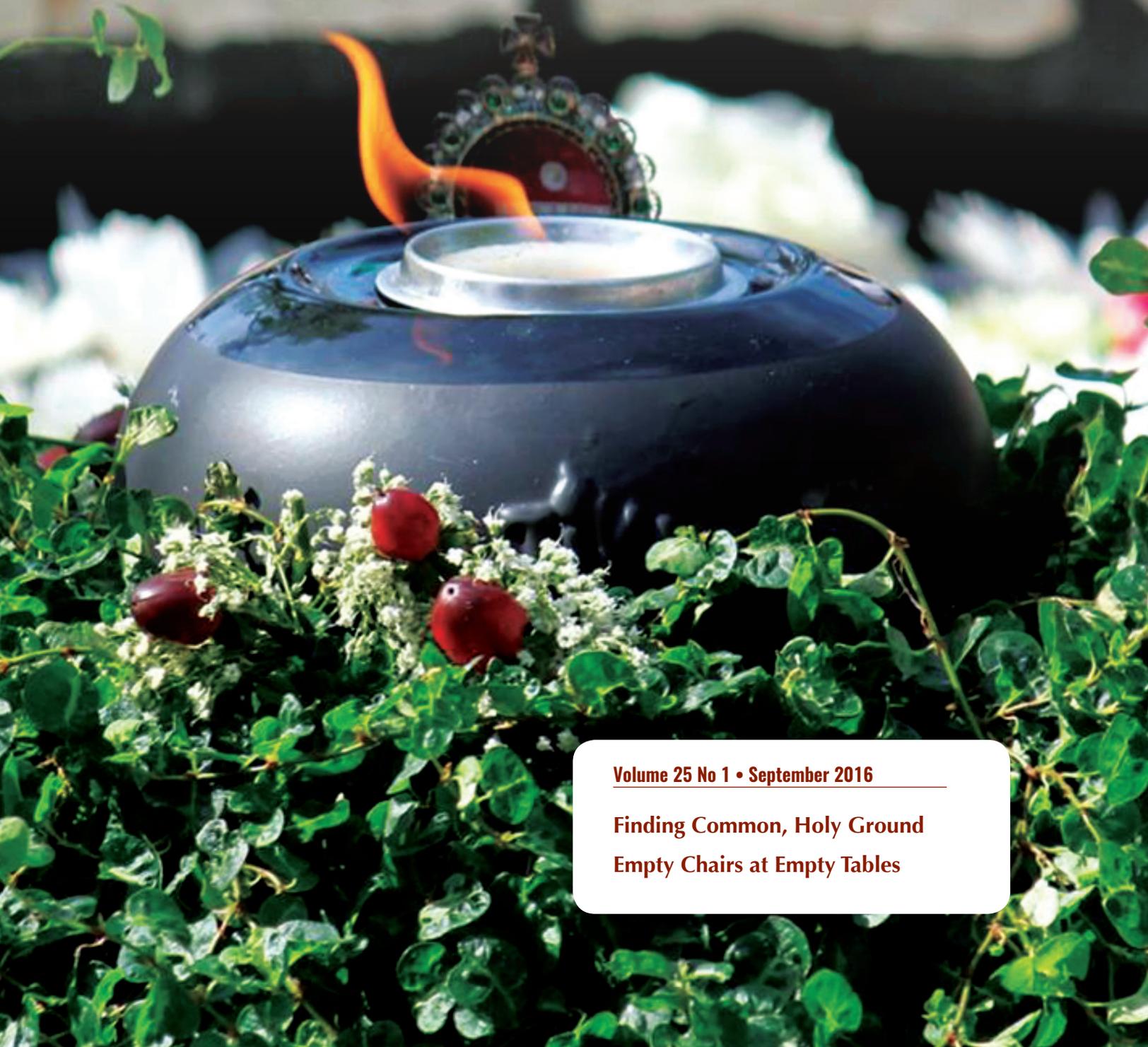


THE New Wine PRESS



Volume 25 No 1 • September 2016

**Finding Common, Holy Ground
Empty Chairs at Empty Tables**



Let us serve God with holy joy.

-St. Gaspar del Bufalo, founder of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood

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Front cover photo: Candle from labyrinth blessing at Precious Blood Center.

