

General Guidelines for Precious Blood Companions

**Associates of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood
Cincinnati Province - Kansas City Province**

Front cover: wood carving by Emmanuel Pirka, in the entry of the rectory in Annabichl, Klagenfurt, Austria.

Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or grouped in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all throughout the earth. This duty is the more pressing when it is only through them that all can hear the Gospel and know Christ. Their activity in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it.

(The Catechism of the Catholic Church #900)



The laity are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.

...the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven.

(Vatican Council II Document: Lumen Gentium #31)

*During the seventeenth General Assembly in September of 2001
a sentence was added (see **bold print** below) to Statute 12
to embrace Precious Blood Companions and other lay associates.*

Statute 12

of the

General Statutes

of the

Normative Texts of the Society of the Precious Blood

S12 *In their apostolate the members of the Society,
according to the directives of the Church, interest
themselves also in forming leaders of the lay apostolate,
catechists and all those who wish to dedicate themselves
in a special way to the service of the Church.*

*Corresponding to the tradition of the Society, the
“Union of the Blood of Christ,” regulated by its own
Statutes according to which the Moderator General is the
Central Director, serves to spread the spirituality of the
Precious Blood.*

**The Moderator and his council may encourage
and promote other forms of lay associations
dedicated to the spirituality of the Precious Blood.**

