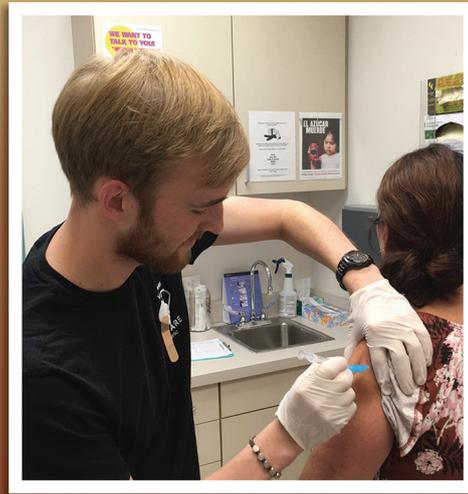


THE **New Wine** PRESS

Volume 30 No. 1 • September 2021



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



Precious Blood Volunteers
preciousbloodvolunteers.org

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Front cover: 2021-2022 Precious Blood Volunteers-Vincent Tedford, Raechel Keisel, and Aaron Wise pose with the St. Gaspar statue at Precious Blood Center during their orientation week.

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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Kansas City Province

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Time

by Margaret Haik, Director of Communications

“Time flies over us, but leaves its shadow behind.”
from *The Marble Faun*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne

September 28th will be my ten year anniversary of working for the Kansas City Province. When I started, my youngest child was in second grade and preparing for his First Reconciliation. Now, he is a senior in high school and looking for a college to attend once he graduates. Time flies by quickly.

All of our articles this month deal with time in one way or another. Brother Daryl Charron and Father Tom Hemm’s articles consider the future of the Vietnam Mission and Saint Charles Center once the United States Province is formed.

Father James Smith was a high school student on September 11, 2001. His article takes a look at the aftermath of the attacks of that day. As our national leaders attacked other countries, stating that they were looking for Osama bin Laden, how many innocents were sacrificed over the next 20 years? Is reconciliation possible between the United States and all those who have been affected?

Volunteer Director Tim Deveney shares the present with introductions of our newest Precious Blood Volunteers. Through the volunteer program, the Kansas City Province shares Precious Blood spirituality with the young people who give a year of service to those on the margins.

We have an update on a ministry in Tanzania that received grant money from the Kansas City Province’s Human Development Fund.

Kathy Keary shares a new event at Precious Blood Renewal Center. Participants will spend time outdoors while at the Center. They will then use art as a means of expression of their experience with God in nature.

Lastly, Father Joe Nassal wrote a prayerful reflection of the people and activities that have been part of the Kansas City Province over the last fifty-six years. As time marches on, may we remember what came before us and continue the good work of the province when it becomes part of the United States Province. ✠

Working Title

by Br. Daryl Charron, C.P.P.S., Provincial Council

I know I am one among many former students who mourn the loss of our inspirational teacher, Fr. Bob Schreiter, C.P.P.S. His death has prompted me to take solace by again reading, "In Water and In Blood." His words of wisdom continue to inspire me as the two provinces prepare to carry on our spirituality with the formation of a new province.

One responsibility the new United States Province will have is to provide direction for the mission in Vietnam. The Kansas City Provincial Council recently approved the pastoral plan of the Vietnam Mission as it looks to its future. The plan includes working with Catholic academics, nursing homes, children with disabilities, orphans, the homeless, and the poor in the Highlands. Part of the plan in serving the homeless includes a food pantry project, which was also approved by our Provincial Council to move forward.

A few of our missionaries in Vietnam are involved in a ministry for elderly men who are homeless. Currently they are taking care of four people who were homeless. They provide them with shelter and food. Our missionaries have sought the help of laypersons in the area to assist in this ministry.

Another promising venture is the collaboration of our Vietnam Mission with the ministry of Sr. Hung Pham, A.S.C. She collaborates with our mission director, Fr. Tam Hoang, to help fund the ministry of Ai Tam. This is an educational ministry for poor children in rural areas of Vietnam. These children are provided with books to further their education. It has received grant money from the Kansas City Province's Human Development Fund for several years, which I hope continues once the new province is formed.

Bob Schreiter's inspirational words help me as I reflect on my three years in Vietnam. I was blessed with meeting individuals alive with the spirituality of the Precious Blood who were eager to share it in our ministries. Almost two and a half years later, we see some of that good work brought to fruition.

