

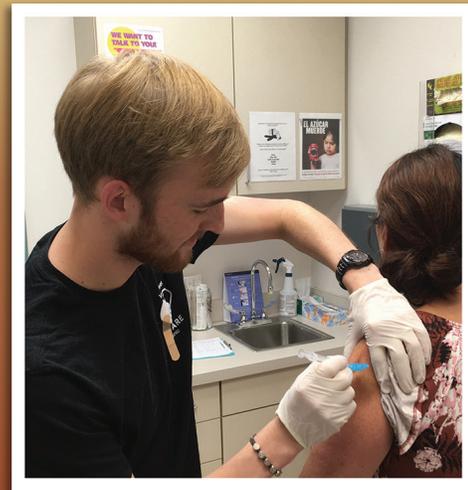
# THE New Wine PRESS

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Volume 28 No. 7 • March 2020



**Grow in your faith.  
Build community.  
Walk with those who suffer.  
Seek reconciliation.**



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# THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 28 No. 7 • March 2020

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*Front cover image: Installation of generator in Malongwe, Tanzania in 2012*

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

Precious Blood Center  
P.O. Box 339  
Liberty, MO 64069-0339  
816.781.4344  
[www.preciousbloodkc.org](http://www.preciousbloodkc.org)

Editor, Layout & Design  
Margaret Haik  
[communications@preciousbloodkc.org](mailto:communications@preciousbloodkc.org)

Copy Editor  
Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.  
[rbayukcpps@mac.com](mailto:rbayukcpps@mac.com)

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# The Virtue of Courage

by Margaret Haik, Director of Communications

I am about half-way through my coursework for my master's degree, which will be completed in December. Right now I'm taking a course in ethics for communication professionals. We just finished up a unit on value morals, which means we studied Aristotle and his thoughts about virtues and becoming a virtuous person.

As I read through this month's articles, the virtue of "courage" seemed to be the common thread tying them all together.

- Fr. David Matz addresses the need for courage in the process of the New Creation. Members and Companions need to have the courage for complicated or difficult discussions during this process.
- Precious Blood Volunteer Keven Cheung provides a reflection on his service at KC CARE Health Care Center. What courage it takes to reach out to those who live in different circumstances from ourselves.
- Companion Kathy Keary has been leading Circle trainings at Precious Blood Renewal Center. Sharing in a Circle takes courage to be open enough to share honestly and listen with a compassionate heart.
- The Companion Council is about to embark on a new journey of the heart. Vicky Otto writes about review of *Gather*, *Send* and being open to changes that come as a sign of the times.
- As part of the Fair Inheritance series, Fr. Antonio Baus writes about a courageous Precious Blood member, Father Larry Eiting, who left Ohio to minister for 20 years in Chile.
- Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation's article this month is from Raphael Jackson, PBMR Intern, who is courageously navigating life following a 27-year prison sentence.
- Last, but not least, Kansas City Province member Fr. Timothy Coday has taken on a new ministry (again, courageously) in a rural part of Tanzania. His brother, Dennis Coday, has combined Fr. Tim's blog posts as an update on the work he is doing there.

*continued on page 4*

# Change and Something New

by Fr. David Matz, C.P.P.S., Vice-Provincial Director

There's a saying that originated in Great Britain: "You can't see the forest for the trees." Another way of saying it is: "You can't see the wood through the tree." The saying was created when they planted trees in front of row houses, which then grew so large that you couldn't see the house anymore. But its hidden meaning is that we can become so involved in the details of a problem that we can't look at the situation as a whole.

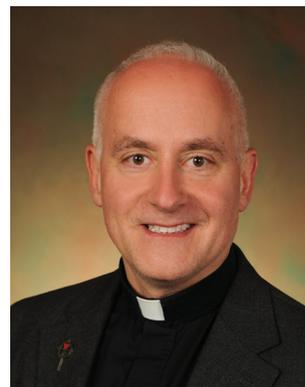
My brothers and sisters in community, permit me to be vulnerable with you regarding my ministry at St. Agnes Church in Los Angeles. I loved that ministry and I miss it and the people that I served—a diverse community of immigrant populations from Korea, Belize, Latin America, and the United States. An urban, inner-city parish dealing with rising rents, housing and homelessness, and poverty, yet a parish rich in tradition and history of being a beacon of peace and justice and joy on that corner of West Adams and Vermont Avenue.