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

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Time for Dinner

by Fr. Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S., Publications Editor

This happened 12 years ago, but the memory has never faded. I lived in Chicago at the time. It was a beautiful summer July day, and I had invited five or six people to the house for a backyard cookout that evening. So, I had to go shopping. As I was leaving a nearby supermarket and approaching my car, bags of groceries in each hand, a man walked up to me in the parking lot. About 20 feet behind him I could see a woman and two small children, standing in front of what I assumed was their car (which didn't look all that roadworthy).

The man said they were trying to get to somewhere, but they were hungry and could I help them out. I put my groceries into the car, reached into my pocket and pulled out whatever cash was in there and gave it to him (probably about \$25). He thanked me profusely as I got behind the wheel and quickly left for home.

Later, as my guests and I were enjoying our meal together, I was suddenly uncomfortable as I thought back to the experience in the parking lot, and my response to that family. I had just given them money and walked away. (I never even asked their names.) I could have chosen to go into the store with them and purchased what they needed. Or—it occurred to me as I looked at the spacious patio and the excess of food—I could have invited them to join us for dinner. And perhaps listened to their story and gotten to know them a little. But they weren't on my guest list.

Many of you reading this will recall the gospel reading from the weekend of August 27-28, where Jesus is attending a dinner at the home of a wealthy family. He notices that some guests are trying very hard to get good seats at the table—at which point he invites his disciples to avoid such behavior. Instead, he says, “when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you he may say, ‘My friend, move up to a higher position.’ Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, but those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

He suggests further that when we have a dinner we shouldn't invite our friends, relatives, and wealthy neighbors. Instead, ask the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, those who never get invited, who usually are not on our guest list.

Humility is not just taking the lower place. It is knowing what is really important, really valuable. It is the courage to say, “Every person has value and

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What Have You Sacrificed?

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

In the 1971 musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Jesus is presented with a challenging question, “Who are you? What have you sacrificed?” A Gold Star family posed the same question to the Republican presidential nominee at the 2016 Democratic convention. Having been challenged by this family whose son was killed in Iraq if the candidate had ever sacrificed anything for the sake of the country, this same candidate lashed back with the comment that he had sacrificed a lot by putting up buildings. Obviously, it is questionable whether this even begins to approach what it means to “sacrifice,” or compare to what the family whose son had been killed in service to his country has endured.

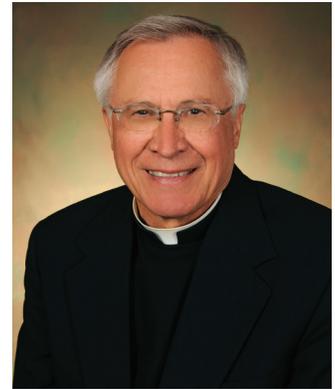
Putting political discussion aside, the issue raises the deeper question of what is implied in the concept of “sacrifice.” The word is defined in different ways, depending on the context. Culturally (and politically, as illustrated in the presidential campaign), it implies that something has been “given up.” In many faith communities, sacrifice is equated with offering up something to God (or gods): produce from the land, an animal, even human life. Frequently, it is understood as involving some kind of killing.

Proper understanding of sacrifice comes from its root meaning, from the Latin words *sacer*, whole or holy, and *facere*, to make. This presumes something is broken and must be restored, must be made whole again. In the Judeo-Christian context, what is seen as broken is humanity’s relationship with God and, subsequently, relationship with one another. How can these ruptured relationships be made whole again?

This brings us back to the question raised in the song, “What have you sacrificed, Jesus?” Even without going into detail about salvation history and the work of redemption, it is clear that humanity often finds itself in broken and alienated straits. There is a great lack of unity and peace in our world. The ministry of Jesus was one of reconciliation. Where the old Adam (humanity) had said no to God’s invitation to be a part of God’s self, the new Adam (Jesus) offered Himself totally and completely to God, shedding His blood (blood being synonymous with life) to the last drop. The work of Jesus was to restore wholeness to broken humanity.

Sacrifice does not mean simply “giving up” something, according to the cultural definition. Rather, the proper understanding of sacrifice is to enhance and enrich life. Nor is it an either/or scenario. Sacrifice must be understood as a both/and proposition. Jesus referred to this mystery, this

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paradox, as having “to lose life in order to gain it” (Luke 17:33; Mt 16:25).

This is something our American culture finds hard to understand. With its undue focus on the individual, the community often is given short shrift. Rather than challenging this unhealthy attitude, some political leaders foster and encourage it. Moreover, even the rare politician who focuses on the common good is quickly accused of being a “socialist.”