"A spirituality of blood is a spirituality that seeks out those who live on the margins of society and chooses to dwell with them. A spirituality of blood attends especially to the bonding processes whereby individuals

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St. Charles Center, Celina, Ohio

Under the Dome

by Fr. Tom Hemm, C.P.P.S., St. Charles Center, Celina, Ohio

Younger members of our two provinces gathered in June to focus on pastoral planning for our journey as a single province. This planning was guided by six core values enunciated by the XXI General Assembly in 2019. Our discernment here at Saint Charles understandably focuses less on planning our missionary outreach as on deepening our understanding of who we are as missionary community.

The second core value acknowledges Saint Gaspar's desire: "Living together in community and communion is our 'first Apostolate.'" On mission, many of us have had to live alone, more often directing our energies outward building up parochial, educational, or other ministerial communities. We found our community life there.

At Saint Charles we give more attention to building up our household community in the bond of charity, a kind of "second novitiate," gently encouraging us to modify an individualistic lifestyle. The second core value identifies "Precious Blood Spirituality, expressed through healthy community life" (Heb 10:19-25).

This Community gathers in one household—Members, Companions, Amici, as well as those longtime associated with us in parish or educational ministry. Other residents have been lifelong members of a parish served by the C.P.P.S. A majority of residents have made their choice to live at Saint Charles because of who we are as Precious Blood Missionaries.

We might consider them to be "virtual companions" attracted to our way of life in the same way that original Companion groups emerged in our midst. Living here embodies the fourth core value, which speaks of a "shared mission," fulfilling Saint Gaspar's desire for "a thousand tongues" to proclaim the transforming power of the Blood of Christ.

The past couple of decades of "flipping" this facility from "formation house" to a "senior living facility" has absorbed our attention, including multiple projects to preserve a hundred-year-old building: extensive tuckpointing, a new sewer system, new windows, overhauling apartments.

The spirit of New Creation invites us now to focus more intentionally on building up an exemplary missionary community. To this end, we are reconsidering Saint Gaspar's dream of a mission house. Fr. Jerry Stack recently offered a presentation of Gaspar's ideas about life in a mission house, with a view to understanding how his vision might inspire us today.

Several articles have sparked a creative imagination about our future. The October 2005 issue of *Cup of the Covenant* offers suggestions about "mission house" as it is being revitalized in our international community: <https://tinyurl.com/MissionHouse-Gaspar>. Another article is from the July/August 2014 issue of *Maryknoll Magazine*: "Mission Never Grows Old": www.tinyurl.com/MissionNeverOld.

From the vantage point of Saint Charles community, we are particularly aware that the age of members and Companions is gradually rising. Currently, 30% of membership of the new U.S. Province are living in retirement here at Saint Charles. The median age of the new province is 71 years, likely to be 80 years in another decade.

In this reality our province simply reflects both privileges and challenges enjoyed by U.S. society at large. Precious Blood members and Companions can generally expect to live longer—and live healthier longer. Most of us likely want to age in place and be somewhat active, residing "on mission" as long as we're able.

At the same time, however, we can expect to live to an age more vulnerable to disability and disease. In our own families and ministry sites we witness adult children juggling family and professional responsibilities to care for elder parents. Caring for one another in the bond of charity offers us new challenges as fewer active members must care for and support elderly and infirm members.

The fact that our province is aging in no way means that we're done. Our mission into the future will be most effective as we optimize the potential of the entire membership of our province

community—young and old—each offering our unique missionary contribution.

Pope Francis continually reminds us of the urgency of a cross-generational church and society: "The prophet Joel once promised: 'Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men will have visions' (3:1). The future of the world depends on this covenant between young and old. Who, if not the young, can take the dreams of the elderly and make them come true?" (message on the first World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly—7/25/2021)

Even as we accompany our brothers in illness and death, our household is a privileged witness of the fullness of a living spirituality of the Blood of Christ. Such was the example of Fr. Ralph Verdi as conveyed in his obituary: *His later years plagued with health issues, his strength fading, Fr. Verdi maintained a sense of mission, believing that God was calling him to something more. His own suffering made him even more attuned to the suffering of others. He once said, "All those people who were sick in the Gospels and came to Jesus—it's easy for me now to say the same thing they said, 'Lord help me.' It teaches you empathy; it expands your ability to love. Suffering is a way of getting to the real truth of things: that we're all fragile, that we all need each other."*

"So whoever is in Christ is a New Creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5: 17-18). ✠

Leadership, continued from page 3

become somebodies rather than remaining nobodies. To be under the sign of blood is to reach out to persons who are caught in being nobodies and gather them into the circle of human warmth and affirmation." The words of Fr. Schreiter ring true as I think of our missionaries in Vietnam. They truly live this spirituality in their lives as they carry out their ministries. ✠



9/11 Memorial as seen from World Trade One in New York City. Image by Christophe Krief, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Truth and Memory

by Fr. James Smith, C.P.P.S., Berkeley, California

Truth and memory, or maybe at more pointed times like now, truths and memories.

