

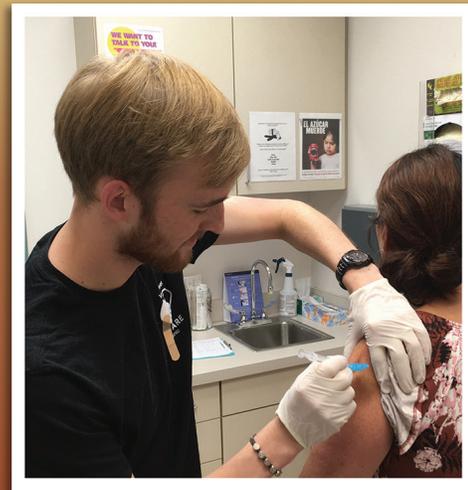
# THE **New Wine** PRESS

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Volume 28 No. 10 • June 2020



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



**Precious Blood Volunteers**  
[preciousbloodvolunteers.org](http://preciousbloodvolunteers.org)

# THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 28 No. 10 • June 2020

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*Front cover image: Tan Thanh parish in 2016*

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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## Messages of Hope and Love, Part 2

by Margaret Haik, Director of Communications

There's a routine to preparing the New Wine Press for publication each month, and one of the final steps is to look for highlights and a possible theme that might emerge from the semi-finished issue. Hope and love were what stood out to me this month—and when I looked back to my column from last month, the title was “Messages of Hope and Love.” I see a pattern during this pandemic.

But what else do we have right now? We are at a place in history where everything is up in the air. In my family the questions are, “Will our kids be attending school via Zoom next fall?” and “Will Jonathan (my 16-year old) have a baseball season this summer?” My husband is lucky enough to still be able to work, but with that comes the biggest question of them all: Will he get sick from working?

Coincidentally, love has also been a theme in some of the classes I'm taking for my master's degree. We studied ethical theories as they apply to the field of communication, and love has been a theme in several of the theories. Philosopher Martin Buber, for example, said that a basic element in dialogue is to “see the other.” Henry Johnstone said that the basic imperative is to address with love those with whom you communicate.

So, love and hope. Jean Gesiege paints a portrait of a man who loved and was loved by the Precious Blood community in her profile of Companion Larry Jenkins as part of the Fair Inheritance series. Members of the Vietnam Mission sent in stories of love and hope as they continue to serve and minister in outlying areas of the country. Similarly, Fr. Dave Kelly tells the story of Sr. Donna Liette's recent ministering adventures during Chicago's quarantine. Fr. Jim Urbanic focuses on the hope of the New Creation by looking back at past times of change and growth for the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Tim Deveney and Gabino Zavala remind us of the work we have to do concerning hope and love. Tim focuses on the aspects of life that we can control during the pandemic. Gabino brings us up to date on the recent CSM/JPIC document that calls on us all to work to protect migrants who stand to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

And the first shall be last: Fr. Timothy Armbruster starts us all off with his message of literally finding “HOPE” in a box. May we all find love and hope that easily! ✠

# It's Time to Plant More Seeds

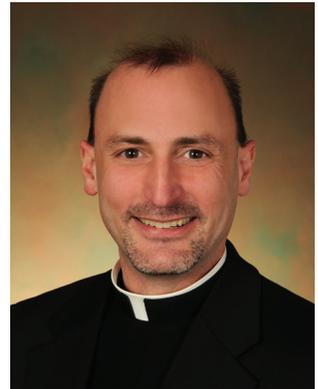
by Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S., Provincial Councilor

The tractors are rolling and the spring planting is happening. Every so often I get asked, “So Father, how do you like it here?” “I love it!” I’m quick to reply. I do enjoy it here, as I’ve enjoyed every place I have ever lived. After a while, each place grows on me and eventually becomes home. Thinking about living here in Centerville at this moment in time, I am once again very happy to be living in small town USA, in the middle of nowhere, away from all the busyness and craziness of the world around us. As the stay-at-home request went into effect, I have enjoyed my time at home doing various house projects and such. I do miss interacting with people and celebrating Mass, but I also cherish the quiet time just to be.

