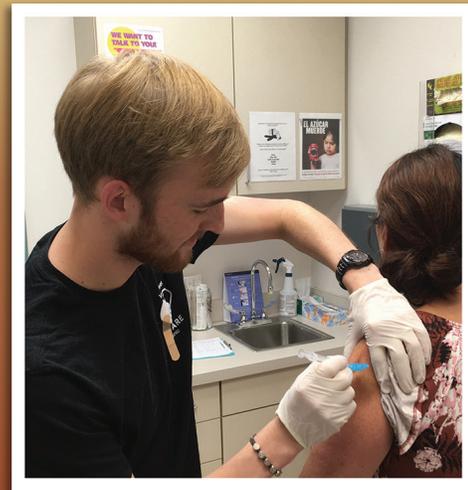


THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 29 No. 11 • July-August 2021



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



Precious Blood Volunteers
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Front cover: The Becoming New Wine logo, which has been used for the virtual meetings that occurred throughout the pandemic.

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

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

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

THE New Wine PRESS

Missionaries of the Precious Blood
Kansas City Province

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Ch-Ch-Changes

by Margaret Haik, Director of Communications

The lyrics to David Bowie's "Changes" ran through my head as I read the articles for this month's *New Wine Press*. The changes in this song's lyrics are generally interpreted as referring to Bowie's chameleonic stage persona and musical style, along with the changes in the world during the late 60s and early 70s. As Bowie sang about the changes of his era, so we now have many changes upon us.

The pandemic certainly brought massive changes for all of us! Because of his living community's situation, Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S. got an especially restrictive experience during the pandemic. He took some time to write a reflection on the past 13 months. As we open up again, I wonder if the changes we all made to keep safe will be lost or will people keep some of them?

Fr. David Matz, C.P.P.S. and Fr. Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S., both share their experiences of the members' gathering in St. Louis. Fr. David points out that the coming changes will be uncomfortable for many in the community. Fr. Joe points out that even though there are coming changes, the vision for the community remains the same.

We want to extend the warmest welcome to Newton Lih, who will enter Initial Formation this fall. Newton has a fascinating background and is about to have some huge changes as he moves from San Francisco to Chicago.

Fr. Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S., sent a quick update about the new assignments and general business notes from the Kansas City Provincial Council.

Lastly, a correction: last month's *New Wine Press* listed the anniversary for Fr. Leon Flaherty, C.P.P.S. and Fr. William Hoying, C.P.P.S. as their 50th, when they are actually celebrating their 60th anniversary of ordination. The changes are reflected on the back cover. Congratulations to all our jubliarians! ✠

Conversion and Challenges

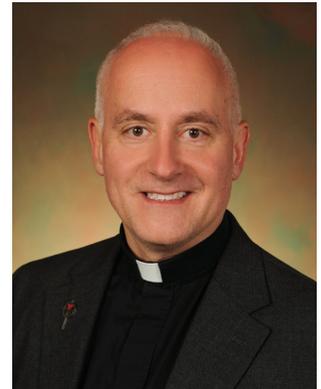
by Fr. David Matz, C.P.P.S., Vice-provincial Director

“I enjoyed our time together this past week!” said Fr. Denny Kinderman as we said our goodbyes this past week at Mercy Center in St. Louis. Members from Cincinnati and Kansas City Provinces gathered to build relationship, develop a vision statement, and began discerning new leadership for the new United States Province. Through the prayer times, structured dialogues, meals, and informal gatherings, we have indeed begun the process of coming together and forming a new creation. It is important to embrace the word “forming.” The New Creation doesn’t end with the election of the new leadership or the creation of a new province. The journey will continue and require intentional activity on the part of the whole community—Companions, brothers, and priests—but most of all it will require change that is already happening systemically throughout the world, nations, and yes, even the Church.