General Assembly XVII September 2001

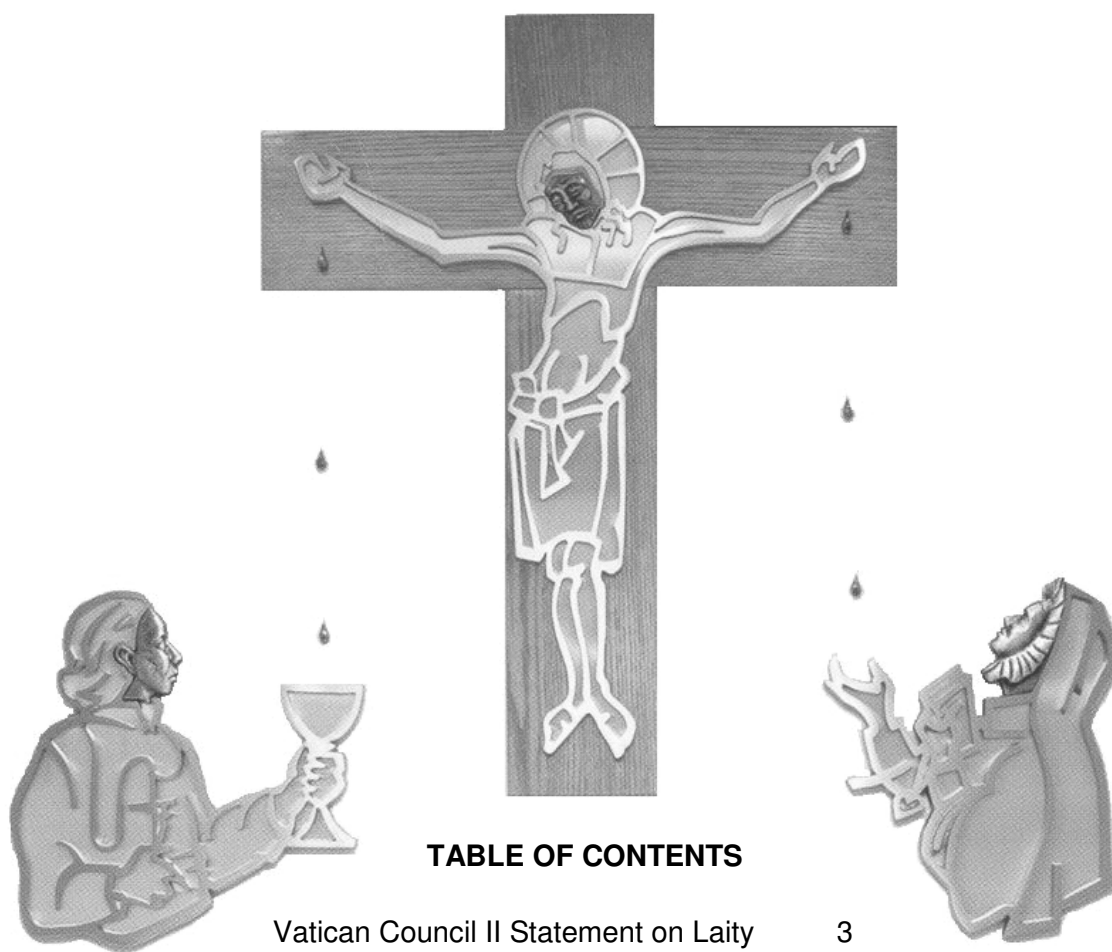


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(above)
Bronze sculptures of
St. Gaspar del Bufalo
and
St. Maria de Mattias
in the chapel of the
Atlantic Provincialate,
Niagra Falls, Ontario, Canada

AN OVERVIEW

*Companions
and Incorporated members
are called by God to live a life of faith
through the spirituality
of the Precious Blood
and Saint Gaspar.
We live the bond of charity
with each other,
carrying that charity with us
to the world,
according to our vocation and gifts.
As missionaries, we share and proclaim
the spirit of the Community:
reconciliation, prayer, hospitality,
and justice.*

Companion delegates and priest and brother delegates composed the above statement during a Summit held in July of 1997, at St. Charles Center, Carthage, Ohio.

A MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Since the late 1980's groups of lay people have been gathering in response to an invitation by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Bonding in a distinctive relationship, they are striving together to understand more clearly how the Spirit is awakening, in the post Vatican II Church, an innovative capacity for laity.

Baptism calls all to the same holiness and participation in the Blood of Christ. Companions are called by God to make holy their place in the world in collaboration with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. A Companion relationship deepens that commitment and fosters that call to holiness. Not called to ordained or professed ministry, many Companions have already responded to the vocation of married life, yet desire to take their part

in following in Gaspar's footsteps.

"COMPANIONS" (THE TITLE)

The word, "companion", comes from the Latin root, "com - panis," which literally means "with - bread". To break bread with another is a sign of friendship, welcome, and hospitality – being in relationship. At its most profound level it is a sacrament: "Do this in memory of me." Eat my body and drink my blood, which is shed for you and for all.

Precious Blood people witness to the "blood of the new and everlasting covenant." They are the vessels from which Jesus shares his life with his friends. As the opening prayer of the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ eloquently says, "May we offer to our brothers and sisters a life poured out in loving service."

The Companion relationship has not sprung from a fear of the demise of the Society as the number of priest and brother members declines. Companions are not an appendage nor an auxiliary. In this regard Companions are not a form of the Union of the Blood of Christ. Companions and Members work side by side giving expression to the charism of Gaspar as a force engaged in the "opra de Dio" of our day. Therefore, the term "associate" is not entirely appropriate, for Companions have their own special vocation as lay men and women. The term "companion" seems better to capture the relationship.

LIVING THE CHARISM AND SPIRITUALITY

Companions and Members accompany

one another as the “thousand tongues” proclaiming the glories of the Precious Blood for which Gaspar so longed.

Companions live the founder's spirit applying his charism to our times and culture through expressions of Precious Blood spirituality. They are responding to a call to live the charism of the Society and the spirituality of the Precious Blood in relationship with the members yet in accord with their own lifestyle.

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

Our founder, St. Gaspar, created a distinctive path in following Jesus by being the apostle of the Precious Blood.

Gaspar's mission was for the renewal of the church. In our day there is need for another call to reconciliation and renewal, as well as for collaboration among the laity and those in religious life.

Companions bring fresh insights, broader based faith experiences, and a shared Gospel vision, as they live out their own personal vocation in collaboration with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. It is a relationship that is mutually beneficial.

Lay men and women were involved in the beginnings of our society. St. Gaspar was not satisfied with only his own personal commitment but sought out other generous hearts who shared his vision. The Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood consisted of lay men and women who were active in works of mercy. During a Workshop in Rome in 1987, Fr. Colagiovanni pointed out: "When Gaspar returned to Rome after his exile, he felt very strongly about preaching missions,

for through missions he wanted to bring many people back to God. Lay people were involved in this mission effort."