Settling in and making the space my own is happening more and more each day. The remodeling is finally making great progress. I was able to connect with the right electrician, plumber, and dry-waller. The electrical and plumbing is roughed in and the drywall is hung. I’m back to cleaning and painting. We have one more area on the first floor to address, and that is the old front entrance and secretary’s office. We are going to open that space to make room for a receiving area and better storage closet for the secretary. Once that is finished and painted, we will be ready to lay the new tile in the kitchen, dining room, living room, and office space. I will then be able to arrange the first floor as needed and get my office in shape. All has been going well until I decided to change out the ceiling fan and light in my office. I purchased a new ceiling fan only to discover when taking down the old, that the old was never properly installed. It works, it’s somewhat secure, but now to change it out, I’m not so sure. I really don’t like the overhead light and so I am very tempted to just plug the hole in the ceiling and use some floor lamps. Just when I thought things were going so well, another hiccup.

From my desk in my office, I can look out the front picture window to see the traffic whizzing by. I knew that coming here would be a slower pace of some things, but from the noise of the traffic, I sometimes wonder. Just outside my window is a flower bed. The colors this spring have been beautiful, as various purples, whites, and yellows came alive. Next to the window on the shelf is a woodcarving of the word “HOPE.” A simple reminder to me to look for hope in all that we do. That woodcarving just landed there one day as I was unpacking and setting things out. There are still those moments in our lives when things just happen, and we find ourselves in the right place at the right time for the right reason. I still need

*continued on page 4*



# Let Me Sing God's Song and Dance God's Dance

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

Each morning I am on the phone, with other community-based organizations, the deputy mayor for public safety, and the violence prevention coordinator for the city. We go through the previous day and night shootings and then each of us reports out about those shootings that happened in our area.

While there is value in collaborating on techniques and strategies as to how to end the violence, the litany of shootings and deaths can be, at times, overwhelming. As hard as we try, we can't seem to get ahead of the violence. There are many reasons, too many to get into here, but at the very core is the generational poverty, racism, trauma, and disproportionate lack of resources. These are societal issues that have plagued our community here in Back of the Yards Chicago for generations.

While the spirituality of the Precious Blood does not shield us from the stress and strain of life, it can however offer us a lens through which to see the world around us differently. We are not called to merely bear the weight of suffering in the world but are called to place the suffering and the pain, the disappointment and failures, within a spirituality that challenges us to remain faithful to the end—to Resurrection!

I had a family Zoom Mass last week, and as my family were connecting to Zoom, they began to talk about these surprise gifts that had appeared on their doorsteps—no one seemed to know anything about them. The next day I told Sr. Donna the story and she jumped right on it, preparing colorful Mother's Day gift bags for 30 Mothers in our neighborhood. I said I would be happy to be "Driving Miss Donna." So away we went down 51<sup>st</sup> to May Street, to Bishop, to Aberdeen—dropping off tokens of our love. The next day, the journey continued with other staff, Karlyn and Kaiyah, dropping off gift baskets to the young Mothers. And finally, the following day, Miss (Sr.) Donna got a new driver, Fred. Again the van went cruising down through the neighborhood dropping off the gifts. Mothers who were feeling lonely and stressed by the COVID-19 stay-at-home directives, traumatized by death and violence all around them, came to the

door, smiling when they saw Fred and Raphael with "Miss Donna" bringing a gift with a "Happy Mother's Day" shout out! Their stress and trauma did not go away but was interrupted—if only for the moment. For that moment time stopped and they felt loved, special, and not forgotten. Life sprung from that simple gesture. That day, as with other days, we strove to sing God's song and dance God's dance.

Fred, who spent decades in prison and now directs our mentoring program, returned from the "Driving Miss Donna" experience with a grin that lit up the room. He was immersed in the love and care that happened as they went from house to house. Fr. Greg Boyle of Homeboy Industries fame calls that kinship; Bryan Stevenson (author of *Just Mercy*) calls it proximity. Whatever we call it, it is the heart of our ministry of hospitality, hope, and healing!

So, amidst the violence, the COVID-19 losses, we hold on to hope, to living our Precious Blood Spirituality—love! ✠

*The title for this article is taken from **Daily Reader for Contemplative Living** by Thomas Keating.*

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*Leadership, continued from page 3*

to unbox and find a spot in the garden for the stone I was given that reads, "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." It's springtime and time to plant more seeds in the garden. I can't wait to see what beautiful things will unfold this summer. ✠

## 2020 Joint Provincial Assembly RESCHEDULED!

October 19-22, 2020

Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel  
2544 Executive Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46241-5013

*Registration confirmation info  
will be sent out in July via email.*

# Still Inspiring

by Fr. Jim Urbanic, C.P.P.S.