This month marks the 20th anniversary of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, one of the events of generations where most conversations around it begin with pointing out where we were when it happened or when we found out it happened. Anniversaries, especially those marked with a 0 or 5 at the end, stir memories in ways other marks on a calendar do not. Memory and memories are fickle; they weave together from the past fragments of experiences, emotions, and ideas so we can hold onto something. Yet they are not the same as a polaroid or an internet “receipt,” i.e., a photograph or social media pin or check-in, to prove something

happened. Memories are fickle because they tell us more about who we are rather than the verbatim transcript of what transpired.

Truth is far easier, at least, according to my framed logic exam from college in my office today. (Thanks, Br. Rob, for letting me keep the test to frame it, and for the A+.) Something is true or false, at least in its representation in symbolic logic. “The sky is blue.” “My name is Michael.” These statements fit squarely into boxes of true or false, unlike memories. The truth of September 11, 2001 transformed the United States, in large part because those who set up live camera shots of skylines never dreamed of the possibility of news networks carrying such an event live on television, let

alone before the days of a seven-second delay. The layers of truth of September 11th include far more than a single day, all the way from then to current days of fleeing translators and aides in Afghanistan whose support Americans promised in exchange for more than a decade of assistance in a seemingly endless war.

Telling the truth is the second step in reconciliation, Fr. Bob Schreiter taught me in class years ago. The first step is to remember it is God who reconciles and we who participate in that reconciliation. I lack illusions of grandeur for being one who holds the power to make reconciliation happen, so I am good with the first step. The second step seems exhaustive. Every American on that day and after has been impacted in uncountable ways. So too for every citizen of the world on that day and since.

In my second year of formation, the famous late evening press conference from President Obama occurred that announced the capture and death of Osama bin Laden. One of my housemates, a candidate in formation at the time and a veteran who had served in Iraq, celebrated the news. I asked him how he could celebrate the death of someone, even someone like bin Laden, while advocating as pro-life in the Church and the United States. I think he said something like he did not know but that such a horrible thing and terrible person like him warranted the celebration. I suspect my family members—whose commute went directly past the World Trade Center near 9 a.m. on weekdays from Staten Island to Midtown Manhattan—was a similar response. I expect that for many Americans, celebrating a death was justified in balancing the 2,996 casualties lost on that day.

I have been struggling with this sort-of eye-for-an-eye component to our memory and the truth of September 11th. Revenge in the face of pain and suffering, especially from the hands and actions of individuals, groups, or nations responsible for inflicting that pain and suffering, seems logical. But where does reconciliation draw a line of exclusion to revenge? Where does the circle of repairing memory to envelope God's hands too, and not just our own hands, draw through lines of retribution?

A few years ago, comedian Hasan Minhaj told the story from his sophomore year of high school on September 12th. After phone calls threatening to kill them for being Muslim, Minhaj and his dad ran out to the street to find the family's car windows smashed. He found his backpack in the backseat broken into and some of his stuff stolen. Seeing his dad sweeping up the glass to clean it out of the street, Hasan asked him what he was doing. "These things happen, and these things will continue to happen. That's the price we pay for being here." Abdo Ali Ahmed, Waqar Hasan, Adel Karas, Abdullah Nimer, Vasudev Patel, and Balbir Singh Sodhi were killed in the U.S. before the end of 2001 in acts related to revenge for 9/11, no matter if they were Muslim or not, immigrant or not, terrorist or not. The blindness of an-eye-for-an-eye infects the vision of revenge. Boiled over rage is not exclusive for election results, mask mandates, or police brutality. The blood of innocent people was shed in the name of defending America from terrorism before any justification for military deployment on Sunday news shows. Do we tell this part of the story of 9/11 in the truth or our memory of it?

My individual memory or any single person's memory matters far less than our collective memory—the collective memory we hold together, which builds up this collective sense of us. My individual memory from September 2001 is of my father leaving the TV on CNN 24/7 for nearly four weeks after 9/11. My high school classmates said they experienced the same thing at home. I felt a little less paranoid with it being more than just me. The opening pitch of Game 3 of the World Series in 2001, Arizona beating the Yankees in seven games, the first of the series to be played in the Bronx, was a strike from President Bush. The U-S-A chant seemed to echo more than every American voice that evening. The collective us at that moment may be the most powerful. Sadly, the words from President Bush at a mosque in Washington, D.C. emphatically stating that the U.S. is not at war with Islam did not land in prime time as much as the MLB World Series.