Sacrifice very likely involves enduring some hardship. Avoiding hardship, no matter what it takes, is another trait endemic to the American culture. Having said this, I in no way want to imply that one must seek out hardship. Hair shirts and whips are not mandatory. There used to be a time when we believed in a spirituality of misery. More than enough hardship will come our way if we are willing to engage in responsible living. It is another example of what Jesus refers to as losing in order to gain.

Anthony DePalma (formerly a visiting fellow at the Notre Dame Kellogg Institute) makes this same observation in the summer 2016 *Notre Dame Magazine*. In his article “The Ancient Ones,” DePalma describes the harsh environment of the White Mountains of California in which the bristlecone pines (some more than 5,000 years old, the oldest living things on earth) grow, despite all odds.

He quotes Pema Chodron, a Buddhist nun, in this context, “Chodron wrote about what she says is a common misunderstanding, the mistaken belief that the best way to live is to avoid pain and adversity. The more enlightened way, she professed, is to endure pain and pleasure ‘for the sake of finding out who we are and what this world is, how we tick and how our world ticks, how the whole thing just is.’” DePalma concludes, “Most people don’t buy that. They are committed to comfort at any cost, even though by doing so they stand to lose more than they gain.” He again quotes Chodron, “As soon as we come up against the least edge of pain, we’re going to run. [By doing so] we’ll never get to know what’s beyond that particular barrier or wall or fearful thing.”

At the present time we are encountering many “barriers, walls and fearful things” in our world.

Fear is driving many people in the present political climate to support a candidate who offers many empty and false promises. True sacrifice is not among the promises.

As a Community we are facing a future that is not very clear. Which way are we going to proceed? Are we going to give in to the temptation to go more deeply into our personal comfort zones? Chodron reminds us, by doing so we stand to lose more than we gain. Are we willing to make the hard choices that are part and parcel of what it means to be a people of the Precious Blood, a people of sacrifice?

“Jesus Christ, who are you? What have you sacrificed?” We know the answer to that question. Jesus was the fearless leader who was willing to do whatever it took to lead people back to where all life can flourish: into the presence of the Creator God. In doing so He showed us the way to move a broken world into wholeness. Gaspar accepted the invitation to follow that same way. So did Maria. Are we also willing to accept the invitation? Who are we, and what are we willing to do to move brokenness into wholeness? Are we willing to be a people of sacrifice? □

Editor’s notes: continued from page 2

dignity. There are no more categories like higher, or lower, more important, less valuable.”

I invite you to read the various articles in this issue, using this gospel passage and our Precious Blood spirituality as a lens. Jesus dismisses honor and status, and invites us all to the same meal, the same place of caring. This seems to be an important truth to remember and assert as we are surrounded by the voices of an election campaign and the realities of life for so many of our brothers and sisters. □



Blessing of the labyrinth at Precious Blood Center

Finding Common, Holy Ground

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

When a person is stressed, overwhelmed, confused, or just needs to escape the noise and busyness of the world, sometimes it is good to take a walk and clear the clutter from one's mind and heart. "Despite their unimposing appearance, labyrinths are finding growing use as instruments for healing individuals and for bringing peace and reconciliation between individuals in conflict," Gillian Corcoran writes. "Labyrinths are not some New Age invention; they are ancient, sacred patterns that combine the image of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. They represent a journey to our own center and back again, out into the world."

As an individual exercise, the labyrinth invites a rich and deeper experience of God's grace and mercy. Our reconciliation labyrinth at Precious Blood Center, dedicated on August 14 and modeled after the one created by Clare Wilson in South Africa to help heal the wounds in her country in the aftermath of apartheid, is designed also to help those in conflict find common ground. It has two entrances because as Clare Wilson writes, when we begin the process of reconciliation "it recognizes that as human beings with different backgrounds and different life experiences, we do not start the journey towards an inner healing or wholeness from the same place. However, by being prepared to consciously take on and interrogate further experiences,

we may find a way to walk towards a place where we can meet with each other in new ways."

In walking the labyrinth, each person can start where they are and walk toward the center, following the path at his or her own pace. At some point, they will encounter the other along the way and they are reminded how "they are indeed on the same human path, meet each other, pass each other. Then they walk the path that the other has just walked, with all its twists and turns." The journey takes these faith walkers to their "heart space, the point where they must make a symbolic choice," according to Wilson. This is decision time—to enter the center, knowing I will meet the other again on "potentially common ground."

After spending time in silence in the center of the labyrinth, they can choose to walk out the same way they journeyed into the sacred space, once again passing each other along the way. Or they can journey out through a third path that leads to a bench inviting more contemplation, silence, meditation, and maybe even a holy conversation.

