notre Dame. Jade also studied for six weeks in Dublin, Ireland. ♦

## On The Move Again

by Fr. Timothy Guthridge, C.P.P.S., Director of Initial Formation

For the second time in a year the House of Initial Formation is moving to a new address. Actually the address itself isn't new; it is the same address as the Advanced House of Formation. It was decided that given the small number of candidates in formation, it would be wiser to put both programs under the same roof. From February until Mid-May, there was only one candidate and the director living by themselves in the House of Initial Formation, a former convent near Midway Airport, which was not perceived as an ideal formation environment.

Having both programs under the same roof does not mean that the two programs will be combined. The goals for Initial and Advanced Formation are very different, and the candidates of each program are at very different points in their lives. Initial Formation enables a candidate to discern whether or not he may have a vocation in our community. This also is a time for candidates to finish whatever undergraduate work is needed for graduate theological study. Advanced Formation is for those candidates who have already made a temporary commitment to the community and are pursuing advanced studies preparing them for brotherhood or priesthood.

We hope to have more personal interaction between the candidates, since they will be living in the same building. Having common meals and liturgies will be more of a challenge because of the different academic schedules.

There will be new challenges as well as opportunities having both programs in the same building. In the beginning there will be a lot of bugs to be worked out. Perhaps the time will come when we will have so many candidates that we will need to acquire another house just for Initial Formation. For the time being, and probably for the next several years, the house in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood will be home for all of our formation candidates. ♦



*Concelebrants at 2015 Bicentennial Mass*

## A Revolution in the Blood of Christ

Homily for the Bicentennial Eucharist, August 16, 2015

by Fr. Joe Nassal, C.P.S., Provincial Director

### Renewal, Reconciliation, and Restoration

In the fall of 1814, St. Gaspar del Bufalo was preaching a parish mission in the small town of Giano in the region of Umbria, about thirty miles from the more famous Italian town of Assisi. He received word from his mentor and friend, Msgr. Belisario Cristaldi, to check out an old monastery near Giano that had been abandoned by the Augustinians several years before. Cristaldi told Gaspar it might be a good location to begin their new adventure.

The monastery, like many churches and religious houses in the aftermath of the French Revolution,

was in ruins. But it was here, on August 15, 1815, with three other priests and after three days of prayer, that St. Gaspar began another kind of revolution, a revolution of renewal, restoration, and reconciliation that would take root around the world.

Gaspar was 29 years old when he founded the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, but he had already been a priest for seven years and had spent several years in exile and in prison soon after his ordination for refusing to take an oath of allegiance to Napoleon who occupied the Papal States. It was in this time of exile that the dream began to take shape. He didn't know it

at the time because when he returned to Rome, he was interested in becoming a Jesuit. He was accepted into the Jesuit community but when Pope Pius VII heard about it, he summoned Gaspar and said, "St. Ignatius does not want you." Instead, the pope encouraged the young cleric to begin a missionary movement to renew and reconcile the people whose lives were fragmented and fractured, and the clergy who had sold out during the suppression.

Encouraged by three friends and mentors, Fathers Albertini, Bonnani, and Cristaldi, the dream began to take shape in Gaspar's heart. He brought together the deep devotion to the Precious Blood of Christ that Father Albertini shared with him during their time together in exile; the vision of the "Gospel workers" which Father Bonnani began, organizing lay

people around the corporal works of mercy among the poor and those on the margins; and the social awareness of Father Cristaldi who recognized the need for reconciliation and restoration in society in the aftermath of the war, to forge a new revolution for religious life.

### Remembering Our Dreams

As Tennessee Williams wrote, a "revolution only needs good dreamers who remember their dreams." St. Gaspar remembered his dream but his desire was to remain hidden. He did not aspire to make a name for himself but rather to inspire others to follow the name of Christ. In one of his letters, he wrote, "Pray in a special way that the Lord will always keep me insignificant, neglected, hidden from the eyes of the world" (3785).

Instead, St. Gaspar focused his energy around the title chosen for the community, because he believed of all Catholic devotions the blood of Christ "is the foundation and the essence." Gaspar wrote that "blood is the most eloquent of symbols." But more than a symbol, he wrote, "it is love itself. By shedding his blood, Christ redeemed humankind. He reclaimed it from every kind of misery, first of all from sin."

The power of the blood not only as a devotion but as a spirituality that shapes and sustains our lives of faith is found in the three symbols that surface in today's readings—covenant, cross, and cup. In the first reading from the book of Exodus, the covenant between God and the people is symbolized by Moses splashing the blood on the altar and then on the people. This is the origin of our word for "blessing"—an ancient form of the "sprinkling rite." When Moses splashes the blood on the altar and on the people he is not only blessing them with life, he is also sealing the sacred connection between God and the people found in the covenant.