Upon my arrival at Mercy Center, I felt like I was in the breach where change happens; that visceral tension between those people and customs that I am familiar with and those that are suspiciously unknown to me. How do I relate to brothers I have yet to meet? How do I enter into conversations with people who may be polar opposite to me in terms of culture, politics, and religion? Yet, I remembered that I’m a missionary—just like the rest of my brothers gathered there—steeped sufficiently in the Paschal Mystery, knowing that dying and rising are central to the lives we live as missionaries. Change requires surrender to the Spirit. Our spirituality shouts out to us in this moment that new life does arise even in death. That’s the hope I clung to as I said hello to Tim McFarland and walked through the door to begin our two days.

It didn’t take long for all of us to start telling stories. One of the stories that Fr. Denny shared encapsulated for me that “breach” feeling and the challenge that change brings for me. He shared:

During one of my visits to the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center one of the youths approached me and asked: “Are you a priest?” I said, “Yes I am.” He said: “I am an atheist, but right now I think I need a prayer.” So, we sat and talked about that, and eventually we prayed. Then he asked if I could write a prayer that he could say when he goes to bed. I gave him a small prayer book pointing out the “Lord’s Prayer” and the “Act of Contrition.”



continued on page 4

Leadership, continued from page 3

After speaking with some of the other youths when I was leaving that section, he yelled across the room, "Thank you, Fr. Denny, you changed me!" I didn't want to get him confused so I didn't say, "No, God changed you and I was only God's instrument." Besides, if his court hearing doesn't turn out the way he is praying that it turned out, he may once again be an atheist!

*Reflecting on this I came to realize that I don't change. Change is very difficult ... at times impossible! How many resolutions have I not broken? If Scott Peck is correct that "life is difficult" (in *The Road Less Traveled*) if living is so challenging, what's that say about changing what is already difficult! The real change is getting myself out of the way and letting the Holy Spirit change me. You see he didn't say that he changed but that he was changed.*

The convergence of the two provinces into a new United States Province will require all of us to embrace change. And when Fr. Denny shared in his story that the real change is getting oneself out of the way and letting the Holy Spirit work, my own perspective changed in regards to why we had gathered and what we were trying to accomplish at Mercy Center. The challenge is to intentionally get myself out of the way of the Spirit so that change may happen. With this change in attitude and behavior, we can let the Spirit guide us in building and rebuilding relationships with one another and move towards that new creation that only God can see right now. We are doing the work and building towards that new future under the Spirit's guidance.

Our first core value challenges us to individual conversion, which then leads to communal conversion. Our communal prayer those two days provided us with experiences of conversion and challenges, as did our structured time and casual conversations during our down time. Although we intentionally invoked the Spirit's presence, Fr. Denny's story challenges our attitudes and beliefs about change and standing in the breach. We must accept the communal challenge to look for the Spirit's movement in everything we do as the process for the New Creation and the new leadership

moves into the future. We will change even though we can't see the end goal yet.

As a community let us pray every day: *Holy Spirit, get us out of the way. Lead us and guide us through change in our world and in our community as we move forward into that New Creation as Missionaries of the Precious Blood of the United States.* ✠

Kansas City Province Joins Catholic Cares Coalition

The Kansas City Province has joined over 50 other Catholic organizations in the Catholic Cares Coalition, which promotes vaccine equity in the U.S. and around the world, drawing on Catholic social teaching, for people who are underserved or marginalized.

The project has three intentional goals:

Goal 1: Leverage communication channels and resources to share consistent information about the importance and moral responsibility of individuals to accept a COVID vaccine when available

Goal 2: Provide human, spiritual, and pastoral support for those struggling to understand, affirm, and act on Catholic social teaching, including the teachings of Pope Francis and the U.S. Catholic Bishops.

Goal 3: Advocate for the equitable distribution of the vaccine in the U.S. and globally.

July is a month-long mobilization effort in support of the Department of Health & Human Services' *We Can Do This* campaign to ensure as many people as possible receive at least one COVID vaccine. We encourage you, if not already vaccinated, to click here to find a vaccination clinic, get vaccinated, and help stop the spread of new variants of the COVID virus.

Learn more about Catholic Cares Coalition at the website <https://CatholicCares.org>.