When conflicts arise, the hope is that those who disagree can find common ground. The reconciliation labyrinth is a spiritual tool to help those who are estranged or in broken relationship to find each

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Memorial at Orlando Pulse (iStock.com/levers2007)

Empty Chairs at Empty Tables

by Vicky Otto, *Precious Blood Companions* Co-director

Ever since I was a child I have always loved musicals. One of my favorites as an adult is *Les Misérables*. As I was reflecting about what happened after the shooting in Orlando, one of the songs from the musical came to mind, “Empty Chairs at Empty Tables.” It has been two months since the horrifying news that 49 people were killed and 53 others were injured at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. The world media has moved on to the next news cycle, but the brokenness and suffering in the Orlando community continues. Victims and surviving family members spoke about how Pulse was a safe place where people did not feel the hostilities about the LGBT community that are now common in our world. I imagine they hoped for a different world. And as the lyrics of the song describe, “Here it was they lit the flame. Here they sang about ‘tomorrow’ and tomorrow never came.” In the aftermath of Orlando we may have taken a small step to the “tomorrow” that everyone hopes for.

One of the unexpected circumstances regarding this shooting is that it began a dialogue and call to

change regarding the language we use as Church. We have heard many words after the massacre condemning the senseless violence. While many of the world’s bishops remained silent, others offered words of compassion and challenged the Church to look at the words they use and the hurt that these words inflict. Archbishop Blase Cupich wrote, “Let our shared grief and our common faith in Jesus, who called the persecuted blessed, unite us so that hatred and tolerance are not allowed to flourish.” Bishop Robert McElroy wrote, “The shootings in Orlando are a wound to our entire society, and this time the LGBT community has been specifically targeted and victimized.... This tragedy is a call for us as Catholics to combat ever more vigorously the anti-gay prejudice which exists in our Catholic community and in our country.” Bishop Robert Lynch spoke specifically about how words hurt. He wrote, “Sadly it is religion, including our own, which targets, mostly verbally, and also often breeds contempt for gays, lesbians and transgender people.” Fr. Russell Pollitt, s.j. also wrote, “We

need to interrogate the impact of the words we use and the positions we take. Religious language, and the mindset it forms, must take stock of its contribution to forming attitudes that contribute to a cocktail that breeds such evil acts. This type of evil can never be associated with God.” At the end of June when asked about a call by Cardinal Marx to apologize to the LGBT community, Pope Francis responded that “I believe the church not only must say it’s sorry to this person that is gay that it has offended, but it must say it’s sorry to the poor, also, to mistreated women, to children forced to work.”

As a religious community, our mission is to be a “prophetic witness for the renewal of the Church and the transformation of the world.” One of the tenets of this mission is to be people of hospitality. We speak often about creating safe spaces for people to be their authentic selves. In creating these safe spaces, we must use words of love and compassion, not of judgment and fear. Each of us may have a different viewpoint regarding aspects surrounding the LGBT community, but as a religious community we can and we must allow ourselves to be open to listening and honoring all the words that are spoken—even the ones that we may personally find uncomfortable.

To truly be ministers of reconciliation we must allow all the words to be spoken in this safe space with a sense of respect and love. It is from listening to words from this place of respect and of love that we honor first and foremost that each of us is made in the image and likeness of God. When words of compassion replace words that separate and divide us we begin to get a glimpse of the possibility of the transformation that our vision statement calls for. Pope Francis has given us the first words that we need to say to begin this dialogue of healing. When we each can put down the shields of distrust and judgment that we hold on to when we find ourselves in a place of division, we can then move to the place of love and compassion that are core to that safe space that we all long for.

The song, “Empty Chairs at Empty Tables” continues: “From the table in the corner, they could see a world reborn.” Let us honor the victims of Orlando, let us honor those who were murdered, and their family members and friends who continue to mourn their deaths, by working for that world reborn and the tomorrow that they longed for where there will be no more hurt inflicted by the angry words that we use. ▢