Paul in his letter to the Ephesians highlights the bloodstained cross of Jesus. As Paul writes, "In Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near through the blood of Christ." We are "no longer strangers and sojourners" but "members of the household of God"—our membership has been bought, paid for, signed, sealed and delivered in the blood of the cross.

In the gospel from Luke, Jesus affirms this holy relationship, when he "took a cup, gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you that from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'" Contained in this cup is a new revolution, a new relationship, a "new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you." The

cup Jesus drinks is a cup of suffering, sorrow, and death. It is a cup of despair, alienation, and abandonment. It is the cup, the chalice of the heart, of the one who came “to give his life as a ransom for many.” When we drink from the cup, our bellies become on fire with justice. This blood sears our souls and seals our commitment to restore relationships broken and shattered by suffering; to be reconcilers in a world wounded with the bloodshed of violence, war and abuse.

As Nathan Mitchell wrote, “Drinking from the cup, we pledge ourselves to justice and solidarity with the losers, the powerless—all the have-nots who have been shut up, shut out, and shut down. The loud voice of Jesus’ blood will not let us forget that he died (as we must) for and among the weak and vulnerable.” When Jesus hands the disciples the cup on that night he was betrayed and claimed it “the new covenant,” he was initiating a new set of relationships between God and the world where all would find a place at the table in God’s house.

This is at the very heart of the revolution St. Gaspar began two hundred years ago. It is a call to gather in the chalice of our hearts the blood of the poor and the proud, the dying and the despised, the unborn and the unfulfilled, the victim and the violent, the beloved and the betrayer. We gather this blood in the chalice of our hearts and lift it high as we proclaim our belief that through Christ, through his precious blood, we are set free to be for one another and our world people who overflow with God’s mercy and compassion.

#### A Mission of Mercy

As we gather today to give thanks and celebrate the bicentennial of Gaspar’s dream, we are grateful to all of you for helping us keep the dream alive and being such an important part of this revolution of renewal and reconciliation St. Gaspar began two hundred years ago. We also look forward as we seek to keep this dream

*Bishop John Gaydos, Jefferson City Diocese*



*Bishop Joe Charron, C.P.P.S., and Dcn. Loi Nguyen, C.P.P.S.*



*right to left: Don Wolff with Greg Brown and Greg’s fiancée, Martha*

*below: Missouri State Representative Nick King presents Fr. Joe Nassal with a special state resolution.*



*front: Charlotte Deveney, John Deveney  
back: Tim Deveney, Victoria Heule and Theresa Walters*



*Frs. Garry Richmeier and Bill Miller*



*Doris & Jim Esser, Fr. Ron Will*

*below: Mrs. & Mr. Kevin O’Brien, Fr. Mike Volmer, Kevin Beauford*



alive in our time and our day, remembering the words St. John Paul II wrote in his 1996 apostolic exhortation, *Via Consecrata*: “You have not only a glorious history to remember and recount, but also a great history still to be accomplished! Look to the future, where the Spirit is sending you in order to do even great things.”

And so as we look forward to the Holy Year of Mercy called for by our Holy Father, Pope Francis—who though he is a Jesuit and took the name of the founder of the Franciscans—is the most Precious Blood of popes, we follow the mandate of our founder who wrote, “Ministers of the sanctuary must make known the depths of God’s mercy. In this devotion, we have the treasures of wisdom and holiness; in it we find comfort, peace and salvation” (1214). One can almost hear the echoes of our founder when Pope Francis wrote in the *Joy of the Gospel*, how “the Church needs to be bold and creative...not obsessed with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines to be insistently imposed” but rather concentrate on the essentials (35) because “mercy is the greatest of all virtues” (37).

We pray to be brave and bold in living this revolution of renewal, restoration, and reconciliation, remembering that our mission is always to serve, not survive. But we will survive and even thrive, if like our founder we continue to live God’s dream for the world where truth, justice, mercy, and peace reign. We will thrive if we remember our dreams. Come now, to the table to celebrate the memory of the one whose mercy will save the world. ♦