Reflections on a Year of Isolation

by Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S., Avila University

The COVID pandemic made it impossible for me to do my primary ministry at Avila University and during the lockdown, I have been embedded here at our Lady of Mercy Country Home. Even though the pandemic isn't officially over, I have had time to look back and reflect on the experience.

I think the part of isolation that hit hardest was to live so close to so many people and not be able to be with them. Eating meals alone is nothing new to me, but twice daily deliveries of food reminded me profoundly my solitude. The residents here depend on seeing each other as well as their families to keep up their morale; even though we understood the quarantine was to protect us, the absence of Mass and other activities took a heavy toll. The worst fear was getting the illness: anyone who came from the outside could carry it in at any time. Once it got in, we were sitting ducks despite all precautions for safety.

One day I was called to do an anointing of a dear lady who was once a parishioner of mine. They were not allowing outsiders to come in, including our usual chaplain, so I went. She had a hard time listening and spoke very softly at best, so I had to lower my mask and lean closer to communicate with her. This was on a Monday just before a COVID test, and we had another test on Thursday. My test on the next Monday was positive. If I had it to do over, I would, and I'm glad I got sick in the line of duty rather than trying to cheat the lockdown. Fortunately, I had received the first Moderna vaccination before my exposure and I was only dreadfully sick for a couple of days. The worst part was having those who came to check on me

wearing gown and gloves; I don't think any of us like to think of ourselves as a threat to someone else.

What the time invited me to do was live in the moment even while holding on to hope the pandemic would end. As much as I could, I tried to be available to my housemates and help when possible. They also helped me because I'm not sure I would've survived as well without them.

Gaspar went to Rome the last year of his life during a Cholera epidemic, hearing confessions and helping as he could. I feel a small kinship with him now that I haven't before.

Looking back over this time, I remember a project of historian Barbara Tuchman's, when she wanted to write about the Black Death of the 14th century: the major currents that afflicted that society arose before and continued after relatively unaffected by the plague itself. She wrote *A Distant Mirror*, to tell the story of the entire 14th century, which was more relevant and has greater implications than her original idea. As we look back on Covid, let us remember how we have grown and how many of the effects of the disease where the result of where we were when it started, and where we're going as it recedes. ✚



**GET
VACCINATED**

+

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or visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)**

#CatholicCares



Participants at the Members' Gathering in St. Louis. (all pictures courtesy of Fr. Tim McFarland, C.P.P.S.)

Living the Vision: Reflections on the Saint Louis Gathering

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

The book of Proverbs famously reminds, “Without a vision, the people perish (29,18).” This quote came to mind as members gathered at the Mercy Center in St. Louis June 14-16, 2021 to dialogue and discern the vision for the New Creation as we become one province in the United States. What the quote from Proverbs doesn't mention, however, is that without living the vision and boldly acting upon it with our Companions, we will also perish.

The absence of Companions at the vision gathering caused many of us to feel that we were missing an important part of our Precious Blood family. Though we had the Companions' reflections from their online gatherings in May that focused on the same questions

Fr. Al Ebach, Fr. Dave Kelly, Fr. Mark Hoying



we discerned in St. Louis, we heard clearly the hurt and frustration many Companions expressed over their exclusion from this gathering. Constructing a vision statement without the presence of those who will be essential partners and participants in living this vision was like the “old” days before the Companions movement was born more than thirty years ago.

The vision statements that surfaced from the twelve tables of triads and composed into a single statement that serves as a starting point for our ongoing discernment—especially as it relates to selecting those who are best suited as servant leaders for the new province—reflected our charism and spirituality. Many said at the meeting and will say upon seeing the statement for the first time, “There's nothing new here.” And they are correct because we have been trying to embody the charism and spirituality of our Congregations and applying it to the signs of these times for a very long time.