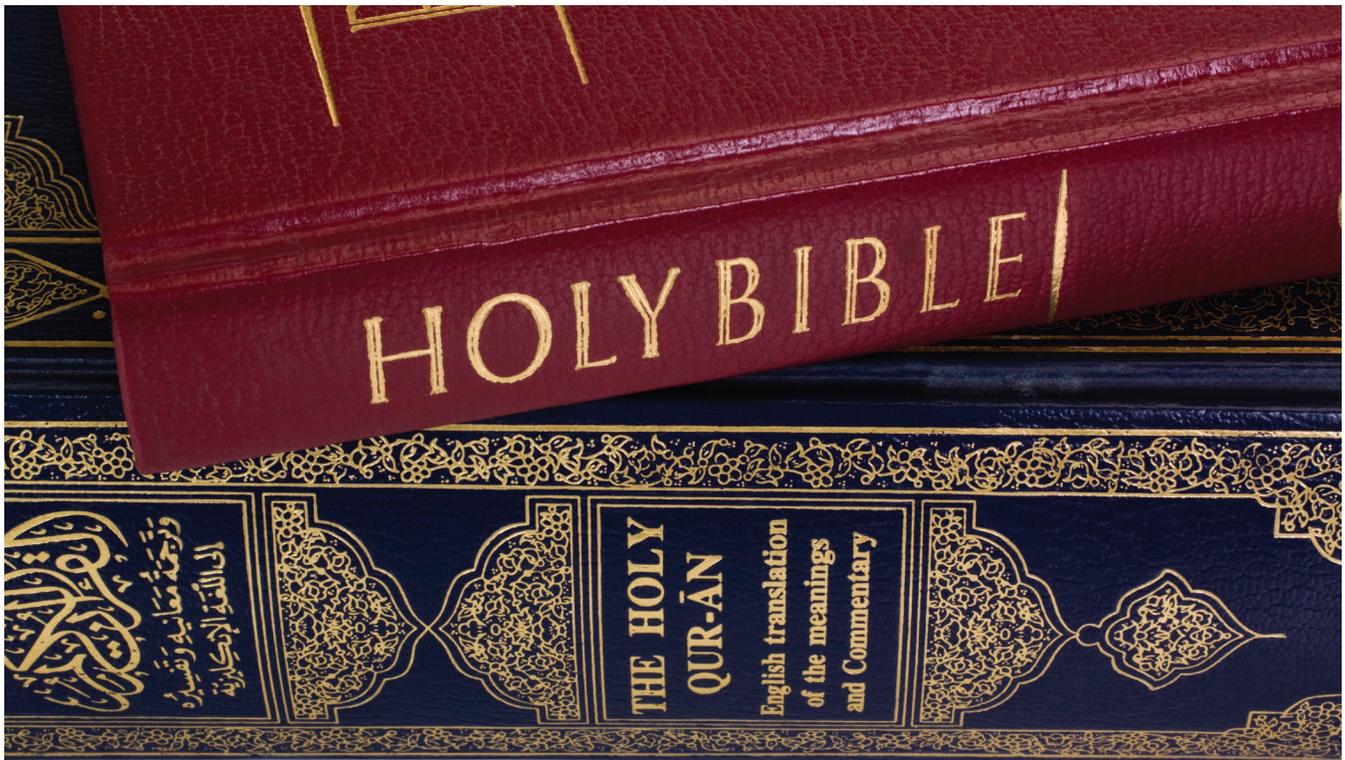
Labyrinth, continued from page 5

one’s center. And then, from the sacred center of one’s being where we recognize who we are as children of God, we begin to see the other as a child of God too. As a spiritual exercise, the labyrinth helps the person get in touch with one’s best self; one’s true self, one’s God-image within.

In 2005 at the Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, several religious leaders from various religious denominations including representatives of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions walked the labyrinth to pray for peace in the Middle East. Kevin Thompson, one of the pastors from the Bay Area who participated in the prayer commented, “Being in the labyrinth brought us together in a way that I have not experienced before. Doing that walk seemed to equalize us all as children of the same creator. It brought down barriers, so our prayers were much deeper.”

This has been my experience of walking various labyrinths at retreat and prayer centers around the country. It is a spiritual exercise that takes one deeper into the sacred center of one’s being. It is an exercise in mindfulness that offers one the opportunity to get beneath the surface and roam around in that inner room Jesus described in Matthew’s Gospel where he told his disciples to go and pray. Except this inner room is outdoors: surrounded by nature’s beauty. The location of the labyrinth at the Center affords one a view of the lake, the sky, and the trees that surround it in their changing seasonal attire.