The future of the church depends on the active involvement of lay women and men who live out their call to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

GUIDELINES

The purpose for these guidelines is to clarify and strengthen the relationship between the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and the Precious Blood Companions. These guidelines offer ways to foster closer ties and collaboration between laity and members as a means to continue in our day the mission of Gaspar del Bufalo for the renewal of the Church.

Through written commitments, called covenants, Companions are united to the Society in a bond of charity without implying membership. A Companion's covenant defines his or her relationship with the Members and other

Companions, sharing more intensely in the spirituality and mission of the Society.



by Fr. Gary Scherer, C.P.P.S.



St. Gaspar del Bufalo wood carving by Fr. Daniel Schaefer, C.P.P.S.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Any Catholic can become a Companion who is...

- called to participate in the goals, mission, and prayer life of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood
- called to journey in faith and service responding to the “cry of the blood”
- called to live in a bond of charity with the Missionaries and other Companions
- seeking holiness in the spirit of Saint Gaspar del Bufalo and Saint Maria de Mattias
- at least 18 years of age
- and is accepted by the Provincial Director after completing two years of formation and expressing commitment in a written covenant.

THE WAY ONE

(1) INVITATION

the Missionaries of the Precious Blood extend an invitation in a local area in conjunction with the Companion office

- Members and Covenanted Companions participate in this invitation
- the invited attend an Information Meeting
- and may attend several Gatherings
- and may request to begin Inquiry

(2) INQUIRY

an Inquirer receives a copy of the Inquiry & Formation Workbook

- begins receiving the *COMPANIONS* newsletter
- examines the four *DELIBERATIONS*
- upon completion writes a request to begin Formation

(3) FORMATION

- advances by celebrating a *Welcome Rite*
- begins receiving C.P.P.S. mailings
- is included in the address book
- is invited to attend C.P.P.S. functions
- studies the eight *STUDY CHAPTERS*
- upon completion writes a first Covenant

(4) COMPANIONSHIP

- celebrates the *Covenant Rite*
 - continues...
 - on-going formation
 - active ministry
 - attending Companion Gatherings
 - making Covenant renewals
 - participating in C.P.P.S. events
 - attending annual retreats or days of reflection.
- ...see following pages for more details..

7 BECOMES A COMPANION

(1) INVITATION

Often, invitations do not draw a huge response, and that is to be expected. It is those whom God may be calling who are invited. The invitation is to come and see if one desires to become more closely associated with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Initially, arrangements for inviting and setting up an Information Meeting are a joint effort of a C.P.P.S. Member or a local Companion group and the Companion office.

The Information Meeting is an opportunity for the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and the Companions to invite people to hear about Precious Blood Companions.

I. FORMING AN INITIAL GROUP

(Any C.P.P.S. Member can Sponsor a Companion group in conjunction with the Companion office)

Personally invite those who seem to exhibit the characteristics of Precious Blood spirituality to an Information Meeting provided by the Companion office.

Following the Information Meeting, the Sponsor leads the candidates through INQUIRY in the Inquiry & Formation Workbook (see page 10 for more details). The Four DELIBERATIONS are the first step intended to aid their discernment.

II. EXPANDING AN EXISTING GROUP

(When an established Companion group invites others to join their group)

It is preferred that both C.P.P.S. and covenanted Companions personally invite those who seem to exhibit the characteristics of Precious Blood spirituality to an Information Meeting provided by the Companion office.

Following the Information Meeting, persons who wish to do so may choose to attend one or two Companion Gatherings. Those who wish to further pursue the possibility of becoming a Companion ask the Convener of the group when they might begin with INQUIRY in the Inquiry & Formation Workbook.

(2) INQUIRY

INQUIRY offers an opportunity for an individual to carefully consider a call to become a Precious Blood Companion. Four INQUIRY DELIBERATION sessions are in the Inquiry & Formation Workbook, pages 8-29.

I. During the INQUIRY DELIBERATIONS

Inquirers study four DELIBERATIONS with the Sponsor and/or Covenanted Companions apart from the rest of the Companion group.