I am thinking about our New Creation province. It seems like an important event in the life of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in America. It is happening at the same time that our units in Latin America have formed a new province from their separate vicariates and missions. It is a bold move. The coronavirus will slow the process but will not keep it from completion.

Yet the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in the United States have also been bold. I cite some examples for this claim.

In the early part of the twentieth century, we began building a chapel at St. Charles in Carthagena, Ohio that remains the centerpiece of the largest Precious Blood house in the world. Then we renovated it 50 years later to be the showpiece that it is today.

It still inspires after all these years. I wonder what our ancestors were thinking in building such a substantial chapel for prayer, and then remodeling it so beautifully that it still inspires today. How many professions/incorporations, ordinations, and funerals has it witnessed over the years? Our ancestors were planning for the future, not lamenting the past. I think they saw themselves as building something larger than themselves. The first building still standing was dedicated to prayer and God, not living space or farm work. It was not a residence, library, or kitchen; that would all come later. Our cemetery suggests we are here to stay.

Our Missionaries lived a difficult life and proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus in many heroic ways, many with horse and buggy. Their zeal and enthusiasm for the tasks at hand merit imitation. Gaspar would be proud of our progress.

A few years after the original chapel was built, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood again planned for the future by constructing the main building. Our ancestors surely felt they had a big future to be so bold as to build the largest building in Mercer County, Ohio at the time. I wonder what all those truck



*St. Charles in Carthagena, Ohio*

drivers think as they drive their rigs along US 127 and see our large former seminary appearing in the distance. We were certainly building something that would last. One hundred years later it still inspires. It was built planning for the future, not just the present. It housed an infirmary, library, classrooms, a print shop, laundry, kitchen, faculty rooms, small student rooms, and some administrative offices. We then moved our barns behind the new main building. We were part of the agricultural foundation for this part of Ohio.

We had parishes in Missouri, Kansas, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Florida, Virginia, and Indiana. We built a shrine in northern Ohio; two colleges in Indiana; a novitiate; a large minor seminary near Canton, Ohio and another one near Kansas City; the Precious Blood Center in Liberty, Missouri; as well as a reconciliation center in Chicago. We have implemented provincial structures to address our former members, our volunteers, our donors, our lay associates, and our infirm members.

In the last 60 years at St. Charles, we added a dining room/auditorium, a new infirmary, and the Messenger Press building. Again, we were looking forward, not backward. Plans and excitement were not small.

And in 1965 we split the mother province into three daughter provinces. "Divide and grow," as Fr. John Byrne, C.P.P.S., used to say. Again, we were looking forward, not backward. We thought we were

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*iStockPhoto.com. Young Boy sticking his drawing on home window during the Coronavirus Covid-19 crisis, view from inside the house. Many people are putting a rainbow to tell neighbours that people inside this house are ok.*

## What Can Be Controlled?

*by Tim Deveney, Precious Blood Volunteers Director*

The last three months have been difficult. Our lives as we knew them have been tossed up in the air and fallen in myriad pieces. We have witnessed suffering at the hands of premature death and significant illnesses from this new virus. There is great uncertainty that has come to households whose breadwinners are no longer employed. The terror that must fill the hearts of people who go to jobs that are essential but are at high risk of contracting COVID-19. The sadness for high school and college seniors who have had to forego the normal rites of passage, including graduations and saying goodbye to friends. This virus has disproportionately hurt people who are poor, African American, Latinos, elderly, the imprisoned, and Native Americans. For all of us there is a sense of dread that the cough we have could be a life-altering or life-ending illness.

In late March the *Harvard Business Review* published an article titled “That Discomfort You’re Feeling is Grief.” The author of the article interviewed David Kessler, an expert on grief, about the grief we are all feeling during this pandemic. Normally when we are grieving, it is over someone dying or a massive change in our lives. During those times we can often draw on the strength of others, especially those who are not feeling the same acute grief that we are. When I

think of the times I have experienced intense grief, I especially remember that when my dad died all of us gave support to my mother who felt the grief most intensely. In a widening circle I leaned on my wife, my co-workers, my friends, and other confidants to give me support.

Since we are all grieving at the same time over multiple losses in our lives, the widening circle does not work as well. We can and should still support each other, but it is much different from how we normally grieve. It is additionally difficult because it’s not over, not even close to over, and no one knows when it will be over. Usually, as Kessler points out, when we have a personal tragedy, the sharpest point happens and we deal with the aftermath. It is similar when there is a communal tragedy such as a natural disaster or an event like the attacks on September 11, 2001. The worst happens and we deal with it and we can begin the process of grieving and hopefully of healing. In this case it is ongoing, and the uncertainty of when the worst of it will be over is traumatic.