As the Beatles reminded us forty-five years ago, life is a “long and winding road.” Each of our lives have many twists and turns, and the labyrinth symbolizes this path—turning, moving, sometimes closer to the center, then back to the edge, then from the fringe back to the center. The reconciliation labyrinth reflects the spirituality of the blood of Christ as its circular design and paths to the center seek to draw all peoples near. We hope the reconciliation labyrinth at Precious Blood Center, dedicated in this Holy Year of Mercy, will provide a safe place for pilgrims of every faith tradition and those seeking faith and healing to find that sacred space within that names and claims them as God’s beloved. ▢



Our Muslim Friends and Neighbors

by Jean Swymeler, St. Joseph, Missouri Companion, Justice & Peace Committee

I would like to share an important issue that the Peace & Justice Committee at St. Francis Xavier has been working with for the last several months. I am excited to share this with you, because as a Precious Blood Companion who values our charism of reconciliation I have really been struggling with the whole concept of revenge. As a society we seem bent on living the “eye for an eye” mentality. If someone commits a crime we yell—“make them pay!” Why are we so into punitive rather than restorative justice? The top three countries in the world with the highest prison population are: United States with 2,217,947 people in our prisons, followed by China with 1,649,804, and Russia with 653,218 people in prison. Why does the U.S. have so many more prisoners than the next two countries? Shouldn’t we be trying to rehabilitate people as opposed to punishing them?

We take these same attitudes of vengeance and punishment into our treatment of those who are different than we are. For example, we hear angry voices shouting, “Muslims are terrorists who should be excluded from our country and our society!”

Our pastor Fr. Ron Will was recently approached by several St. Francis Xavier parishioners who were

upset and afraid because of all of the media hype about the followers of Islam. He brought this concern to our SFX Peace & Justice Committee. It was decided that we would start a dialogue with our Muslim neighbors. Their mosque is very close in proximity to our SFX Church. In fact we had made a “border crossing” field trip as a Peace & Justice Committee to the mosque several years ago. We had become acquainted with Ramadan, one of the leaders of their mosque. It was decided that we would contact him and see if he was open to meeting with our committee to discuss a get together. He was very open and invited us back to the mosque.

Several members of the mosque met with us. We found them to be a very gentle, caring and deeply spiritual group. (Did you know that Muslims pray five times a day?) They were very serious about their faith commitment. Many times they reiterated the ideal that we who believe in God must verbalize our stance. They were adamant that we are all one in God. They loved Pope Francis’s message of mercy and decided that we should approach our meetings with that message in mind. We met two more times with

them to iron out details of our citywide meeting and to get to know one another.

A date was chosen. We decided to meet at SFX Parish Center. All the Catholic churches in St. Joseph and Savannah were sent a message for their bulletins. The message read “Pope Francis has declared this year to be a Year of Mercy. What does it mean to be merciful to others? How do we practice mercy in a world that seems to value revenge? The St. Francis Xavier Peace & Justice Committee invites you to attend “The Year of Mercy: Exploring Mercy Between Muslims and Christians.””

Anthony, a member of the mosque, agreed to prepare the food. The big day came and we were afraid that our numbers would be like most Peace & Justice gatherings, very meagerly attended. Our Muslim friends said they would have perhaps three people in attendance.

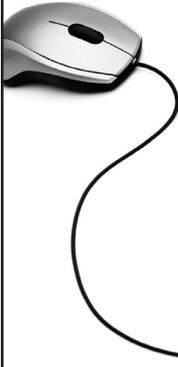
How surprised we were to see that six of our Muslim friends came to join us, bringing with them a young woman who was learning more about the Muslim faith. I approached her after the gathering, because she was taking notes during the discussion and shaking her head as if she was familiar with what was being said. I thought that perhaps she was a reporter for the *St. Joseph New-Press*. However, she told me that she was dating one of the Muslim’s in attendance. She went on to say that “he was one of the nicest guys she had ever dated.” (Some circumstances never change much, no matter what faith we are!) We had many SFX parishioners in attendance, as well as parishioners from Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Co-Cathedral.

We met in a circle of peace with the Bible and Qur’an as the centerpieces. We ate the delicious food that Anthony had prepared. Father Ron led the opening prayer. We talked about the importance of the Bible and Qur’an to each of our faiths. Each Muslim shared his faith journey with us. Their imam (Arabic word meaning “Leader”) spoke of how mercy is so important to them, as is the oneness of all creation. He shared the importance of expressing gratitude in our daily prayer. He also shared how he didn’t want to offend anyone, or come off as if their religion was right and ours was wrong. He wanted to say how proud he was to be able to meet with faith-filled people and gain strength and purpose in our oneness.