Many in our community were aghast at the decision to leave a "Precious Blood" parish, with clarion calls from our members and Companions, "We need to stay there! Why are we leaving it?" St. Agnes was supposed to be a hub, a mission house where members and Companions could not only minister in a parish, but also develop ministry focused on immigration, one of the five goals of ministry developed from our St. Louis gathering.

When we speak of the New Creation and uniting our two provinces into one, St. Agnes would have been a wonderful community for us to invest in and nourish, but the challenge of our leave-taking has revealed that we as a community are also stuck looking at trees and not seeing the forest! Other than myself, there was no other Missionary with the necessary gifts available to maintain that ministry, let alone see the forest beyond the trees, to create a vision for how this diverse parish could become a beacon of hope, a Precious Blood parish where even the most recent immigrant or refugee could find a home, a safe place to grow and prosper. I vulnerably and shamefully could not do it alone; too many trees demanded my attention and energy. But even though I mourn the loss of not being the daring leader I wanted to be, something about daring leadership is rising from the loss of a dream for the New Creation.

In her book, *Dare to Lead: Brave work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.*, Brené Brown defines a leader "as anyone who takes responsibility

*continued on page 4*



*Leadership, continued from page 3*

for finding the potential in people and processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential.” She states that from corporations, nonprofits, and from public sector organizations to government “we desperately need more leaders who are committed to courageous, wholehearted leadership and who are self-aware enough to lead from their hearts, rather than unevolved leaders who lead from hurt and fear.” Her quest to find and develop brave leaders led her to face shame and vulnerability and to move the understanding of courage as a personality trait to a skill that can be acquired and practiced.

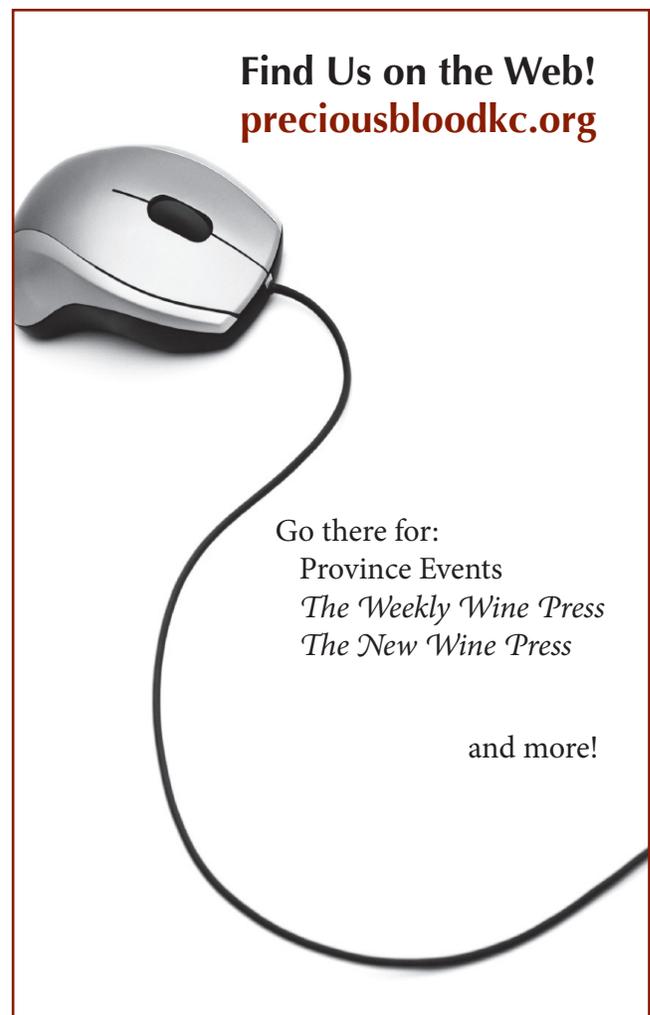
But there are obstacles. We avoid tough conversations including giving honest feedback. We want to be “nice and polite.” We lack the courage to be direct or we just don’t want to invest our time and energy. Rather than acknowledging and addressing fears and feelings that show up in times of upheaval, we spend an unreasonable time managing problematic behaviors. Not enough people are taking smart risks or creating and sharing bold ideas to meet the changing demands and need for innovation. When people are afraid of being put down or ridiculed for trying and failing, the best you can expect is status quo and groupthink.