Inquirers continue some participation in the monthly Companion Gatherings during the INQUIRY DELIBERATIONS. (*Gathering with the Companion group prior to and/or after the INQUIRY session is encouraged.*)

Inquirers are invited to pray for enlightenment during their DELIBERATIONS and to pray various Precious Blood prayers, which are found at the end of each DELIBERATION. Inquirers continue works of service or some ministry in which they are already engaged. No new ministry is required.

II. Concluding the INQUIRY DELIBERATIONS

After prayer, and the DELIBERATIONS, with the help of the Sponsor and Convener each Inquirer makes a decision about entering Companion FORMATION and investigating the STUDY CHAPTERS. This intention to enter FORMATION is presented in written form to the group's Convener who informs the local Companion office.

(3) FORMATION

FORMATION begins with a *Welcome Rite*, on page 31 in the Workbook, (or page 15 below). The Candidates then examine the STUDY CHAPTERS in the Workbook, pages 32-82.

I. During the STUDY CHAPTERS

The Sponsor and/or Covenanted Companion meet with those in FORMATION to assist their study of and sharing in the STUDY CHAPTERS. Groups can and should alternate leaders so that those in FORMATION hear different voices and messages.

STUDY CHAPTER sessions are held separately from the regular Companions' Gathering, i.e. in another room, while the present Companions gather with their own agenda. It is recommended that all come together for opening and closing while the Candidates have their study session apart for at least one hour. That allows the Candidates to get acquainted with and to pray with the regular Companion group.

II. Concluding the STUDY CHAPTERS

A Candidate concludes FORMATION by writing a one-year covenant. Chapter Eight, the final STUDY CHAPTER, is designed to assist in the writing of one's covenant.

(4) COMPANIONSHIP

COMPANIONSHIP begins with the *Covenant Rite*, found on pages 16 & 17 below. Companionship is grounded in Jesus' commandment "*This I command you, to love one another*" (John 15:17). ...a command to be inclusive is at the center of what it means to be a Companion.

A commitment, called a Covenant, is written at the completion of Formation. It is presented to the Provincial Director during a Covenant Rite. This rite marks entry into Companionship.



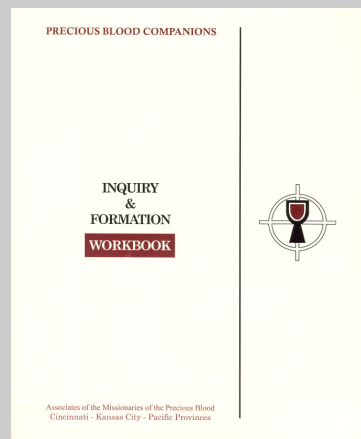
Bronze statue in the rectory of San Gaspare Church, Rome, Italy

COMPANIONSHIP includes on-going formation, continuing in active ministry, taking part in an annual retreat or day of reflection, and sharing in as many Companion Gatherings and C.P.P.S. events as possible given one's state in life.

After First Covenant all Companions are equally part of the same group unless there is agreement to form more than one group. Each group is required to have its own Convener and Sponsor. In some instances a Sponsor may be designated for a group.

Covenant renewals after the first one-year covenant are for three-year time commitments.

4 EASY STEPS FOR MAKING THE BEST USE OF THE INQUIRY & FORMATION WORKBOOK



1

Companion Candidates in Inquiry and Formation meet regularly over a two-year period while using the Workbook.

2

Thoroughly cover every DELIBERATION and every STUDY CHAPTER in the Workbook, moving through the material without rushing.

3

Make up all absences in extra sessions.

4

Adequate preparation, prior to gathering with the others for group sharing:

- read each section with highlighter in hand, or underline
- respond in writing to the **DISCUSSION STARTERS**.