We shared what our faiths hold in common, such as the fact that, along with the Jewish people, we are

children of Abraham. They acknowledge Jesus as a great prophet. But they also shared their concern and hurt that they are portrayed by the media as terrorists and a violent people of a violent religion. They believe that they are a people of peace. We were then invited to ask questions. Finally, Ramadan ended our gathering with a closing prayer. Many people stayed and conversed and shared fellowship. It was decided that those wishing to continue the discussion would continue to meet in the future.

That night of sharing with our new Muslim friends and fellow Catholics was a rewarding and exhilarating time for me. It was an experience of departing from the political rhetoric of “those Muslims” promoting a popular opinion that more and more blames the Muslim religion itself for violence—as if it is something inherent in Islam. This has to be challenged in the name of truth and in the name of what’s best in us as Christians. That evening we came to understand that there is nothing inherent in Islam or the Qur’an itself that morally or religiously supports hatred or violence. Seeing the many faces of Islam that evening we understood that we are both part of the same family, both worship the same God, both suffer tragedies. We came to understand that our Muslim brothers and sisters need our understanding, support and fellowship. That evening was an opportunity to listen to their stories and share what we held in common as people of faith. Our Precious Blood gifts of hospitality and community were very much in evidence. I felt as though our society’s vengeful stance was made just a little softer and kinder that night. Our wounded world was bandaged with our conversations and caring for one another. ▢



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Debbie Bolin preparing PBMR's garden for a water feature

Yes, I Believe!

by Debbie Bolin, Sedalia, Missouri Companion

Sr. Donna Liette, C.P.P.S., in the June edition of *The New Wine Press* asked the question, “Would you believe?” Would you believe how two of our youth from the “hood” were like the 1000 (only two) tongues that St. Gaspar desired for bringing people to an understanding of redemption, restoration, and healing? Would you believe? Yes, Sister! Never doubt that PBMR and C.P.P.S. are making a difference!

Would you believe how much has changed in the two years since we have been there? A chef, an art studio, lush green grass, a thriving community garden, a labyrinth in the Peace Garden, a school for “at-risk” children—not to mention feeding the hungry, employing several of the young men and a few of their mothers, financing bus passes, and being a safe place for the kid’s to just hang out?

Many of my friends and colleagues—including my dear husband—wonder why I would want to spend part of my summer vacation traveling eight hours away, on what seemed to be the hottest week of the summer (so far) to travel to Chicago’s South

Side and work outside for 8 to 10 hours a day? My answer: Because I want to help the people who are working seven days a week, all year long, in the “hood” to make a difference in these peoples’ lives. At least this time, I knew what I was getting into and couldn’t wait to see my friends at PBMR. From the moment we arrived we were welcomed with open arms and Precious Blood hospitality second to none. We got hugs from Jonathan and Joe whom we met two years ago. We got to meet Jonathan’s son, who is two years old now; he wasn’t born yet, the last time we were there.

And so our adventure began. Fr. Timothy Armbruster and I left early Monday morning, July 18th, with his car packed with lumber, power tools, buckets of rocks, an outdoor cooking station, a watering system, fresh tomatoes, canning jars, fresh basil and other herbs in a bucket of water (so they would stay fresh), a tank of propane to hook up to the cooking system, and anything else we could think of so we wouldn’t have to go to Lowe’s in Chicago. (Well, “the best laid plans”—we now know



Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S. building the frame for the water feature

where several Lowe's and Home Depots are located in Chicago!)

I admit that it was my idea back in February to go to PBMR in the summer—but I'm going to blame Fr. Timothy and Br. Juan Acuña Gonzalez for the rest of these projects. The closer we got to July, many ideas for projects began to bloom—and explode. Br. Juan said, "Sr. Donna would like a water feature in her Peace Garden and Sr. Carolyn would love a watering system in her vegetable garden." Well, if you are going to have a thriving vegetable garden, Fr. Timothy should teach them how to can some of their vegetables so they can enjoy them in the winter.

And so it began. Monday evening we walked the property of PBMR to get an idea where we would begin the fountain for Sr. Donna, we checked out the outdoor kitchen that we would use for canning, and organized the hoses and located the water supply for Sr. Caroline's garden. We were treated to dinner and finally arrived home at the Drexel Formation House, welcomed by Fr. Dennis Chriszt and Fr. Steve Dos Santos, and given a quick tour.