I do not know if our collective memory of September 11th is open to reconciliation. I am not

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Welcome, '21-'22 Precious Blood Volunteers!

by Tim Deveney, Precious Blood Volunteers Director

We welcomed three young adults in late July for Precious Blood Volunteers orientation, which was held at Precious Blood Renewal Center in Liberty, Missouri. Raechel Kiesel and Vincent Tedford are serving as Precious Blood Volunteers at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) in Chicago. Aaron Wise is serving at KC CARE Health Center in Kansas City, Missouri. These three have committed to walk with people who struggle, to be part of God's reconciling work in the world, and to live in intentional community.

At orientation, we spent the week preparing our volunteers for their service year, getting to know each other, and learning about the Precious Blood community and its spirituality. We were blessed by people from across the Precious Blood family. Precious Blood Volunteer alumni Ryan Cornelissen and Hector Avitia spoke with us. Ryan led a session on solidarity, a principle of Catholic social teaching. Hector gave us an introduction to peace circles and how they are used in conflict resolution, decision-making, reconciliation work, and restorative justice. Father Keith Branson, C.P.P.S. welcomed our volunteers to his apartment with fresh bread and a session on the history of the Precious Blood community. Sister Mumbi Kigutha, C.P.P.S. gave a presentation on reconciliation, Vicky Otto talked with the new volunteers about Precious Blood Companions, and Gabino Zavala led a discussion on the work of the Justice and Peace Committee as well as the Kansas City Province's corporate stances. The retreat was capped off with a commissioning service led by Father Keith Branson, and joined by Companions, incorporated members, and former volunteers.

I am grateful to our placements who continue to give our volunteers the opportunity to walk with the people they serve. Our placements at PBMR, KC CARE, Bishop Sullivan Center, and Cristo Rey Kansas City have been welcoming placements that give so much to the communities where they work. During orientation, our placements in Kansas City were gracious enough to welcome our volunteers and share the stories of the people they work with along with the work they do every day.

I asked our volunteers to answer a few questions about themselves and why they want to serve as Precious Blood Volunteers. Their answers, and a little bit about each one of them, are below.

Raechel Kiesel

Raechel Kiesel will be serving at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago, Illinois. She is from Fort Branch, Indiana and holds a BA in sociology and theology with a minor in



business economics from the University of Notre Dame. Raechel served this past year as a volunteer at Dismas House in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Why do you want to volunteer?

"I spent the past year at Dismas House with folks who were formerly incarcerated or homeless. After hearing their stories and learning from their experiences, I am excited to keep asking questions as a Precious Blood Volunteer about how our country thinks of and pursues justice and how to continue seeking reconciliation."

Why do you want to volunteer with Precious Blood Volunteers?

"This past year especially has revealed the deep need for reconciliation within our country and in ourselves. I am excited to join Precious Blood priests, brothers, and laypeople in their fearlessness to enter into those depths. As I write this on the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, I am reminded that those who are poor, vulnerable, and hurting are able to relate to Christ more closely

through his passion and death. In the coming year, I hope to bear witness to that reality, as well as the hope of resurrection and redemption by his same Precious Blood."

What are you looking forward to about your volunteer experience?

"I am looking forward to living in community with other volunteers in the same neighborhood in which I will be serving. I have so much to learn, and I am so excited to learn from and with those around me."

Vincent Tedford

Vincent will serve at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago, Illinois. Vincent is a graduate of Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. He graduated with a BA in physics. Vincent is from Brownfield, Texas, which is just down the road from Lubbock, Texas.



Why do you want to volunteer?

"I want to volunteer because I want to put my faith into action. I want to love others as I have been loved. Vocationally, volunteering prepares me for, what I hope to be, a lifetime of service to the world around me."

Why do you want to volunteer with Precious Blood Volunteers?

"I want to volunteer with Precious Blood Volunteers because I like the people and the mission. From meeting all those who interviewed me, I got the sense one of my biggest dreams would be fulfilled, to be part of a family-like workplace. I want to support the mission of Precious Blood

Ministry of Reconciliation as I walk with those who suffer, especially from injustice. While I hope to use my educational background for furthering mankind's understanding of the universe, I think it equally important to support the educational needs of those in marginalized or underserved communities. I want a stake in a future where true justice, reconciliation, and love are more important, and in fact fundamental to, the advancement of humanity."