INQUIRY DELIBERATIONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Deliberation
A THOUSAND TONGUES:
<i>C.P.P.S.</i>
Gaspar's Missionaries of the Precious Blood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Deliberation
DARING TO TAKE RISKS:
<i>Mission</i>
A Spirituality of Mission |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second Deliberation
IN THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS:
<i>Spirituality</i>
Transforming the Ordinary Into the Holy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fourth Deliberation
UNIQUELY PRESENT:
<i>Community</i>
Sacred Listening |

FORMATION STUDY CHAPTERS

- **Study Chapter One**
 PRECIOUS BLOOD COMPANIONS:
 ASSOCIATES OF THE MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD
By “reading between the lines” Jean Giesige leads in scrutinizing Companion involvement in the Precious Blood charism
- **Study Chapter Two**
 A MINGLING OF MEMORY AND MERCY: SPIRITUALITY OF THE CUP
Fr. Joe Nassal helps find an adequate response to the question “Can you drink this cup?”
- **Study Chapter Three**
 ST. GASPAR: THE MAN, THE MISSION, THE DREAM
The meaningfulness of Gaspar’s adventurous life is told by C.P.P.S. Frs. Joe Nassal and Ray Cera.
- **Study Chapter Four**
 BRINGING ALL PEOPLE NEAR: A SPIRITUALITY OF THE CROSS
Fr. Joe Nassal teaches the meaning of the “book of the crucifix.”
- **Study Chapter Five**
 OUR PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY IN THE U.S.
Founders and Foundresses share a spirituality of the blood calling us to be open to the new.
- **Study Chapter Six**
 FROM GENESIS TO REVELATIONS: A SPIRITUALITY OF COVENANT
Fr. Joe Nassal discusses the inclusivity of the covenant in the blood of Christ: we are to be an inclusive community of memory and hope.
- **Study Chapter Seven**
 IS THERE A PRECIOUS BLOOD WAY TO PRAY?
Reflections in this chapter call forth a creative spirit for expressing a precious blood theme.
- **Study Chapter Eight**
 THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP
The outcome of this chapter is the writing of a covenant.

CELEBRATING RITES

Rites mark the process of becoming a Companion:

- A **Welcome Rite** (*page 15*) celebrates the completion of Inquiry and beginning Formation.
- A **Covenant Rite** (*pages 16-17*), at the conclusion of Formation, celebrates the beginning of Companionship. The Covenant Rite also marks the ongoing renewal of one's covenant.

To embrace
the reality of
greater collaboration
with the laity
means that we (C.P.P.S.)
need to be converted
from seeing lay men and women
as mere “helpers” in our works,
to view them as
true “partners” and “companions”
in a common mission.

Most Reverend Barry Fischer, C.P.P.S.

THE WELCOME RITE

FORMATION *begins with a Welcome Rite*

This ceremony is ordinarily celebrated in the local Companion group and is to be embellished with prayer, intercessions, and song.

Convener of the Local Group:

The following have completed the Inquiry Deliberations:

... names are read aloud ...

Each stands and responds saying “present” as her or his name is called.

It is their intention to enter Formation, continuing their journey toward becoming Precious Blood Companions.

Sponsor:

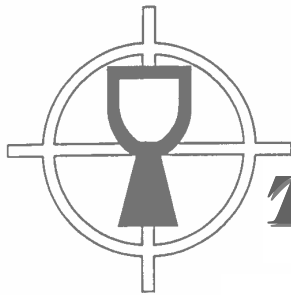
I, [...*name...*], representing the Provincial Director of the [...*name...*] Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, extend to each of you an official welcome.

In the words of our Founder, St. Gaspar: “Let us, indeed, become strengthened through the Blood of Jesus Christ.”

May your reflections on the “Study Chapters” and your continuing journey with Companions and the Incorporated Members of our Society of Apostolic Life bring you to a clearer discernment of your call so that you may respond in creative fidelity.

Be assured of the prayerful assistance of all the Companions and Incorporated Missionaries of the Precious Blood.
Welcome!

Approval is expressed through applause.



THE COVENANT RITE

All Companions making or renewing covenant are to be present for the rite.

Companions are called by name; and they each respond: “present” or “I am willing” or “here I am, Lord” or something similar.

REQUEST

COMPANIONS

By the favor of God, I have been called into partnership with the Society and desire to participate more fully in the spirituality and mission of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, for the praise of God and the service of the people of God especially the poor and those who are oppressed.