# Elevations and Anniversaries, A Warm Welcome and Fond Farewells

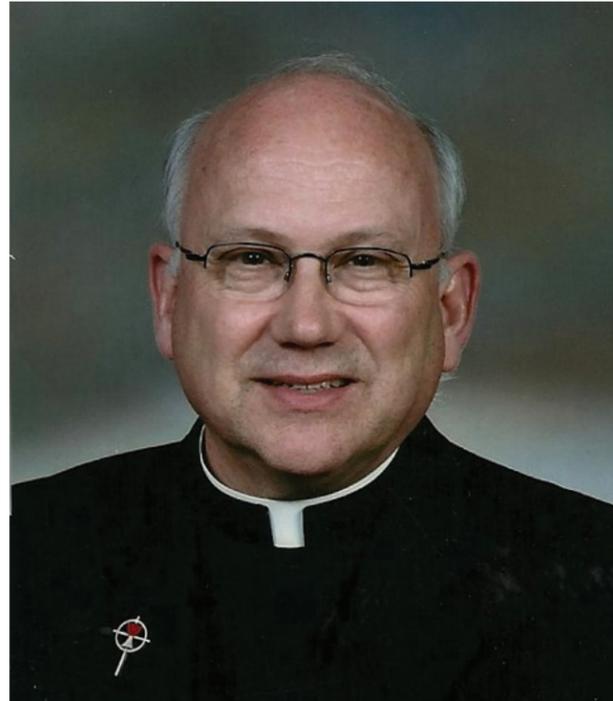
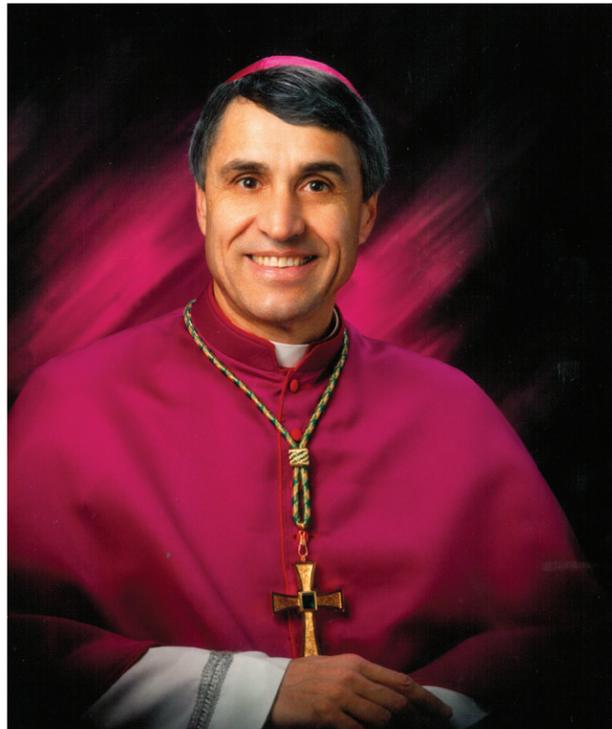
by Fr. Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S., Provincial Director

1989 was a year of advancement for two members of the Kansas City Province. In October 1989, Father Phil Smith was elected to the General Council of the Society of the Precious Blood. He served two terms as General Secretary for the Congregation in Rome. The following month, on November 21, 1989, the Vatican announcement that former provincial director, Father Joseph Charron, professor of Moral Theology at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota would be the new auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. He was ordained a Bishop at the Cathedral of St. Paul on January 25, 1990.

On November 12, 1993, Bishop Charron was named the Bishop of Des Moines, Iowa. He was installed as Ordinary on January 21, 1994.

1990 marked the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Society of the Precious Blood and the 25th anniversary of the Kansas City Province. These anniversaries were celebrated at the Provincial Assembly June 11-14, 1990 at St. James Parish in Liberty. This Assembly also marked the first time Companions were welcomed with a special blessing of acceptance

*Bishop Joseph Charron, C.P.P.S., episcopal ordination*



*Fr. Phil Smith, C.P.P.S.*

on June 12, 1990. The Companions welcomed were from C.P.P.S. parishes in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Kansas City, Missouri, Sedalia, Missouri, Linton, North Dakota, San Angelo, Texas, and Centerville, Iowa. Father William Nordenbrock, C.P.P.S., of the Cincinnati Province was also welcomed as the first director of Companions for both the Kansas City and Cincinnati Provinces.

During the Assembly, a special blessing ritual was held at the new Province Center in Liberty. One of the two residences was named after Father Daniel Schaefer, the first provincial of the Kansas City Province; the other residence was named after Father Robert Stukenborg, one of the founding fathers who served as treasurer since the beginning of the province. The guest house was named for Brother Ignatius Altmann, the oldest brother in the province and symbol of hospitality. The Province Center was officially dedicated by Bishop John Sullivan of the Kansas City-St. Joseph diocese on the Feast of St. Gaspar, October 21, 1990.