What brings hope for the New Creation is the themes we've been writing, reading, and reflecting on these many years are so much a part of our Precious Blood culture and conversation that there is general agreement on how we will seek to live and minister as

one province. But if there is no energy, no enthusiasm in being what Paul reminded us on the Sunday after our gathering what we have already become, “Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold new things have come (2 Corinthians 5, 17),” then we are simply merging two provinces into one until the time comes when we turn out the lights.

The obstacles are obvious and have been clear from the beginning of this process: we are trying to create something new in an ancient structure of an institutional Church resistant to change. For example, while we were meeting in St. Louis and talking about how our spirituality calls us to live an inclusive vision of Eucharist, the bishops were meeting via Zoom to discuss writing a document that may seek to exclude some from the table.

Another obstacle is that most of us have found our comfort zone and settled in for our good night. A commencement speaker once told the graduates, “Find your comfort zone and then run away from it as quickly as possible.” Many of us have found our comfort zones and are very comfortable.

The age and energy level of many members and Companions presents issues, though as many have noted, if we chose to play the numbers game, we will certainly lose. We don’t have the numbers. But it’s not about how many we have that matters. It’s about how many we have who are willing to live the spirituality and charism with a renewed vigor and vitality. We can do cosmetic changes but the work of transformation is always cosmic and if it is faithful and true, leads us to communion in the New Creation.

Where are people calling out for renewal and reconciliation through the ministry of the Word? That is where we belong. This means that our places of mission reflect the spirit of the Second Vatican Council when the Church named all those baptized as a priestly people of God and affirmed ministry in the Church is not the prerogative of professional clerics and religious but the mandate for all. As Pope Francis has consistently named us, we are all missionary disciples. The St. Louis vision statement is explicit about our work of renewal is rooted in the Second Vatican Council. As Vatican II called for a spirit of inclusivity that went far beyond the

Roman Catholic Church to the world, including dialogue and collaboration with all peoples of faith, we are to reach out to all people to advance the realm of God’s truth, justice, peace, and mercy.

Is this a new vision? No, it is rooted in the Gospel, our spirituality, and our charism, and must be applied to our world today to meet the threats to human dignity and life. Wherever the lives of the vulnerable, the outcast, and the poor are threatened, the blood of Christ beckons us to respond. Not just with corporate stances but with real presence.

At the 1993 Assembly of the Kansas City Province, a Membership Commission was formed to canvas Companions and members “to facilitate a process to encourage all associated with our great Society... to become a new creation in Christ.” Yes, we’ve been talking about this a very, very long time. The questions we asked Companions and members to reflect upon flowed from the Circular Letters of Saint Gaspar beginning with the one he raised in his First Circular Letter in 1826: “Let us then meditate on the motives that prompted us to devote ourselves to this great society.”

We have had many attempts to re-found, rekindle, and revitalize the Society over the years. But as Saint Gaspar reminds, “Our Society will progress...in proportion to our becoming people of the spirit.” We can have the most dazzling vision statement but it will fizzle like fireworks on the Fourth of July if we ourselves are not transformed to live what we have already become: a new creation in Christ. ✠

Members during prayer time in St. Louis



Meet Candidate Newton Lih!

Editor's Note: In June, the Kansas City Provincial Council approved the acceptance of Newton Lih into Initial Formation. He was kind enough to write a biography to introduce himself to the community.

My name is Newton Lih. I will be entering initial formation with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in 2021. I am excited to enter formation and look forward to meeting the members of our community.

I was born June 4, 1985, in Hsinchu, Taiwan. My family background is a mix of Chinese, Taiwanese, Mongolian, Aboriginal Taiwanese, and a smidge of Jewish. My family's claim to Judaism is through a distant relative who was in the Chinese city of Kaifeng, home to the oldest Jewish synagogue in China. I consider the diversity of my ethnic background a great source of pride.

I immigrated to the United States when I was three years old, when our family settled in San Jose, California. My father worked as an engineer and my mother stayed home. I grew up in the last bits of the "Leave it to Beaver" era: kids playing in the streets and walking to school safely. I grew up with Saturday morning cartoons, Vacation Bible School, and violin lessons. I've seen the Bay Area go through dotcoms, housing booms, housing busts, and gentrification.