In light of these obstacles and more, Ms. Brown suggests specific courage-building skill sets that people need to use to address these problems. The courage-building skill sets are: Rumbling with Vulnerability, Living into our Values, Braving Trust, and Learning to Rise. The foundation skill is the willingness to rumble with vulnerability. Without this core skill, the other three skill sets are impossible to practice. Our ability to be daring leaders will never be greater than our capacity for vulnerability. We are traversing the day-to-day issues of statutes and finances of our two Provinces as we unite in our New Creation. I do not believe we have yet “rumbled with vulnerability”—especially with our five futures goals in ministry, ministry sites, and mostly with personnel and placement in the New Creation. I have allowed myself in a small way to be vulnerable in what I believe was my own personal and professional failure at St. Agnes. Success rises from failure. Upon dialogue and reflection, new life and new ideas do rise from the ashes.

Let’s rumble with each other! A rumble is a discussion, conversation, or meeting defined by a commitment to lean into vulnerability, to stay curious and generous, to stick with the messy middle of problem identification and solving, to take a break and circle back when necessary. To be fearless in owning our parts and to listen with the same passion with which we want to be heard. Let’s have a real conversation, even if it’s tough. I do believe this is the next step in our New Creation. Let’s rumble. ✦

*Editor, continued from page 3*

One last thing to share. At the request of Fr. Richard Bayuk, I have assumed the role of editor, which he filled during three different tenures. He remains as the copy editor and proof-reader and serves on the editorial board. I’m grateful to have learned from him while he was editor and also that he’s still working on the *New Wine Press* and able to guide me. ✦



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and more!

# Vulnerability, Dignity, and Dedication

by Keven Cheung, Precious Blood Volunteer

“So, what brings you in today?” is usually the first question I ask patients once I have brought them back to an exam room at KC CARE Health Care Center. Replies will range from a simple follow-up appointment to a long list of health concerns. Patients will reveal personal and intimate details of their lives within a short period of time. Perhaps it is the natural expectation of vulnerability that comes with seeing a healthcare professional or that being strangers makes the information less personal. Whatever the case, people come through the doors seeking help and willingly expose themselves physically and emotionally.

Many of the individuals that come to KC CARE are those that are most vulnerable in our society: uninsured, undocumented, underserved, or homeless. One of the questions I often ponder is how to uphold the dignity of those that I serve. It can be hard at times to balance the desire to sit and talk to patients with the responsibilities I am tasked with. Given the limited time and fixed schedules, upholding a patient’s dignity is often found in small actions. One example of this centers around women’s health. Women who come in for breast and cervical examinations will often be told to undress before the provider comes in so that less time is wasted waiting for the patient to undress. One provider, however, will always go into the room to talk with the patient before allowing them time to undress. After all, sitting there unclothed on the cold examination table with paper thin drapes over your body waiting for the doctor can be uncomfortable for anyone. This seemingly small decision is one way that I see the personalization of dignity in the clinic.

It is understandably hard to work in an environment that addresses suffering. There is only so much that I can do for a patient. Part of my work as a volunteer is to send referrals on behalf of patients to different specialities. Unfortunately, those without insurance are left with the option to either pay out of pocket or to be put on a waitlist for programs that could take up to a year, both of which only negatively exacerbate financial and physical burdens. The best I can offer sometimes feels vastly inadequate to the circumstances patients face. A phone call, fax, or phone number that



Keven Cheung

patients can follow up with is usually only the first step in a long line of hoops they have to jump through. The best part of my day at times is when a patient finally picks up the phone after weeks of trying to contact them. I never expected to learn so much about the healthcare process through referrals.

A few months ago, I remember calling a patient about his referrals. His friend picked up the phone and told me that she and her husband were the ones that took care of and arranged for his health needs. In the few interactions we had, I was encouraged by her consistent responses over the phone and dedication to helping her friend. Many patients do not know how to, are unable to, or do not have someone to advocate for them. Their health issues can often be neglected in comparison to their other responsibilities. With so many fires to put out, no wonder patients miss appointments, phone calls, and medication refills. Working in the clinic has highlighted more problems than solutions, but I also recognize that the most effective way to create change will be a collective one. My hope is that my time in Kansas City will continue to prepare me to critically tackle these challenges as my role within healthcare further develops. †



*Church in Mabeshi part of Itigi Parish, Tanzania*

# Jambo!

*by Fr. Tim Coday, C.P.P.S.*

Jambo! Mambo Vipi? (That's Swahili for "Hello! How are you?")

I returned to the missions in Tanzania last fall. It took several weeks to get my residence permit and national identity card straightened out and a few more to get the details of my assignment finalized. When I arrived in Malongwe in November, I was ready to get to work, and there was a lot for me to do.