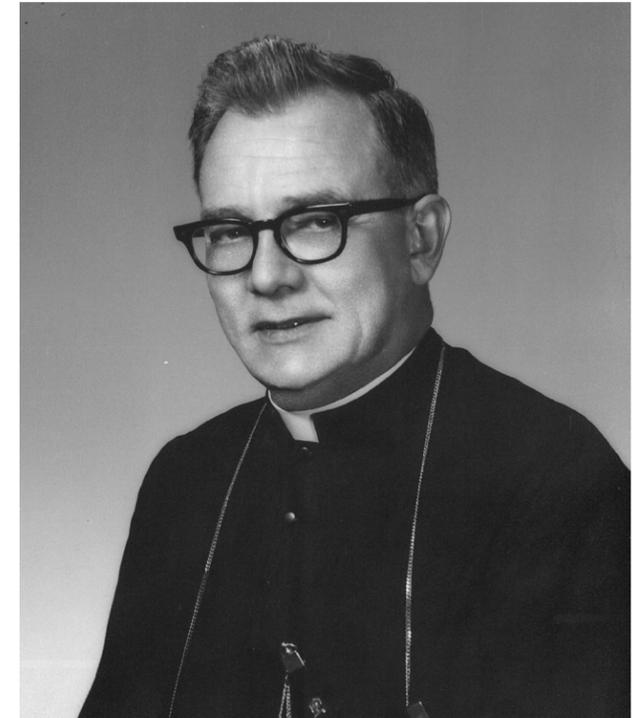
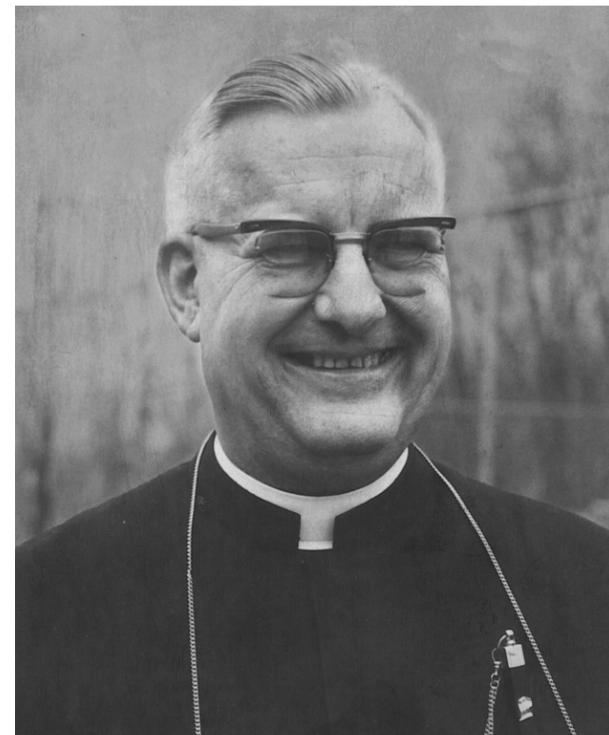
On April 10, 1991, Father Thomas Albers was re-elected Provincial Director on the first ballot. On Thursday, April 11, 1991, the Provincial Council was elected: Father Mark Miller, vice-provincial and 1st counselor; Father Joseph Nassal, 2nd counselor;

Father Michael Volkmer, 3rd counselor; and Father Thomas Welk, 4th counselor. Father Ralph Bushell was appointed Provincial Secretary and Father William Dineen Provincial Treasurer.

Father Daniel Schaefer, first provincial of the Kansas City Province and former Moderator General of the Society of the Precious Blood died on November 27, 1991. His death was the result of a fall he had suffered several weeks earlier. In eulogizing Father Schaefer, his classmate Father Robert Lechner of the Cincinnati Province said: "What has marked our lives because we shared the Christian and C.P.P.S. community adventure with Dan? One answer is: He did not so much touch what we did but our way and manner of doing things."

Father Lechner said if Father Schaefer had written his memoirs, he might have called it, *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the World of Post-Vatican II*. "Dan, like all of us, was stretched between our American inheritance of rugged individualism and a more authentic sense of community," Father Lechner said. "Dan began with a no-nonsense God and faced life with no-nonsense. First of all, honesty. No phoniness, no fake, no sham, the old rugged truth. And then tough love. Not only for others but for himself. These belong to the Dan

*Fr. Robert Stukenborg, C.P.P.S.*



*Fr. Daniel Schaefer, C.P.P.S.*

Schaefer legacy."

The priest Father Schaefer called the "guardian angel" of the province, Father Robert Stukenborg, died the following summer on August 7, 1992. Father Stukenborg supervised the building of Precious Blood Seminary and was elected to the first provincial council of the Kansas City Province. He was provincial treasurer from 1965 until illness forced him to retire shortly before he died. "R.F. Stukenborg was the E.F. Hutton of the Kansas City Province," Father Joe Nassal wrote in appreciation in the August 25, 1992 edition of *The New Wine Press*. "When Stuke talked, we listened."