I attended the University of California, Berkeley for my undergraduate studies, where I found myself drawn to learning about different cultures and languages. I graduated with two degrees in Chinese and Japanese literature. I am a deep lover of poetry and philosophy.

After college, I spent some time searching and maturing as an individual. It took a while before I would find my worldly vocation: I am an accountant by trade. My professional life has been blessed with opportunities and wonderful mentors. I've seen companies go IPO, get acquired by larger corporations, and go bankrupt. The theme of my professional life is summed up in one word: transitions. My gift is to help people and organizations go through transitions.

My spiritual background begins with the evangelical tradition of my childhood. I was raised in a loving tradition with a deep emphasis on Scripture. We worshipped through the American hymnal. Music was always in our

house, and our family loved to sing. As a young adult, I was disenchanted with the church and left. I wandered for many years as a prodigal son but reconnected to faith through community and Scripture. I began reading spiritual authors such as Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, and St. Teresa of Avila voraciously. I ventured amongst Quakers, contemplatives, and pilgrims. I came home when brave Catholic coworkers were willing to share their faith and encouraged me to attend Most Holy Redeemer in San Francisco, California.



My life at Most Holy Redeemer has been abundant and joyful. I participated in the Young Adults group, and before COVID took hold, I helped to organize a Gregorian Chant group. I've been a lector and a eucharistic minister. One of my greatest honors was to help with First Communion for three adorable young children. The loving work it took to build faith in our smallest disciples filled me with awe.

My calling to the Precious Blood began with Father Matt Link, C.P.P.S., pastor at Most Holy Redeemer, who introduced me to the community. I've been accompanied by Father Steve Dos Santos, C.P.P.S. and the priests at Sonnino Mission House. They've honored me with their openness and friendship. I've been shown a community with a wonderful combination of experience, wisdom, truth, sincerity, and purpose.

Moving from San Jose to Chicago will be a huge change, and I look forward to being a student again. As I enter Initial Formation, I am aware that there will be many growing pains, but also the building of wonderful friendships. I ask members of the Precious Blood community to pray for me as I begin my journey, and I hope to meet all of you in person sometime soon. ✚

Provincial Council News

As a Provincial Council, most of our time and energy has been spent working with the Cincinnati Province Council in bringing the two provinces together, but work on behalf of Kansas City Province projects continues, as well. Here is the most recent business we have approved:

- Upon the admission committee's recommendation, Newton Lih was approved to enter Initial Formation for the Kansas City Province at San Felice Formation House in Chicago.
- A request for \$7,000 from Deacon Hoa Vu, C.P.P.S. to build a food pantry building in Vietnam was approved.
- Provincial budgets for the coming year were approved.
- Fr. Al Ebach, C.P.P.S. was appointed parochial administrator of St. Francis Xavier Parish in St. Joseph, Missouri.
- Fr. Joe Bathke, C.P.P.S. has been granted retirement from full time ministry.
- Fr. John Wolf, C.P.P.S. was appointed director of the Human Development Fund Committee, replacing Fr. Joe Uecker, C.P.P.S.
- The Human Development Fund committee's recommendations for disbursement of funds were approved.
- Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S. was appointed to the St. Gaspar Society Board of Directors, replacing Fr. Richard Colbert, C.P.P.S.

On behalf of the Provincial Council of the Kansas City Province,

Fr. Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S.