Malongwe is a four- or five-hour drive (over very rough roads) west of my last assignment, which was at the water project in Dodoma.

I have been asked to oversee and manage a hospital, which is a project of the Tanzanian Province. The hospital is staffed by a doctor, four nurses and a nurse-pharmacist. It serves a very large, very rural area, provides medical care for all common illnesses, and has a mother-child clinic for pre- and post-natal

care and delivery services. There is a ward for males and another for females, a maternity ward, a lab, and pharmacy. My house and a house for the nurses is in the same compound as the hospital.

The hospital staff is dedicated and well trained. They provide extraordinary services in a very difficult situation. But they haven't had a manager on

*The hospital and nurses' house*



site for two years. As a result, the physical aspects of the hospital have been neglected. For example, when I arrived, none of the buildings in the compound had running water. Can you imagine a hospital without running water? I got the pump running and water is flowing again, but the system needs more work.

The hospital patients pay fees for services, facilities and drugs, and in these regards the hospital pretty much pays its way. But for too long nothing was done to maintain the facilities. Bathrooms were built but never finished; the screens on the windows of the hospital and staff housing — which are critical for stopping mosquitoes from spreading malaria — have rusted and deteriorated to the point that they are falling apart. Walls need to be repaired and painted. These will be my priorities.

Electricity is another problem. Our electricity comes from solar panels. Because the solar panels are inadequate and the batteries we have are old, we never have enough electricity, especially during the rainy season (which we are in now) when the sky is overcast. I also need to install an inverter so we can run a refrigerator and computer, and charge phones.

A Lutheran church group from Fort Wayne, Indiana, donated a generator in 2012 as a back up to the solar panels and batteries. The generator, a very large one manufactured by Caterpillar, would ensure the batteries are charged and that our electricity supply is steady and reliable. But it sat unused. It was terribly sad.

I managed to get the generator running, but it needs more work. It needs a muffler, for one thing (Can you imagine how loud a generator without a muffler is!), and I need to fill a tank with diesel to keep it running.

Once I get the generator up and running, I can put it to other uses too. Local carpenters cut logs into boards by hand using cross-cut saws. As you can imagine, the boards are very rough. Before they can be used, the carpenters have to plane them smooth by hand. With the generator, I can run a planing machine. The small fee charged to the carpenters will be income for the hospital.



*Generator in need of repairs*

Similarly, I'd like to run a sunflower press from the generator. Most farmers here grow sunflowers as a cash crop. There is no oil press in this area, so they sell the crop as seeds. They can get a much better price selling it as oil.

Once the generator is repaired, it can supplement the hospital's income, which will allow us to improve services.

I am also here as a priest working in Itigi parish, opened by the Italian Province in 1972. Itigi, the town, is 81 miles from here, a two-hour drive over unpaved roads. At one time the parish boundaries encompassed 109 towns each with a church. I provide religious services for seven towns in the western part of Itigi parish. One place I visited in January, had not celebrated Mass since 2013. In January I was also appointed associate pastor of Tura Parish, which has 10 churches spread over 1,800 square miles. I try to visit each place at least once a month.

*continued on page 9*

*The hospital ambulance*



Circles are one of the tools we use at Precious Blood Renewal Center to help groups reach reconciliation and healing. Circles give people the space to listen and to speak in a safe environment, but the key to the Circle is learning not only to speak from the heart, but to listen from the heart.

Circles can be used for many purposes: team building, staff renewal, developing mission statements, strategic planning, community building, healing, managing interpersonal conflicts and disagreements, and bonding among diverse participants. But to be successful a Circle needs a trained and experienced facilitator.

Some months ago, we were asked to put together a Circle facilitation training workshop, which we then did on February 1. A good variety of people attended, but a common theme seemed to motivate them, the theme summarized in the words from our advertisement: “compassionate communication.”

Among those who came were spiritual directors who desired to add to their tool chest when ministering in a group setting. Others plan to implement this technique in their workplace or volunteer endeavor, hoping to gain a communication tool that allows all voices to be heard in a respectful manner. Some were looking for a way for participants to share with one another on a deeper level.

While most intended to employ the new skill in a spiritual setting, there was also talk of utilizing a Circle in a secular and family setting. Using this method to heal the divisions that are so prevalent in our world today also surfaced.

A Circle begins with a ritual to honor the time and space as sacred. The Circle becomes the sanctuary, increasing the potential for members to experience a connection with the Spirit as well as one another. The invited guest is the authentic self—the person that one is before God—the true self. The opening ritual sets the stage for deep sharing.