EXAMINATION

PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR *(addressing the candidates)*

In baptism and confirmation you were washed and anointed. Through the Blood of Christ you have been brought near. Do you now wish to follow more closely the Lamb of God by (making) renewing your covenant as a Companion of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, embracing your ministry according to the spirit of Saint Gaspar del Bufalo and Saint Maria De Mattias?

COMPANIONS I do.

APPROVAL

PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR *(to Incorporated and covenanted Companions)*

Dear brothers and sisters in community, you have heard the request of our sisters and brothers. Is it your desire to embrace them as Companions of our Society?

INCORPORATED AND COVENANTED

It is. We embrace them with the bond of charity and pledge to them our support and encouragement. Together, may we be faithful to our calling in the service of God and the People of God, especially the poor.

Approval is expressed through applause

The homily and a prayer may take place at this time before proceeding with the rite.

COMMITMENT

COMPANIONS

Responding to God, who calls me to follow Christ, and in your presence, Father Director, trusting in God who is ever faithful, and begging the intercession of Mary, Help of Christians, of Saint Gaspar, our founder, and Saint Francis Xavier, our patron, and Saint Maria de Mattias, I promise to be faithful to my Covenant and to serve God and God's people as a Companion of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, for the period of... *one year / three years.*

PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR

As the Provincial Director of the *[name]* Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, I accept your covenants and accept you as our Companions for the period of... *one year / three years.*

Through faith in Jesus Christ who has redeemed us all through his Precious Blood, may you with God's help, and with the fidelity, care and support of our Community, and of your family, and friends, remain faithful disciples as Precious Blood Companions.

BLESSING OF INSIGNIAS

(for first covenants)

PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR

Lord, loving God, you have purchased us at a great price through the blood of your Son. You have made people of every tribe, language, nation and race, a kingdom and priests to serve you, our God. Bless + these insignias, and those who wear these symbols of your Son's sacrificial and reconciling love. May that love be lived by them in our day, through their ministries, that all may come to acknowledge your loving presence in action today. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

PRESENTATION OF COVENANT AND PEACE GREETING

Each Companion presents his or her covenant to the Provincial Director and exchanges a Peace greeting with him. Those making first covenant receive the Companion insignia (pin or pendant).

COVENANT POLICIES

WRITING A COVENANT

- ◆ The first Covenant is written at the completion of Formation. It is a commitment statement of the relationship between the Companion and the Society.
- ◆ Each Covenant includes three elements:
 - ✧ **Ministry**—*names the ministry in which the Companion is involved*
 - ✧ **Spirituality**—*states how precious blood spirituality supports one's baptismal commitment, attentive to the cry of the blood*
 - ✧ **Relationship** with the Society—*states how one will live the bond of charity with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and other Companions*
- ◆ Chapter Eight in the Workbook (pages 78-82) assists in writing a covenant.
- ◆ Each Companion is encouraged to share his or her covenant with the Sponsor, a Convener, or a Companion for comments.

THE COVENANT FORM

A Covenant is typed or written on a covenant form and signed prior to the Rite.

THE COVENANT RITE

The Covenant Rite marks a Companion's entry into Companionship, or a renewal of commitment as a Companion.

- ◆ The covenant is to be presented by the Companion to the Provincial Director during the Covenant Rite.
- ◆ After the Covenant Rite the Provincial Director reads, signs, keeps a copy on file, and returns the original Covenant to the Companion.
- ◆ Normally the Covenant Rite takes place during the week of the provincial assembly, when the community is gathered.
- ◆ Arrangements for Covenant Rites are made through the Companion Office requiring approval by the Provincial Director.
- ◆ Requests for exceptions are presented in writing.

COVENANT TIME COMMITMENTS

- ◆ The first Covenant is made for one year while subsequent Covenants are renewed at three year intervals.
- ◆ A covenant time commitment may need to be extended until a Companion should be able to attend a Rite.
- ◆ Covenanted Companions who become homebound or enter a nursing home may choose to request a Covenant time commitment in keeping with their situation.
- ◆ The Covenant renewal Rite for the homebound or those in nursing homes can be designed with the help of the local group and the Companion Office.
- ◆ Companions who move and no longer live near a Companion group need to contact the Companion office.