In 1992, the province entered a process to revise the *Provincial Statutes*. A grievance committee was formed (former provincial Father Lawrence Cyr was the chair) to write the statutes for the new province customary. An elections committee was appointed to review and revise the elections process after the question was tabled at the 1991 Assembly. Also, a 24-page book of prayers, *United in Prayer*, made its debut as a supplement to the C.P.P.S. *Manual of Prayers*.

*Next Month: The Beginnings of Companions ♦*



Fr. Lac Pham, C.P.P.S. blesses Truc Vu during ordination Mass.

## A Mission of Service

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

Bright sunshine blessed the earth on June 20, 2015 in St. Joseph, Missouri when we gathered to celebrate the ordination of Truc Vu to the presbyterate. Members of his family were able to come from as far as Texas, joining people of the local Vietnamese community and our community with the St. Francis Xavier parish community for the great day.

In his homily, Bishop Joseph Charron, C.P.P.S. challenged Truc to be a Missionary of Gaspar's model: a Missionary of the Precious Blood, a Missionary of the Good News, a Missionary of Reconciliation. He reminded us of a classic story of two different people who recited Psalm 23 at a public event—one a radio announcer who recited it perfectly to applause and adulation, and an ordinary librarian whose rendition moved the audience to silence despite an imperfect presentation: clearly she knew the Shepherd. Truc was reminded to deepen his knowledge and relationship with the Good Shepherd. Lastly, Bishop Charron referenced the Gospel reading, Luke 22:24-27, when Jesus

challenged his disciples to distinguish themselves by service to others. Service through the word of God and sacraments are only two means by which a priest serves the People of God, and every priest's ministry is distinguished by its service to all.

Toward the end of the liturgy, in his words of thanks to those who made the celebration possible, Provincial Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S. particularly singled out Fr. Lac Pham, C.P.P.S., the founding director of the Vietnam Mission, for his guidance of the Mission for the past 16 years and his role in inviting Truc, Nhan Bui, Loi Nguyen, and Tam Hoang to become part of our community and ordained ministry as Precious Blood Missionaries.

The celebration continued at the St. Francis social hall afterward, with the tastes of Vietnam and central Missouri playing counterpoint at a festive meal. Fr. Truc has returned to Vietnam to begin his priestly ministry, joining the Vietnam Mission as they move into a new chapter of service to the Church in Vietnam as Precious Blood Missionaries. ♦

## To Lay Down One's Life

by Kathy Keary, Companions Co-director

The bicentennial pilgrimage was packed with many memorable experiences. Precious Blood pilgrims from all over the world gathered to celebrate the founding of a religious community that continues to thrive after 200 years of devoted service. Visiting places meaningful to us as Catholics and significant to us as Precious Blood men and women was truly edifying.

When I am asked which one experience impressed me most, the tour of Acuto, Italy quickly comes to mind. This is where St. Maria De Mattias founded the Adorers of the Blood of Christ in 1833.

Being profoundly touched by the tour of Acuto has little to do with the initial history of a congregation, but rather what the sisters did over 100 years later as they continued to live out their founder's vision. During World War II, many Jewish children found shelter, security, and love under their roof. The

*The museum contained a telling sculpture of Maria, which symbolizes her commitment to welcome all.*



Sr. Grazie De Guglielmi, ASC, who remembers sheltering Jewish children in the sisters' Acuto house during World War II.

sisters have no idea how many children they served because no records were kept, but a steady flow of frightened faces graced their mission house. The dwelling was located in the thick of the village. The children could not speak for fear they would be heard by those passing by; sign language was the usual mode of communication. The sisters created many hiding places, including revolving walls in closets and secure spots in cabinets.

These brave women not only knew what it meant to give one's life in service, but lived it in an extraordinarily bold manner as they risked their own safety to care for God's little ones. Their courageous acts personified St. Maria De Mattias' vision of a community of women reaching out to the margins while looking to Heaven for providential care. They embodied the words of St. Gaspar del Bufalo: "Love is a celestial fire that never says: enough! We must allow ourselves to be consumed by it in accordance with the will of the Almighty."