Simple guidelines foster compassionate communication. A talking piece is used. Only the person with the talking piece speaks. Stories are told and emotions are shared as the speaker goes to a place deep within, echoing the words they discover in the depths of their soul. Often the speaker is surprised at what surfaces, but typically begins to trust the words that are born from a place that Jesus referred to in the Gospel of Matthew as the “inner room.” In the words of David Whyte, an English poet and author of the book, *The Heart Aroused*: “The voice emerges from the body as a representation of our inner world. It carries our experience from the past, our hopes and fears for the future, and the emotional resonance of the moment.”

It is commonplace to listen with the intent to respond or critique a speaker’s words. In the Circle, we learn a new way of listening that involves taking in what the person is expressing from a place deep within. While one is speaking, the others prayerfully listen from the heart. This leads to a deeper form of communication that fosters group solidarity. In the process, participants are opened to a deeper message as universal themes surface. The art of speaking from the heart and listening from the heart expands the participants’ capacity for unconditional love. Concerns of those in the Circle become the concerns of other Circle members.



The act of speaking from the heart while others listen from the heart is commonly referred to as contemplative dialogue. In his book *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Thomas Merton wrote: “Contemplation is also the response to a call: a call from him who has no voice, and yet who speaks in everything that is, and who most of all, speaks in the depths of our own being: for we ourselves are words of his. But we are words that are meant to respond to him, to answer to him, to echo him, and even in some way to contain him and signify him. Contemplation is the echo. It is a deep resonance in the inmost center of our spirit in which our very life loses its separate voice and re-sounds with the majesty and the mercy of the Hidden and Living One.”

Through contemplative dialogue participants reverence the divine in one another, drawing them into communion with each other and God. “Love for God and love for others are not two loves, but rather two manifestations of one love,” James Finley has written. “These two manifestations are bound so closely to each other that one is impossible without the other.” Communion with God is always a gift. It cannot be manufactured; however, we can tend to our inner life in a way that is conducive to divine union. The Circle is one way to foster our inner life.

The Circle always makes room for silence. Engaging in silence together promotes a soul connection with others in the Circle. Our inner wisdom can be better heard with silence, so more intuitive responses surface. The silence encourages speaking from the heart. It is not only the words that nourish us but also the silence. As Thomas Keating wrote in *Invitation to Love*: “Silence is God’s first language; everything else is a poor translation. In order to hear that language, we must learn to be still and rest in God.”

Expressing gratitude is also a key element of a Circle. The life of the soul is enriched by expressing thanksgiving. A positive feeling pervades the group. The practice in the Circle will carry over into daily life. The fuller one’s gratitude is the less room there is for depleting negative emotions.

Sharing and listening from the heart in a safe and sacred setting is an exercise in practical compassion.

We care for one another as we engage in contemplative dialogue. It is common for the spirituality of the Circle to carry over into one’s everyday life, manifesting itself in the expression of greater love, compassion, and reverence for others. ✚

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*Tanzania, continued from page 7*

I was given a 1994 Toyota Land Cruiser to get around. Thank God I have a mechanic I can trust!

Thanks for listening. I know God’s Spirit is always at work. God bless us all as we try to build a kingdom of love and justice. If you want to see more photos and learn more about my work, please visit my blog at <https://timcoday.wordpress.com/> ✚

**If you would like to help Fr. Tim Coday:**

Fr. Tim faces many challenges in Tanzania. The Tanzinian Province does not have the funds to support this hospital.

If you would like to help support the ministry Fr. Tim does in Tanzania, the Kansas City Province will forward any donations to the ministries he works with in Malongwe.

Your help will:

- provide clean water
- fix and power the generator
- fix the car so Fr. Tim can celebrate Mass in the surrounding towns
- help to complete projects already begun
- help for much-needed maintenance to improve services and protect the health of the staff.

Make checks out to the Kansas City Province and put “Tanzania mission” in the memo line.



# GATHER

# SEND

# Step Out Stand Up Speak Clearly

## Revisiting a Vision

by Vicky Otto, *Precious Blood Companions Director*

Author and playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote, “We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility of our future.” Shaw’s sentiment continues to ring true in the Companion Movement with our vision statement, *Gather Send*. When *Gather Send* was presented to members and Companions at Assemblies in 2014, many felt that the document was extraordinary because of the care given to the discernment process as well as how the document encapsulated the hopes and dreams of Companions across the United States.