COMPANION OFFICES

The Companion Director and Co-Directors are provincial appointments.

THE DIRECTOR IS AN INCORPORATED MEMBER

- o administers program in collaboration with the co-directors
- o draws up the annual budget and financial report
- o maintains records of Covenant renewal dates
- o is general editor for all publications and communications
- o arranges for annual retreats
- o provides for Companion participation in various events
- o reports to provincial councils and the CAC
- o attends National Precious Blood Associate Conference meetings
- o collaborates with associates of other Precious Blood communities
- o holds Membership in North American Conference of Associates and Religious
- o meets quarterly with co-directors (or as is necessary)
- o with co-directors makes arrangements for each Information Meeting
- o organizes Covenant Rites with Provincial Directors
- o with co-directors works with/visits groups
- o assists in planning Convener and Sponsor Workshops (every 3 years)
- o sees to the distribution of bi-annual “Cup of the New Covenant”

TWO CO-DIRECTORS ARE COMPANIONS IN COVENANT

(one in each province)

- o collaborate in administration of program with director and other co-director
- o assist with annual reports to provincial councils and assemblies
- o assist in planning covenant rites
- o work with Conveners & Sponsors, assist in their Workshops (every 3 years)
- o work with/visit groups
- o assist in budget and financial reports and long range planning
- o organize the annual retreat for Companions
- o arrange for Companions attendance at the assemblies
- o attend Companion Advisory Council meetings
- o attend National Precious Blood Associate Conference meetings
- o collaborate with associates of other Precious Blood communities
- o hold Membership in North American Conference of Associates and Religious
- o meet quarterly with director (or as is necessary)
- o assist in further defining this assistant-director position

ROLES OF SPONSOR C.A.C. & CONVENER

SPONSOR

The Sponsor is an Incorporated Member.

Each Companion group is initially invited and led through the Inquiry & Formation Workbook by a Sponsor. A designated Sponsor is appointed for a Companion group in an area where no C.PP.S. are present.

Role of the Sponsor

- ♦ advocate for Companions with the C.PP.S.
- ♦ liaison for Assemblies, Feasts, District meetings, or other provincial events
- ♦ participant in a Sponsor Workshop
- ♦ with the first group:
 - assumes Convener's responsibilities
 - facilitates the Inquiry process
 - sees to the celebration of the Welcome Rite (Workbook p. 31)
 - assists with studies during Formation
 - offers encouragement and guidance in composing one's Covenant
 - prepares the group for "Choosing A Convener" (see page 22)
- ♦ after first covenants, functions in collaboration and partnership with the Convener (who assumes responsibilities):
 - may assist in planning monthly gatherings
 - is an animator within the group (*urging expansion, healing divisions, etc.*)
 - proposes suggestions to and from the Companion Advisory Council (CAC)
 - offers encouragement and guidance in composing one's Covenant prior to one's Covenant renewal
 - participates in an annual planning session with Convener (and possibly others from the group) any time before the first gathering in the Fall
 - assists in Sponsor "turnover" when leaving the area

COMPANION ADVISORY COUNCIL, C.A.C.

The Advisory Council is made up of two Companions from the two sponsoring provinces and one Incorporated Member from each province.

The purpose of the Advisory Council is to advise the Directors and monitor the Companion process.

The entire Advisory Council meets twice each year; provincial representatives also hold a meeting during the week of the provincial assemblies.

Council members are appointed by the Directors and serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms.

CONVENER

The Convener is a Companion in covenant selected by the local group for a three-year term by using the process called "Choosing A Convener."

The Convener functions in collaboration with the Sponsor.

The Convener assumes the responsibility for the group gatherings freeing the Sponsor to attend and participate at the gatherings without having to tend to the organizational tasks.