Our Precious Blood Spirituality centers on the One who gave His life for us. How do we give our life in an environment where martyrdom is unlikely? We give our life when we set aside wants in favor of commitment to a cause or purpose. We give our life when we allow another to take precedence. May we be inspired by the fervor of our fellow community members as well as the words of Pope Francis: "What counts is to be permeated by the love of Christ, to let oneself be led by the Holy Spirit and to graft one's own life onto the tree of life, which is the Lord's Cross." ♦

## Return to Crownpoint

by Kara McNamara, Precious Blood Volunteer Alumna

When I left Crownpoint, New Mexico a couple days before Christmas in 2013, I was overwhelmed by the simultaneous warmth and weight of my experience. After a full week of difficult goodbyes to my students and the teachers and staff at St. Bonaventure Mission School, the people of both faith communities, and others that I came to know—Father Al, Sister Maureen, and Sister Michelle—I couldn't and didn't look in my rearview mirror. I drove and drove—through Albuquerque, Amarillo, Wichita, Kansas City, Davenport, and finally Chicago. I was exhausted and elated.

I walked through the first ten months of 2014 with a lot of prayer, reflection, and questions. What did my six months in Crownpoint mean?

I moved back to Dayton, Ohio where I had gone to college, and I now have a job there with Big Brothers Big Sisters. I live in a historic, urban neighborhood with a good friend from college, and I am volunteering as a mentor in the community and as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for children in abuse and neglect cases in Juvenile Court. I go on walks, buy a fair amount of lattes at the neighborhood coffee shop, spend time with friends, and try to see God in everyone I meet. And as I do all of these everyday things, I carry my experiences in Crownpoint with me.

My time on the reservation changed me, and it couldn't be clearer to me, now that I have moved back to a familiar place, surrounded by familiar people, doing familiar tasks. Going back to the familiar has made me realize that I don't fit quite the same way that I used to—which is a good thing. I am different. I am stronger, more compassionate. I think I have a better understanding of the complexities of poverty and the reality of hopelessness. I am more reliant on God. I am a little more street-smart. I am definitely more handy after some of those home improvement projects I took on with Leah and the sisters!

But it wasn't until this past November when I made a return trip to New Mexico, that all of my questions



Precious Blood Volunteer Alumna Kara McNamara

and good memories and hopes and concerns from my volunteer experience came together into a beautiful mosaic. I stood in places that I had been the year before—on top of West Mesa, on the balcony off my old bedroom overlooking the mine, inside the rooms of Chetro Ketl at Chaco Canyon, in St. Paul's church, and in the car driving down Highway 371. As I stood in those places, I realized that the change in my heart that began in Crownpoint has continued to work in me.

Returning to Crownpoint was a personal commitment I made on the last day of my volunteer work. It was important to me to return—for my own understanding and to visibly keep my promise to the people I met there that I would never forget them. My time as a Precious Blood volunteer is an important part of who I am. I look forward to continuing to return to the reservation, and I look forward to continuing to allow God to let the light of my time in New Mexico shine in me and through me. ♦

## Embrace Is Grace, and Grace Is a Gamble

by Fr. Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S., Director of PBMR

“And that I make it through the summer,” he interrupted. “Pray that me and my family don't have no violence done to us.” Even though he was locked up, he was aware of the dangers that seem to increase during the summer months. “My neighborhood is messed up,” he said. “My best friend was killed a month ago and I saw what that did to his family. I don't want my momma to go through that.”

We are in the midst of our summer program. This year's program has two tracks: youth in two separate cohorts gather four times a week, five hours a day. Both groups began with a values exercise: “What is important to you? What do you hope for this summer?” Without exception, each said that they wanted to be safe, that they wanted to make it through the summer, and that none of their family or friends be killed or hurt.

The constant preoccupation—even subconsciously—with violence and safety is exhausting; you can see the stress and strain on their faces. Too many have themselves been harmed or had a loved one killed because of violence. At a far too early age kids realize that they are vulnerable, they are at risk. They understand as well that just walking to school or through the park can be dangerous. They live their lives hyper-vigilant, constantly on guard. And the most troubling to me is they feel that adults will not protect them. Too often, their experience is one of isolation and abandonment.

Miroslav Volf writes from experience about violence and reconciliation. In his book *Exclusion and Embrace*, he points out that the very core of our faith is the scandal of the cross. He goes on to say that Jesus' greatest agony was not that he suffered. Suffering can be endured, even embraced, if it brings forth the desired fruits, as does the experience of giving birth. What turned the pain of suffering into agony was the abandonment: Jesus felt abandoned, by the disciples, by the Jewish people, even by his Father.

The ministry of reconciliation calls us to create a safe and welcoming place for those who sometimes do not come to the door ready to be embraced. Too

often, the hurt in their lives has caused frustration and confusion, and they project a sense of mistrust or anger. Just today a man came to see me and made note that this one young man outside seemed have a chip on his shoulder. He went on to say, in a dismissive tone, “He is never going to get anywhere in life with that attitude.” I knew the young man he was talking about. Paris can sometime portray a distant and uninterested, even angry, look. However, once you engage him, his smile overwhelms his initial scowl. Most people never get to the smile because they can't see beyond the scowl. Hospitality demands patience and persistence—waiting for the returned embrace.