Kessler advises that to deal with this grief is to focus on the areas we can control. In the particular

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case of dealing with COVID-19, Kessler advises to focus on what we can control. So, what is it that we can control? We can wash our hands, keep a safe distance from others outside our houses, and work virtually if we can.

The Gospel reading for the Roman Catholic Lectionary for May 17<sup>th</sup> was John 14:15-21 (“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”). Margaret Haik, Father Dave Matz, Vicky Otto, Father Keith Branson, and I focused on this reading for the May 14<sup>th</sup> edition of “Tapping the Wine Cellar” that was broadcast live on Facebook. While reflecting on this reading, I read in a commentary that Jesus gives only one commandment in the Gospel of John. The commandment he gives us is to love one another as he loves us. I recommend adding this commandment to Dr. Kessler’s list of what we can control. We can control how we respond to others in our families, our neighborhoods, our communities, our nations, and our world. We should do that with love for each other.

Unfortunately, Jesus doesn’t give us any extra instructions here, just love. This is simple, right? It leaves me craving more instruction. I find myself asking Jesus to give me some more guidance on how I am going to deal with this situation that is fraught with moral and ethical peril. It is difficult, especially when we have hard decisions to make that might require a sacrifice for us individually, our families, and our communities.

Over the last few months we all have had to make decisions that are difficult, and we have had to do it while coping with grief from all the death, suffering, and the altering of everything in our lives. Responding to these with love is hard. We have had to grapple with how much economic damage is a human life worth. There seems to be a collective shrug about over 93,000 dead in the United States from COVID-19 (as of mid-May), and a willingness to accept that this growing carnage is a part of our lives in exchange for people to go back to our “normal” lives. There have been arguments about how we balance individual rights with our responsibilities to our neighbors. The arguments extend to our rights to assemble, to have dinner out with others, to attend church, to earn a paycheck, among many others.

These rights have corresponding responsibilities to them. We must take basic precautions like wearing masks when we are around others, keeping ourselves at safe distances, and limiting how often we go out and what services we use. The safety measures we take should be done out of love for one another and should be done with the guidance of responsible voices in public health, government, media—with a greater awareness of the suffering of our brothers and sisters. Most importantly, they should be taken by listening to God’s voice through regular communal (virtually works well!) and personal prayer, while looking for God’s presence in everyone around us. ✠

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*Still Inspiring, continued from page 4*  
leading, not following.

We have begun missions in South America, Central America, and Vietnam. We are always part of international leadership.

We have bonded with lay men and women in our Companion movement, spiritually and socially, by living side-by-side with them at St Charles.

To me these events suggest that our Congregation is not afraid to leave the status quo in favor of doing something daring and bold. I have often been struck by the timeline of these events and what motivated our ancestors to be daring and making big plans for the future. We have a history of bold and inspiring actions. That same excitement is needed today. I pray that our New Creation province will add to this list of bold and exciting Precious Blood history in America. We have spent decades thinking more about the people of God than ourselves.

There is little discussion of province here at St. Charles. But there is lots of discussion of community. Everyone knows which province people belong to, but it is not stressed. Every member is treated the same. I think that is a good model for the future of our new creation province in the United States. We work at making the bond of charity operative rather than province geography. May God bless our journey, along with keeping us safe at this critical time. St. Gaspar, pray for us. Glory to the Blood of Jesus. ✠



*Deacon Hoa Vu, Br. Daryl Charron, and an unidentified parishioner at Tan Thanh parish in 2016*

## Living Faith During the Pandemic

*by Paul Anh Hao Pham, C.P.P.S., Vietnam Mission*

The COVID-19 outbreak has been known in Vietnam since early January. Although the number of infections was few, it made people worried and scared. People were afraid because they knew that deaths and the number of infections were increasing daily in China. Moreover, there was no cure or preventive vaccine. At that time, some pastors in parishes notified their faithful about the dangers of this strange virus.