The Role of the Convener

- ◆ convenes regular (*monthly*) gatherings:
 - responsible for on-going agenda for the group
 - responsible for *persons in charge* during each monthly gathering:
 - ✧ person to lead prayers
 - ✧ person to lead study for service
 - ✧ person to lead theological reflection
 - ✧ a scribe to write a report
- ◆ makes sure that a report of what takes place during the gathering is sent to the local Companion Office
- ◆ offers suggestions from the group to the Companion Advisory Council
- ◆ presents to the group all communications from the CAC, Director, Co-Director, and Provincial Office
- ◆ arranges dates through the Companion Office for Covenant Rites when these cannot take place during the week of the assembly
- ◆ is an animator within the group (*urging expansion, healing divisions, etc.*)
- ◆ encourages participation in annual retreats, assemblies, C.P.P.S. events
- ◆ sets an annual agenda for gatherings (*in collaboration with the Companion office*)
- ◆ informs the Companion Office...
 - of new or changed addresses, phone numbers, email addresses,
 - of any departures,
 - immediately upon the death of a Companion or a Companion's relative, and
 - when an Inquirer requests to enter FORMATION
- ◆ informs the Office or the editor of names and petitions for the Prayer Corner in the bi-monthly *COMPANIONS* newsletter; or other newsletter items, urging Companions to write articles for the newsletter.
- ◆ Convenes an annual planning session with the Sponsor (or others from the group) prior to the first gathering in the Fall. Ordinarily an issue of *Fresh Bread* will be available by September for use any time during the year.



CHOOSING A CONVENER

Every Companion group chooses a Convener every three years.

The Choosing A Convener pamphlet is mailed from the companion office with instructions including notes for the set up in each group.

- Choosing A Convener is the procedure to be used by each group. It is a prayerful process for discerning a Convener.
- To be suitably open to the Spirit and to be free to consider each Companion with her or his gifts, no one may remove her or his name during this process, prior to a particular moment when one may remove one's name. Offering a reason for removing one's name is fitting.
- The Leader during this prayerful discernment cannot be a Companion eligible to be chosen. Therefore a C.P.P.S. member or any capable person may take the role of the leader for Choosing A Convener.
- Results are to be mailed, emailed, or called in to the Companion office as soon as the Convener is chosen.
- In accepting this position, the Convener agrees to attend the Convener Workshop. This Workshop is designed to assist Conveners in their role during their term.



Icon of the Most Precious Blood, Jesus, Mary, Gaspar, Maria, Francis Xavier and John Merlini,
in Casa di Preghiere, Patrica, Italy, by Ornella Colombo Lancini

COMPANION GATHERINGS

... include ...

HOSPITALITY

We first *share our stories*. We share with one another how we are. It gives expression to the bond of charity. This may lead to a probing and deeper awareness of the world in which we live. We see our stories in light of our relationship to the Society and as a component in the province's story and a piece of the worldwide story of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Hospitality says we belong.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

We *share the sacred stories* (perhaps within the liturgical calendar) and ask: How do these words enter my life? How does God's word take hold of or challenge me? What makes me un/comfortable about God's word? Theological reflection keeps us attentive. Gaspar promoted contemplation on God's word and Jesus' sufferings, which he called the "great book of the crucifix."

PRAYER

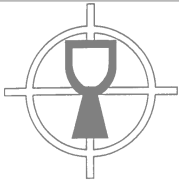
We *share* in the breaking of the *bread* and the drinking of the *cup* in memory of the Risen Lord in a community of a discipleship of equals, i.e. a church without distinctions. Prayer transforms us into people of the covenant. "The most precious blood of our Lord has always been the object of special attention on the part of all the Saints: it is the school of sanctity, of justice, of love" [Pope John Paul II].

STUDY FOR SERVICE

Called to *share* publicly *in* a variety of *ministries* we keep ourselves updated as we study the signs of the times as interpreted by the Society to better participate in the Society's mission and vision. Good will, closeness, and collaborative style are not enough; we respond to the cry and call of the blood in acts of justice and reconciliation to "seek the well-being of the city where I have sent you...for in its welfare you will find your welfare" [Jeremiah 29:7].

BUSINESS

The Convener coordinates dates, times, and special events with the group along with any other announcements and business that comes to the group's attention.



Precious Blood Companions

Associates of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood
Kansas City and Cincinnati Provinces

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