Volf offers an interesting metaphor for the work of reconciliation. He asks us to consider the human embrace. He says that there are four structural elements in the movement of embrace: opening the arms, waiting, closing the arms, and opening them again. For embrace to happen, all four must be there and they must follow one another on an unbroken timeline; stopping with the first two (opening arms and waiting) without the willingness to embrace causes further harm, and stopping with the third (closing the arms) would pervert it from the act of love to an act of oppression.

Those four elements are crucial to the work of reconciliation. We must be willing to open our arms in hospitality, which at times must be done so with patience. To complete the embrace we must also be willing to close our arms in an embrace as we commit ourselves to one another. Ultimately, we open our arms again as we acknowledge and respect one another as individuals.

Volf goes on to say that “Embrace is grace, and grace is always a gamble.” One has to willing to put oneself out there and risk being rejected, made a fool of, or, perhaps, even victimized. Together may we be willing to take the risk of embracing the abandoned, the isolated and know the gift of grace! ♦

# Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!

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



PBMR on trip to Fair Oaks Dairy Farm

It was a SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS summer at Precious Blood Center. What that means is that there was lots of creativity, positive nonsense and chances for our youth to speak their truth and be heard. The joy of learning was caught in a safe place—PBMR!

One of our 7<sup>th</sup> grade youths wrote: “Before we got to Precious Blood Center, we boys went out in public and people look at us like we were up to something. We fed into it and started to act like we were hoodlums. Even though we get paid for the work we do here at the Center, it is not the only reason that we come. We want to be safe, to learn, to be motivated to stay on the right track. Even my two older brothers who are in and out of jail motivate me to take a different track. Thank you to PBMR, now I have a chance for happiness and success.”

Every summer gets more exciting; this fall Fr. Kelly’s dream of rehabbing a house in the neighborhood will become more than a dream. The plan is to purchase a boarded up house across from PBMR where our boys can use the skills they learned this summer to restore the house, beautify the grounds and have a sense of pride in offering something positive to their neighborhood.

Br. Juan taught a group of our kids the art of photography; Fr. Denny made benches for our peace garden with two of our kids; Ricky, one of newest staff and a mechanic, showed the boys some general principles of his trade. Sr. Carolyn taught the basics of vegetable gardening, and many other skills were

introduced to expose our youth to the many options. There were cultural experiences and fun times: we visited the Fair Oaks Dairy Farm—saw real cows! Then we experienced the wonderful hospitality of Rensselaer, Indiana, especially at the Egan home. All of our youth had the opportunity to tour O’Hare airport and see jet planes up very close, learn about terminals and runways and the joy the airport workers feel at being a part of the busiest airport in the world. There were team building activities, such as creating paper maché “Peace Persons,” sailing, rope climbing, as well as the career building experiences with professionals in various fields. It was not a lazy-dazy summer at PBMR!