Kansas City Companion Rita McNally and Minster Companion Pat Large were members of the Companion Council and were instrumental in

creating *Gather Send*. When asked how *Gather Send* has impacted her life, Rita writes, “As defined, Gather is the bringing together and taking in from scattered places. Send is dispatching the messenger. These two words have become my approach to life in all aspects and are an unending work in progress. I must always be open and attentive to recognizing daily opportunities to Gather and Send in the spirit as a missionary of the Precious Blood.”

Pat writes, “The *Gather Send* vision statement had a profound impact on me from the beginning. As a Companion in covenant with an evangelizing community of missionary disciples, it spoke to who I am, how I am to be and to live, and how I am to minister.

*Gather Send* is not a passive or stagnant thing, but an active, ongoing, daily faith journey of walking down the road with others. It meant journeying with a new Companion group, which was just forming. It meant leaving a familiar parish and walking with a new parish and faith community in crisis. *Gather Send* inspired me to move out of my comfort zone and urged me to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom through writing, speaking, and giving personal witness of my faith journey.”

Lake Mary Companion Trish Frazer and Alameda Companion Maureen Lahiff offered their perspective regarding how *Gather Send* changed their living out their lives as Companions. Trish writes, “When we first read *Gather Send*, the phrase that struck us was, ‘we are ambassadors of Christ to the edges of society.’ That phrase really was an affirmation of the outreach we do with our dog, Sylvie. When we visit the nursing homes or hospitals, we have come to realize we may be the only visitors some have. When we sit with an underprivileged child who is struggling to read, we help them feel loved. In our ‘ever-widening circle,’ we are enriched and inspired to ‘step out, stand up and speak clearly’ in word and action that all life is precious.

Maureen writes, “*Gather Send* has become a touchstone for Companions. We reflect on it as we revise our Covenants. Occasionally, we use it for lectio divina. We always had the rich language of our Covenant Rite to express who we are, but I suspect most Companions don’t keep these words close at hand the way we do *Gather Send*. Answering the question ‘What is a Companion?’ continues to be a challenge and a work in progress but *Gather Send* gives us a place to start that is broader than our individual reflections and our local group.”

As director I am continually grateful to Fr. Dave Matz, those who served on the Companion Council and Companions across the United States who took the time to discern, dream, and envision their hopes for Companions in the future. When Companions across the country received *Gather Send*, it released new energy and spirit among Companions. To “step out, stand up and speak clearly,” became a rallying cry for Companions as they embraced their ministries with renewed motivation and embraced new

ministries as they prayerfully heard the cry of the Blood and answered the call to service. The movement of the Spirit at the birth of *Gather Send* propelled us into a future that was full of possibilities.

It is hard to imagine that it has been five years since the creation of *Gather Send*. Over the last five years, dreams may have faded, and new dreams have come to light. New visions and the movement of the Spirit may be propelling us in a different direction. It is because of these possibilities that over the next year, we will again discern and dream about what our hopes and visions are for the future of Companions. The discussions will allow all Companions to validate once again the sentiments of *Gather Send* and offer new insights and dreams that will allow the Spirit to move us farther into the future. A tentative schedule for the process is:

**March 2020 through March 2021**—Visits to Companion Groups for discussion

**April 2021**—Companion Council to review discussions and edit or draft new statement

**May/June 2021**—Present the next edition of *Gather Send* to Companions at Assembly

Over the next several months, as we pray and discern what our desires for the future are, we will indeed, in Shaw’s words, “be made wise...by the responsibility of our future.” ✠

***Have a Precious Blood Members, Companions, Parish, or other community event happening?***

Please let us know about it!

We welcome submissions and higher resolution photographs.

Send submissions to:

**communications@preciousbloodkc.org**

# Father Larry Eiting, C.P.P.S.

by Fr. Antonio Baus, C.P.P.S.



Father Larry Eiting was born in Minster, Ohio on January 12, 1941, one of five children. He began his studies with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood at Brunnerdale High School Seminary and continued

his studies at St. Joseph's College and St. Charles Seminary. He was definitively incorporated in 1965 and ordained to the priesthood in 1968.

After serving as an associate pastor in Dayton, Ohio for two years, he began a twenty-year missionary ministry in Chile. His ministry posts included parishes in Rio Negro and Santiago.

In 1984 he was elected Vicariate Director and remained in that office until his death in 1990. In 1986 he became principal of Saint Gaspar College in Santiago, Chile. While he was pastor at San José de Garin Parish in Santiago in the early 1980s, he had to face persecution from the dictatorial government of Augusto Pinochet as a result of defending and supporting people who were suffering human rights abuses. His visa was cancelled, and it was only through the efforts of Cardinal Silva and Chilean Church authorities that he was able to remain in the country. However, the condition was that for over a year he had to renew his visa each month with all the paperwork involved in that.