At that time, in the Tan Thanh community, the stories shared at supper usually revolved around epidemics. All of us sympathized with the worries of the faithful when they came to our community to learn more about this issue. In the time of our communal prayer, there were occasional prayers to God for a pandemic, especially for peace and healing for those who were suffering loss in China. We were aware of people who were in the midst of a threatening disease, they are "the Cry of the Blood," a challenge to the mission of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

As of March 17<sup>th</sup>, the number of infections in Vietnam increased sharply, reaching 158 cases. At that

time, most of the churches in the dioceses and priests offering Masses consistently noted, reminded, and informed the faithful to be careful, hygienic, and avoid close contact with others because of the risk of infection. Now every parish, before or after Mass, prayers are always for a pandemic. The prayers are diverse in many forms, some of them popularized by the Vietnamese Conference of Bishops, and others compiled and sent to parishes by the diocesan bishops themselves. Regardless of which prayer, all are united in heart, pleading for the mercy of God before the pandemic.

Particularly in the Tan Thanh community, with many different missions—visits, catechism, preaching, teaching, etc.—all have close contacts in ministries, so we often remind each other to be careful when we perform our mission. Particularly, there are members who have ministries with minorities, groups who have a poor sense of health maintenance and hygiene, which is a danger for the ones who serve. However, with the spirituality and responsibility of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, one needs to be courageous,

committed to continue the mission, following the example of our founder, coming to the people with our trust and hope in God.

As of April 1, there has been a ban of large gatherings, that the Vietnamese government calls a "social gap." All parishes across the country are not allowed to have the Eucharist celebrations, but instead the attendance is at online Mass in individual families. In Tan Thanh community, because of no priests present, we planned to attend Mass from a distance in the same way. But fortunately, a local parish priest had privately celebrated for us in the community, along with the group of Sisters of the Lasan here. Thus, we have sustained this important liturgy every day, including Holy Week, Triduum, and Easter.

Because of the ban, all pastoral activities must be stopped, and we increase our prayers instead, especially reflecting with God privately. On the peak days of the epidemic, following the liturgy of the hours,

we offer our prayers for the pandemic according to the prayer of our province. Although pastoral activities have been stopped, the charitable works are still maintained by our members, because in this difficult situation vulnerable people need help more than ever. Our members still visit to inspire and give donations to the poor through the community.

When faced with a pandemic, even though it is only a small virus, people realize the fragility, weakness, vulnerability, and imperfection of human beings. People can make many extremely advanced weapons, such as a drone aircraft, submarines, and stealth bombers, but they are unable to deal with this tiny and hateful virus; people can make weapons that can kill in a moment but can't kill this microorganism.

Before the pandemic broke out, the world had no days of silence from the sound of gun shots; there was not a day that people don't hear somewhere about

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## Service Update from Vietnam

Charity is a part of the mission of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood of Christ. Each year, we spend time with the poor who are living in the highlands of Vietnam or the poor who are living in our neighborhood, giving some presents in the Christmas season.

This past Advent, we shared some presents with the poor who have lived in the highland of Vietnam. I felt very happy when we had shared with them some presents in Advent. The people who have lived in the highland have been the poor because their properties were revoked by the local government. They are minorities, who live to depend on the jungle in Vietnam, but the jungle destroyed, they did not do other jobs in order to own the money for them and their families. When we gave some presents, I felt they were very

hungry, especially the kids. I always hope there are many people concerned about them. The food is not enough to eat. How they think about their education? If they do not have a good education, how do they get out of poverty. Poverty makes people feel suffering, lack of educational opportunities. So, in order to get out of poverty, they must have a good education as rich children. For this reason, I support the education program which Sr. Hang Pham, A.S.C. is doing.

I hope every child in the world, especially Vietnamese children, has a good education program to develop an overview. I am also concerned about the kids who did not have a good education program as Vietnamese and every kid in the world, because this is the main cause to get the problem for society in the future. ✠



Coahuila, Mexico, Jun 16 - A group of migrants of Central American origin waits on the railway line to get on a container train, known as "The Beast," to reach the border line between the United States and Mexico. iStockphoto.com

## Forced to Flee

by Gabino Zavala, Justice and Peace Director

As I write this, much of our country is still sheltering in place. We continue to stay at home and physically distance to save lives by slowing the spread of COVID-19. During this time, we have been aware of the heroic work and sacrifice of nurses, doctors, first responders, and hospital technicians. We pray for those essential workers such as truck drivers, supermarket workers, farmworkers, meatpacking workers, bus drivers, and many more.

As we remember these people and pray for their safety, let us not forget those who continue to live in the shadows of our communities, those who are most vulnerable—the undocumented immigrants in our midst. Often you will find them cleaning hospitals and stores at night so that we might be safe. They continue to work in our fields and warehouses. Many work in our meatpacking industry where the virus has been most fierce. And so many of them do this work for meager wages with little care for their safety. They make crucial contributions to our community.