I'm not going to take you through all of the Precious Blood sweat, tears, and laughter that were involved in those five very short days—but why a fountain and what is a Peace Garden? In the midst of chaos, shootings, asphalt, concrete and houses in disrepair, PBMR is a Precious Blood oasis where all people are welcomed with food and drink, prayer and peace. It has been Sr. Donna's dream for three years to have a water feature, where people could come, sit and listen to the peacefulness of trickling, splashing water and simply breathe. Water is inviting and life giving. It is the perfect way to bring

people and nature together in the garden just like Jesus did.

This is what our Precious Blood spirituality calls us to do. Reach out to those on the edges, welcome them in, become one with them in the Precious Blood of Jesus. And yes, when all of the work was done, Sr. Donna and I hugged and cried tears of joy that her dream had come true.

I am very blessed to know and to be friends with so many caring, wonderful people in our Precious Blood community. Sr. Donna has a fountain in her Peace Garden, Sr. Carolyn has a watering system for her community garden, and we left several jars of stewed tomatoes and spaghetti sauce to feed the neighborhood.

My goal every summer is to do something inspiring—whether it is extra studies at Notre Dame, taking students to Steubenville or doing something that makes a difference in other peoples' lives. That goal has been accomplished this summer, but not without my heartfelt gratitude to all those who helped make it happen. Fr. Timothy (without him and all of his talents and resources, none of this could have been possible—plus my husband won't let me go without him), Fr. Dave Kelley, Fr. Denny Kinderman, Sr. Donna Liette, Sr. Carolyn Hoying, Fr. Steve Dos Santos, Fr. Dennis Chriszt, and Br. Juan Acuña: thanks for all of your hard work, and of course St. Gaspar who is with us always, inspiring and encouraging all of us along the way.

As we move forward into this new school year and this new Year of Grace, I know I will look back on my activities at the PBMR and remember all of the moments of joy-filled grace that were given to me in this very special time. Yes, Sr. Donna. I do believe! ☐

Frs. Denny Kinderman and Timothy Armbruster



Tutors Live the Call of the Blood

by Timothy Deveney, Director of Precious Blood Volunteers



In a January edition of *The Weekly Wine Press*, Father Joe Nassal wrote that as a Precious Blood community, “We seek to stand with those who are suffering, those who are excluded, those who are marginalized, those who are pushed away from society and the church’s table.” Standing with people who are hurting and are cast aside in our society is a part of our call as Christians in general and as people of the Blood in particular. Many of our incorporated members, Companions and volunteers serve and work with people living in these situations.

This past spring three Precious Blood Companions stood closer with children who are from low-income households as tutors at the Learning Club of Kansas City, Kansas. Some of these kids are children of recent immigrants from Latin America and some are children of refugees from places like Nepal and Sudan. The Learning Club is an after-school program, serving children from Kansas City, Kansas. Many of these children are from low-income households and need additional positive adult relationships in their lives as well as help with their schoolwork. The Learning Club has five sites across Kansas City, Kansas, including the Cyrus K. Holliday Public Housing Complex in the Argentine neighborhood.

Liberty Companions Rena Tulipana, Fran Norton, and Pam Demasi have been working with some of these kids at the Cyrus K. Holliday Public Housing Complex site. Rena, Pam and Fran work with the kids on their homework in math and reading along with playing educational games.

Fran Norton noted that we she was first asked she wanted to say no since “it was way out of my

comfort zone.” She continued that on “the first day there was so much to remember, what to say and do,” and she worried about doing the right thing. During the tutoring sessions “the kids were given a treat, we helped with homework, played games and earned points they could use for small gifts.” In addition to working with the kids on their homework the Learning Club encourages the tutors to work with the kids on social skills.

After a number of tutoring sessions Fran reported, “I was relaxed more and saw how much good work we were doing.”

Another one of our Companion tutors, Rena Tulipana, said she started tutoring because she thought she could make a difference in these kids’ lives. Rena’s background as a Catholic school teacher made her a natural fit working with the kids and she “felt the need to give back to the community some of the skills I was given.” She noted that at first “it was difficult getting acclimated to the culture of some of the students” since “many [of the students] were refugees or immigrants from countries in peril and they had little or no knowledge of our culture.”

Rena said she enjoyed working with the children at the Learning Club. The students “were well behaved and respected each other and their tutors.” Rena added that “it was a blessing to be a part of their education!”

If you are interested in tutoring at any of the Learning Club sites you can contact Tim Deveney at tdeveney@preciousbloodkc.org. You are also welcome to contact the Learning Club directly at 913-244-5838 or bgrabs@learningclubkck.org.





**Let us serve God
with holy joy.**

- St. Gaspar del Bufalo



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