As I began my studies for the priesthood in the late '70s, he and I were discussing why I wanted to become a priest. With his usual good sense of humor, he told me that his vocation was sparked by the swimming pool at Brunnerdale Seminary. At age 14, that was very appealing! In an ironic twist of fate, he

was called to the Eternal Father by means of a swimming pool.

Larry was a fun person to live with, and he always had a big smile on his face. He would say that there was a time for the kingdom of God to be joyful, and his smile was a charmer. He would probably love to see how we still share a few of his anecdotes about missionary life in Chile. One of those, told by the late Fr. Larry Wyen at Larry's funeral, related that he wrote his parents that it had turned cold in Chile. He was not sure how he was going to keep warm, but the girls were certainly pretty! His mother sent him an electric blanket the next day.

An insight into his commitment to the Lord, to the Church, and to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood can be seen in the last homily he gave on the feast of St. Gaspar, October 21, 1990, the day before his untimely death. In the homily, he noted that the celebration of the feast, which was also a celebration of the ordination anniversaries of Fr. Bernard Mores and Fr. Patrick Patterson, was also a time for making a review and revision of life. He asked for forgiveness for the personal failures of the Missionaries, as well as for the failures of the Vicariate community.

The words of that homily ring as true today as they did 30 years ago:

*I hope that this celebration is for us a manifestation of our desire to correct our errors and, with the grace of God, to experience a sincere conversion. I pray the Lord will help us to have a better understanding of our identity and to be a community more united and more faithful to its mission and to the charism of our founder. And by means of a contemplative life and a persistent prayer, we grow in our faith, discover our prophetic mission, and respond to our Church, who calls us to conversion and renewal.... Help us Lord, to be your Missionary Church, which knows how to meditate, adoring and loving your Word, so that we may transform it into life and communicate it to all our brothers and sisters. ✠*

# Thirty Days Free

by Raphael Jackson, PBMR Intern



Being released from prison was the most emotionally draining experiences of my adult life. It came at the end of serving 26½ years, from the age of 16 to 42. All familial relationships had suffered during my time in prison,

meaning that I had no loved ones to lean on in that critical time of transition.

The psychological impact of the sudden shift from a controlled and secured environment to one of uncertainty is one that doesn't allow for meaningful preparation. The morning of being notified of the release was one I experienced as both panic and exhilaration. Exhilarated to be free, but anxious because of having no concrete knowledge as to what was going to happen. I was a 42-year-old man with no resources other than what the state would be willing to provide. I was confident in my ability to find a way, but to say that I wasn't afraid would be a gross misrepresentation.

Even though for approximately the last two years of my incarceration I was assured by a friend—Orlando, a friendship acquired in prison—that due to the recent expansion of restorative justice work to include re-entry, the organization that he is employed by would be a resource for me, doubt still persisted. To be honest, my faith in people wasn't a source of comfort.

My experience of constantly being lied to, let down, and needing to rely only on myself since childhood, wouldn't allow me to accept his news as a viable solution—not even partially. After all these years, still I underestimated my ability to be wrong.

Orlando told me that the core mission of Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation is eradicating community violence by addressing the multiple causal and propagating factors. His assurance wasn't empty.

This process began with him picking me up from the prison upon my release—a release that I notified him of approximately 30 minutes after I was notified. I had no idea that I would be released on that day, nor did I know that he would pick me up. That is an important component of the relationship that I currently have with him, as well as with PBMR.