September 27, 2020 has been designated as the World Day for Migrants and Refugees. Pope Francis has selected as this year's theme "Forced Like Jesus to Flee." The pope's words use Jesus and his parents as displaced persons and refugees as a touchstone for the plight of the undocumented, of migrants and refugees everywhere.

We need to be aware of the reality and experience of the displaced persons in our midst. Like Jesus they have fled persecution, threats on their lives, hunger, violence, and the effects of climate—all of which has made it impossible for them to survive at home. Jesus is present in each of our undocumented sisters and brothers who are forced by these dire circumstances to flee—as in Herod's time—so that they might save their lives. In their faces we are called to recognize the face of Jesus Christ.

This reality is all the greater during this global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a time when we are to care for one another, especially the most vulnerable

in our midst. However, this administration has taken the opportunity to make immigration laws even more restrictive during COVID-19—perhaps hoping we won't notice. Last month President Trump signed an executive order limiting immigration into the United States by suspending new green cards. Many have been waiting for years to have their papers processed. This is a distraction, because this policy has no practical benefits and the coronavirus is *not* an immigration issue. The administration's poor response to the pandemic is the problem, not immigration.

Pope Francis has written that the Christian's response to migrants can be summarized in four words: "welcome, protect, promote, and integrate." Unfortunately, we live in a time where cruel policies put many children of God in cages for having the audacity to seek a better life. Families walking miles for safety, those caught in a broken immigration system, and children forced to appear alone in court depend on us, on our voices raised loudly for love and justice. God knows that voices spewing hate are everywhere.

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) held a gathering in March for the Directors of Justice and Peace and the Integrity for Creation (JPIC). The topic of this conference was immigration. We looked at the root causes of immigration. We discussed the economic reality and the policies that are the reason for so much poverty in those countries where the immigrants come from. We reflected on the impact of environmental destruction and climate change that has caused so much hunger. Finally, we discussed the effects of militarization that lead to violence, that force people to flee. I encourage you to read the final document from this CMSM/JPIC gathering, which can be found at <https://cmsm.jp/c/2020/03/jpic-virtual-gathering-on-migration/>.

Immigration is such a complex issue. We need to know this issue and these people so that we can understand. We need to draw the immigrant near so we can serve them. We need to listen so that we can recognize what the needs are. We need to share with our immigrant sisters and brothers so that we might grow. We need to get involved in order to promote the truth. We need to collaborate with others on this issue so that we can build something that is life-giving. ✠

*Living Faith, continued from page 7*

shooting and murders. But when the tiny corona virus appeared, it was not anything else that silenced the gunfire. A little virus, which makes heads always hot, likes to solve every problem with violence slack down and stop. Only the corona virus, not anything else, can bring hateful and opposing hearts together, suspend all retaliation to shake hands, cooperating to save this world.

Particularly for believers, more than ever before, during this pandemic, Christians have perceived such a fragile and vulnerable humanity. Many believers understand that humanity must always rely on and trust in the mercy of God. Exclusion of God is a serious mistake; human power and ability are extremely limited, only the power and power of God are absolute and infinite.

For the members of the Precious Blood community in Tan Thanh, the pandemic is not only an opportunity to strengthen their beliefs, but also a time for each member to better understand; be more creative, dynamic, and enthusiastic; and more faithful in the mission to the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized. Each member needs to know what to do in support of those suffering people in the most practical and effective way.

We, in Tan Thanh Community, continually pray to God through the intercession of our founder St. Gaspar. May God have mercy for the safe and peace of humankind, for the members of the Precious Blood in the world; and may God take action to protect His Church.

*Editor's Note: Br. Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S., who served in Vietnam, explained to me that the Tan Thanh Community is an outreach ministry of the Vietnam Mission. Tan Thanh is an area near the Cambodia border, and the largest parish, where three of members and one candidate who serve there live, is also called Tan Thanh. It is typically served by a diocesan priest, but there is not one currently assigned there. ✠*

# Companion Larry Jenkins

by Jean Giesige, Communication Director for the Cincinnati Province

Larry Jenkins was the kind of guy who, if you were sitting next to him in chapel at a Community event, could give off an aura of total absorption and worshipful attention that indicated he was deep in conversation with his Creator. Then the minute it was over, he could turn to you with his quick smile and whisper something that would have you laughing for the next two days.