Recipients of Precious Blood Scholarships, 2021 – 2022

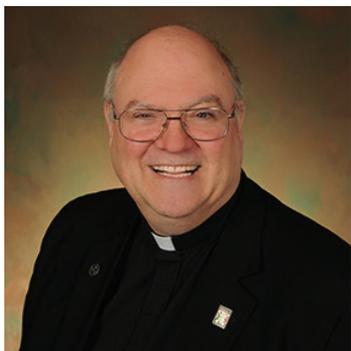
Student	School	Home Town	Person Nominating
Grant Arens	Bishop LeBlond HS	St. Joseph, Missouri	Fr. Lac Pham, C.P.P.S.
Emily Bowman	Avila University	St. Joseph, Missouri	Marilyn Beck
Murphy King	Bishop LeBlond HS	St. Joseph, Missouri	Fr. Lac Pham, C.P.P.S.
Dylan Marmaud	Bishop LeBlond HS	St. Joseph, Missouri	Fr. Lac Pham, C.P.P.S.
Carly Russell	Stonehill College	Warrensburg, Missouri	Fr. Joe Bathke, C.P.P.S.
William Trapp	Bishop LeBlond HS	St. Joseph, Missouri	Fr. Lac Pham, C.P.P.S.

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Congratulations Jubilarians!

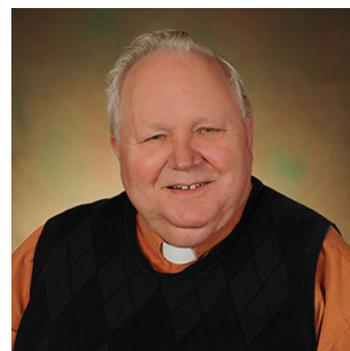
*Even though we will not gather as a full community until October,
we want to recognize members of both provinces celebrating milestones this year!*



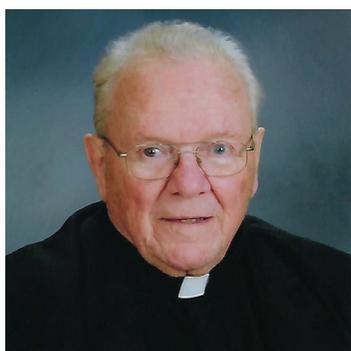
*Fr. James Betzen, C.P.P.S.
40 Years Ordination*



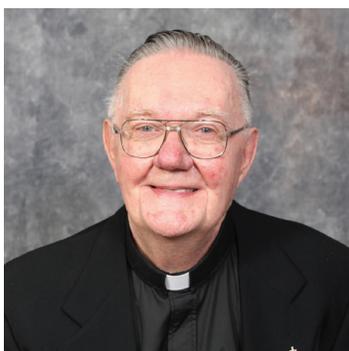
*Fr. James Dugal, C.P.P.S.
65 Years Ordination*



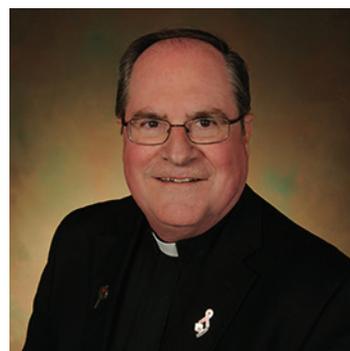
*Fr. Linus Evers, C.P.P.S.
50 Years Ordination*



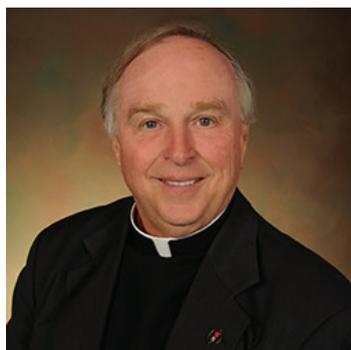
*Fr. Leon Flaherty, C.P.P.S.
60 Years Ordination*



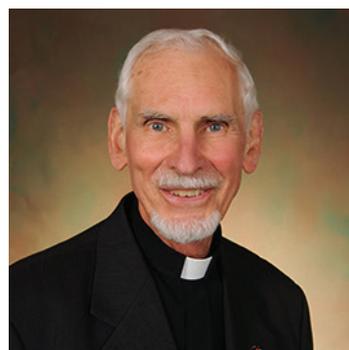
*Fr. William Hoying, C.P.P.S.
60 Years Ordination*



*Fr. Mark Miller, C.P.P.S.
50 Years Ordination*



*Fr. James Urbanic, C.P.P.S.
50 Years Ordination*



*Fr. Bill Walters, C.P.P.S.
60 Years Ordination*