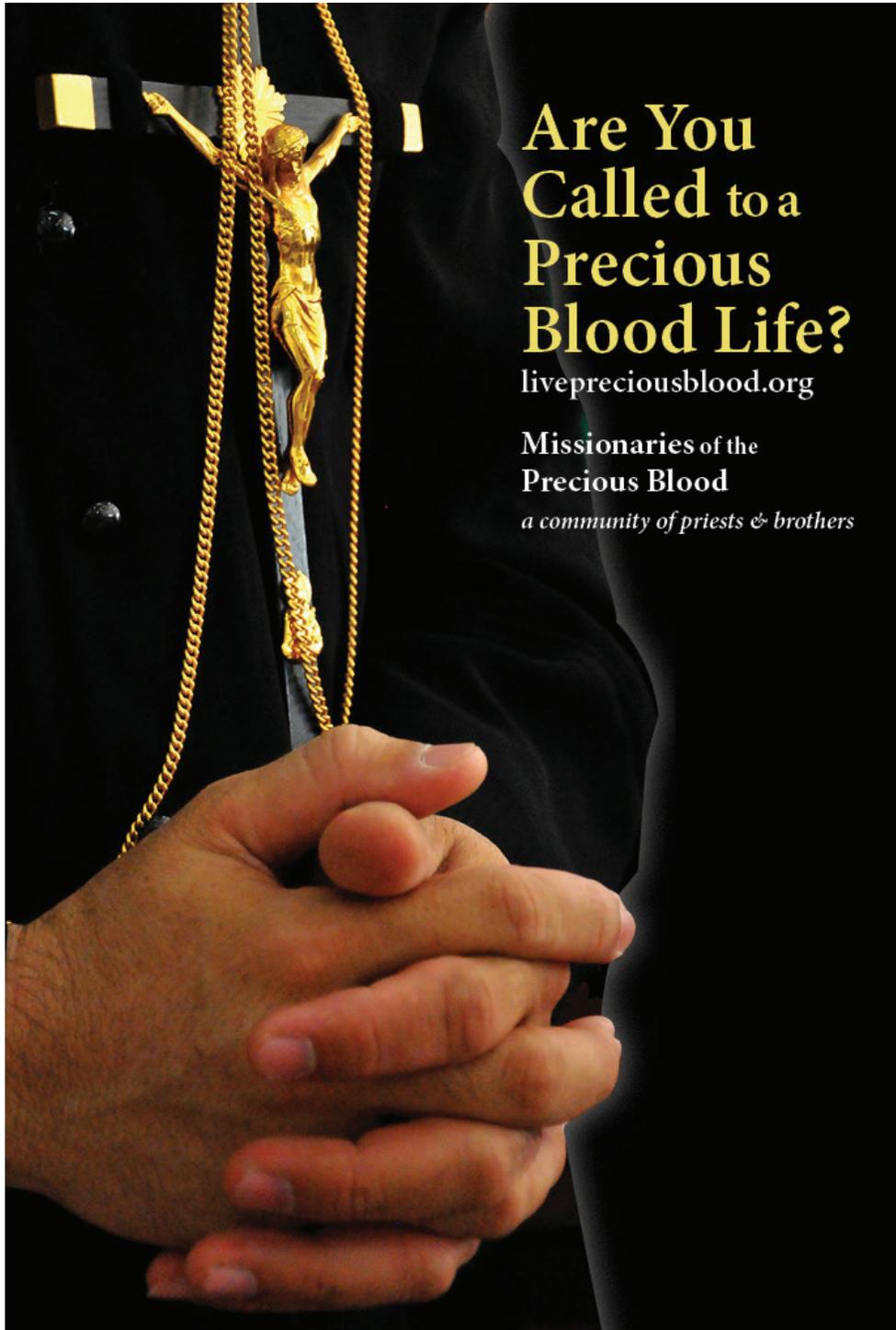
Upon my release I was mandated to a halfway house that was deplorable. I am basing that assessment strictly on the infestation of bed bugs, and absolutely no resources available for returning citizens. Basic human necessities were not provided. I'm speaking of the most basic of needs, such as toiletries and food. Men are ejected from the space at the end of their 60-day stay with only a suggestion that they should go to the police station or a shelter. I recognize that it does provide shelter and a bed for 60 days, but for a returning citizen without resources, especially those returning after an extended absence, the inability to clean or feed one's body and secure transportation directly impacts the ability to make decisions that allow healthy adjustment and prevent recidivism.

Upon my release, the Illinois Department of Corrections placed in my hands \$13.00, a parole agreement, an address to a half-way house, and notification that I would be transported to Chicago by bus or train—no information as to how to navigate the city, not even how to locate the half-way house. I had no idea that Orlando would intervene, as a friend and as a case manager for PBMR. He picked me up from the prison, aided me in securing clothing, food, transportation, a phone, toiletries, and eventually housing and employment.

Over the course of my first 30 days of freedom, outside of the mentioned impact PBMR has had on my re-entry, I have observed the community atmosphere PBMR maintains. It engages young people in job training, family as well as personal issues, securing food, safety, mentoring, counseling, peace circles, etc. It is a home away from home for those who frequent its halls. ✦

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[vocation@cpps-preciousblood.org](mailto:vocation@cpps-preciousblood.org)  
[vocations@preciousbloodkc.org](mailto:vocations@preciousbloodkc.org)