*Sharon and Larry Jenkins*

He could be serious, but not always. He was exceptionally bright, but down-home. He was a successful business-

man who cared nothing about hoarding money. He was a family man who cherished his wife and daughters, yet defined family in the broadest terms. He was a hard worker whose work would come screeching to a halt when someone asked him for help. He was a small-town kid who was absolutely at home when traveling around the world.

Larry was born and raised in Rensselaer, Indiana, where the Missionaries of the Precious Blood were part of the landscape. He was an altar boy at St. Augustine Parish, where Missionaries were pastors. They also served at Saint Joseph's College, where Larry would become involved later in his life. When the Missionaries decided to form groups of lay associates, called Companions, in the early 1990s, Larry and his wife Sharon were among the first to be invited.

It was natural for the Jenkins to say yes to the invitation, because they said yes to nearly everything that God asked them to do, including to each other. They met in high school, when Larry was a senior and Sharon a junior. They sat next to each other on an art

class trip from Rensselaer to Chicago, and that was the very beginning of a 48-year relationship, 45 years as husband and wife, companions to each other first.

They were married in 1964, after Larry served in the National Guard and attended barber school. He went to work in a barber shop in Rensselaer and Sharon worked next door at the bank. "We ate lunch together every day," she said.

Life went by in a blur for the young couple. "Four years and one week after we were married, we had our third baby," Sharon said. Larry was working hard and doing well, but long hair was coming into style and he had a growing family—daughters Jenifer, Jynell, and JoAnn. Another barber suggested that Larry become a realtor in addition to cutting hair, because "barbers know everybody in town" and he could schedule his appointments for his two careers so that they wouldn't conflict.

That was the start of Jenkins Realtors in Rensselaer, where Sharon and eventually their daughters also worked. (Their daughters now manage the business.)

To his family and his work, Larry added many other layers of Christian living. He was active in the parish, serving on the parish council and as a Eucharistic minister. He played the guitar for the parish's folk group. He and Sharon taught religious education classes in their home. They met Br. Tim Hemm, C.P.P.S. when he was ministering to the youth at the parish, and soon were helping him with retreats and other activities.

"Larry and Sharon were involved in everything," said Br. Tim. "They were so hospitable. We always knew their house would be available. They hosted many gatherings and were so involved in our ministries. They were natural as Companions."

Br. Tim called Larry "a go-to guy. He was the consummate businessman, but he always had his feet on the ground."

Those qualities led Fr. Bill Nordenbrock, C.P.P.S., the first Companions director, to ask Larry to serve on the new Companions advisory council, which would help shape the movement. It was unformed in the beginning, intentionally so, but as the Community added more Companions it felt the need for guidelines and guidance.

Larry brought logic, faith, and a wealth of experiences to those meetings. Both practical and spiritual, he had an innate sense of what the faithful would find appealing about becoming a lay associate, and what a covenanted relationship with Missionaries of the Precious Blood might mean in their lives. His insights were invaluable and his patience with the process was epic, Fr. Nordenbrock said.

Meanwhile, he continued to be a leader at home and at work. “Larry was brilliant. He was a risk-taker in a good way—when cell phones first came out, he was among the first to have one. When multiple listings for real estate were introduced, the Jenkins’ were there,” Br. Tim said.

*Companions Sharon and Larry with Fr. Denny Kinderman, Companion Mark Giesige, and Fr. Bill Nordenbrock in Rome*



To Larry, it was all about keeping people connected. And the best way to do that was with his own broad grin and listening ear. “He kept an eye out for people who were down-and-out, living paycheck to paycheck,” Br. Tim said. “Larry was always willing to fill in the blanks to help them out.”

The Jenkins’ hospitality, their care for others, including and especially those who were struggling, made them a great example of Precious Blood spirituality, said Fr. Denny Kinderman, C.P.P.S., who followed Fr. Nordenbrock as Companions director.

“Larry had a gentle spirit and was always open and attentive,” he said. “Yet he stood his ground during Companion gatherings and advisory council meetings. Precious Blood spirituality gave depth to his insights as he held all he was involved in near to his heart. His Precious Blood spirituality brought close those who were wavering or unsure through his unifying love and welcoming presence. I believe Larry was a model Companion, portraying all that had been hoped for as the Spirit that moved Gaspar also moved our province to embrace lay associates.”