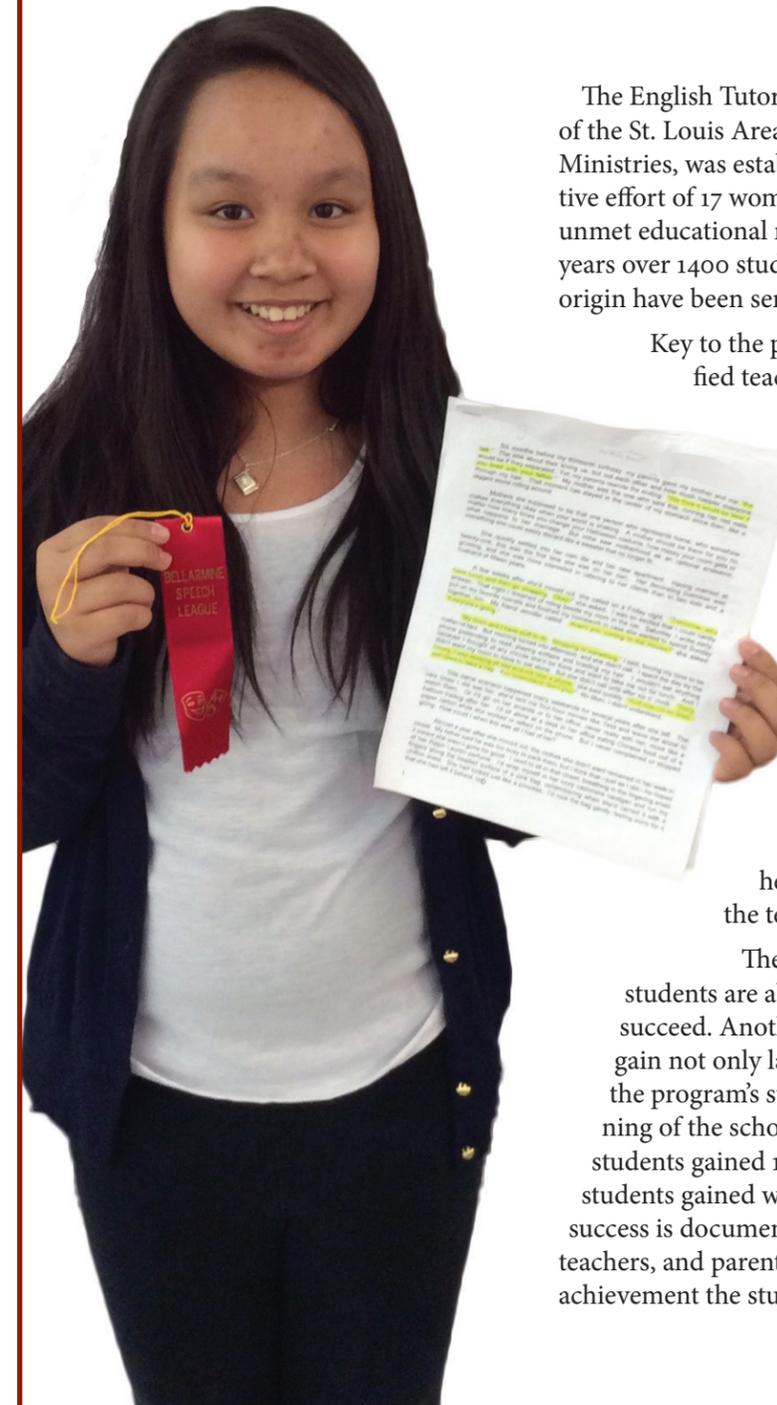
What a joy it was to see our kids—who experience not one trauma, but live in trauma—have a chance to see a bigger world than their block, a chance to learn, to laugh and explore possibilities and know they are special.

Along with lots of experiences for team building, there was the opportunity for spiritual growth as we sat in circle each morning. There was a designated time for enhancing vocabulary, visiting the local libraries, solving math problems, expressing self through art and drama, time for sports and time for self-reflection.

As the Missionaries of the Precious Blood celebrate their 200th anniversary, we give thanks for all the lives that they have enriched, inspired and healed. All of us here at PBMR can only stand in amazement at the commitment of Frs. Dave Kelly and Denny Kinderman and Br. Juan Acuna to this community, where generational poverty and daily violence cry out for redemption. They stand between gang lines, in the courtrooms, in the schools, at the corner stores; they are fathers to the fatherless, mentors to those without direction; they are present wherever the blood cries out, offering healing and reconciliation. They are truly missionaries with the spirit of Gaspar, and we give thanks.

Staff, youth and their families have caught their missionary spirit and their joy in serving. It is hard work, but slowly the neighborhood is being transformed. And as Letwan, one of young kids says, this place is “supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!” ♦

## 2015 Human Development Fund Recipient



The English Tutoring Project, a collaborative ministry of the St. Louis Area Women Religious Collaborative Ministries, was established in 1998 through a collaborative effort of 17 women religious congregations to meet an unmet educational need in the St. Louis area. In the past 17 years over 1400 students from more than 30 countries of origin have been served.

Key to the program are the experienced, certified teachers who prepare the daily lessons for the students in need. Students in

groups of 1-5 meet 3-5 times a week with the teacher using materials designed for new English speakers. It is a pull out program during the school day for the school year. Since almost 90% of the program’s students are living in poverty according to the free and reduced federal lunch guidelines, the service is offered at no cost to the parents or the schools. The Human

Development Fund grant is used to help with the stipends and benefits for the teachers.

The program is most successful when students are able to participate in regular classes and succeed. Another indicator is to have the students gain not only language but confidence and joy. On the program’s standardized testing given at the beginning of the school year and again in the spring, 85% of students gained 1 or more levels in achievement, 15% of students gained within their current level. The greater success is documented by comments from principals, teachers, and parents who attest to the confidence and achievement the students develop.

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## Discernment Retreat

October 23-25, 2015  
Precious Blood Center  
2130 Saint Gaspar Way  
Liberty, MO 64068

For men discerning a vocation as a Precious Blood priest or brother.

Contact Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S.,  
[vocations@kcprovince.org](mailto:vocations@kcprovince.org) for more information.