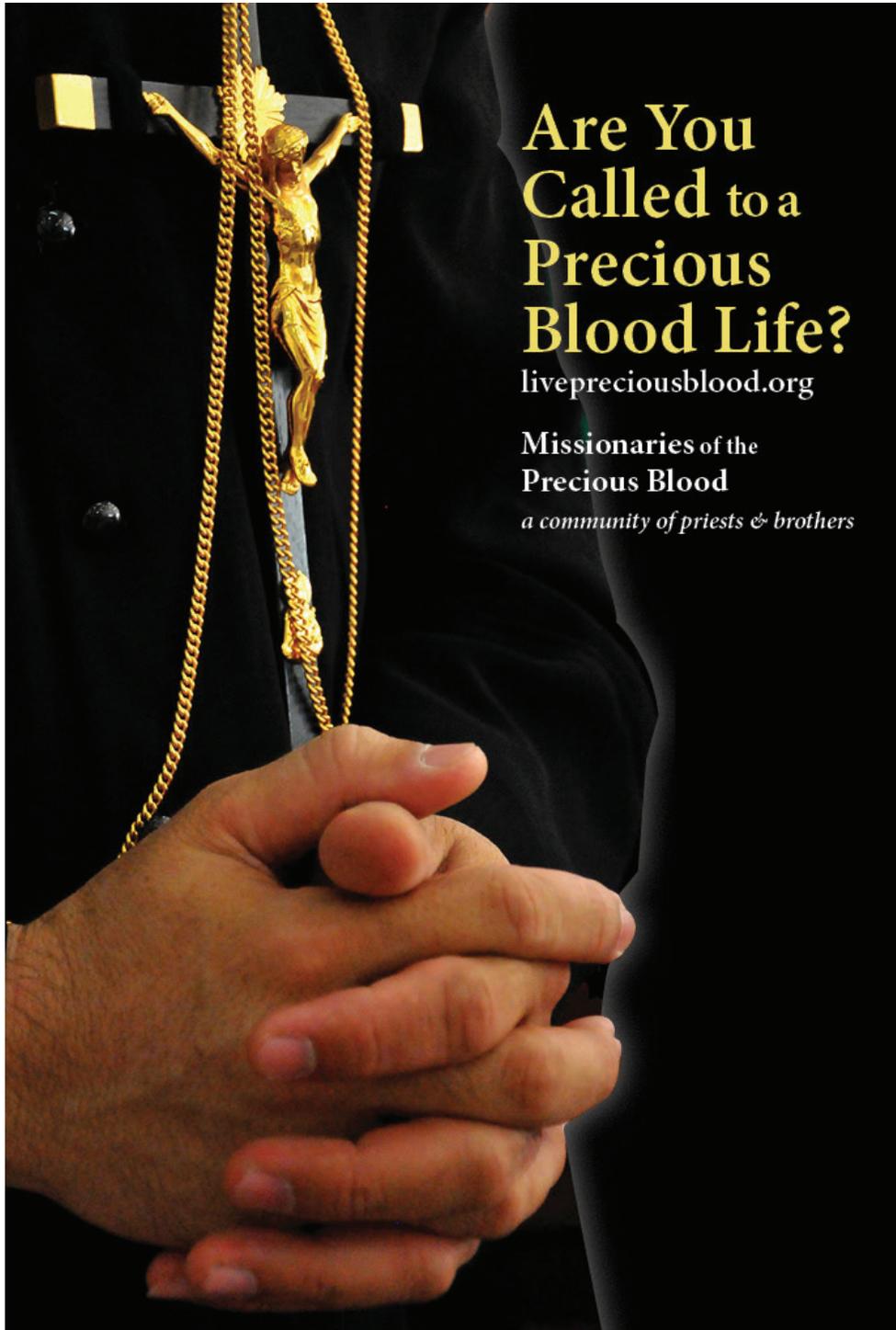
Br. Tim agreed, about both Larry and Sharon, who did everything together. “They were Companions’ Companions,” Br. Tim said. “They were the best.”

Larry died at age 66, far too young, but he’d put to good use the many gifts God had given him, and shared all he had with others. He passed away after a valiant battle with cancer, which Sharon unflinchingly helped him fight, on July 1, 2009— the Feast of the Precious Blood. ✠

*This article is part of the “Fair Inheritance” project, a series of profiles of people who have had a significant impact on the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in the United States. These biographical sketches are of people nominated last fall as part of the Fair Inheritance Project. The suggestions came from members, Companions, and others.*

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