What are you looking forward to about your volunteer experience?

"I am looking forward to being a compassionate teacher/mentor who plays a role in the education and progress of the individuals I serve. I look forward to building relationships with people who are different than I am and what we can learn from each other. Most of all, I look forward to living more like Christ and his apostles by simply focusing on the people around me, how I can be of service to them, and growing spiritually to be a vessel of God's love."

Aaron Wise

Aaron is serving at KC CARE Health Center in Kansas City, Missouri. He is living in community at Jerusalem Farm in Kansas City. He grew up in Huron, Ohio and attended Case Western



Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Aaron graduated in 2021 with BAs in biochemistry and Spanish, and minors in chemistry and biology.

Why do you want to volunteer?

"Over the past 16 years, much of my focus has been in developing the intellect God has given me

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in an academic setting. While study, in its own way, can give glory to God, it can also feel isolating and self-serving. I've been yearning to honor God in a more direct and simple way, and I feel called to service. Through this service, I aim to help and learn from those who are marginalized, with the hope that after this year, I may be better able to serve and advocate for those who suffer as a future physician."

Why do you want to volunteer with Precious Blood Volunteers?

"I was drawn to volunteer with Precious Blood Volunteers because of their commitment to faith, community, service, and reconciliation. I think there is something very powerful in a community of people living simply, authentically, and intentionally for Christ. I'm really excited to grow closer to God with these people!"

What are you looking forward to about your volunteer experience?

"I'm looking forward to learning and growing in community with other volunteers and those we serve, and encountering Jesus incarnated in those who are in need!" ✦

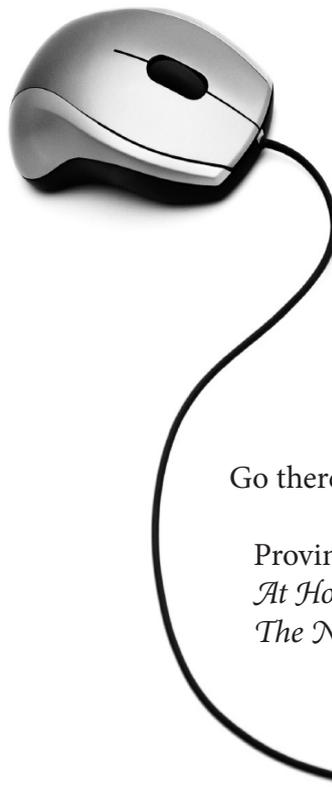
Memory, continued from page 7

even sure with whom we need to reconcile on this anniversary, even though I do know that there are deep and cavernous wounds lingering today. Memories still reeling. Voicemail messages still played decades later. Veterans whose boots touched wars in the Middle East even when their own feet touched the ground for the first time as infants born after September 11, 2001. But instead of asking about reconciliation directly this anniversary, maybe it is truth we need to ask: what truth do we need to tell? The truth about loss, death, and the unknown? The truth about the unknown feeling of being attacked, which was and still is unimaginable? Or in an even more important direction: What truth do we need to hear? The truth from immigrants and U.S. citizens attacked and blamed for something because of the color of their skin? The

truth about the impact of endless wars on people, families, and villages in faraway countries we imagine bear nothing upon us but have felt the weight of these wars the most? The truth about the greatest cost of terrorism and responsive military actions upon the poorest in our and other countries?

Violence, attacks, suffering, and pain—these things do happen. I am not arrogant enough to imagine that they will not happen in the future, although I have some hope that they will not. I disagree with Hasan Minhaj's father in one big way: this is not the price we pay to be here. Through truth telling and some sort of healing of memories, reconciliation is the price that God paid for us to be here. ✦

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Precious Records: Art and Accompaniment

by Thomas Weis, PBMR Arts Coordinator

In our last staff meeting, Holly, our circle keeper, prompted us to reflect on accompaniment. She asked: What does it mean to accompany someone, and when have we been accompanied in our past? As we passed the talking piece, I heard an hour's worth of stories detailing how PBMR staff have either walked alongside participants through the dark and lonely passages of life, or how friends and family have accompanied staff when they have struggled to find the strength to move forward.

There was a common theme in each story shared in our discussion of accompaniment: meeting another person where they are, without judgment, regardless of their past.

I came to PBMR for a year of service through the Precious Blood Volunteers program. I had no particular vision of how I would spend my days, other than mulling over vague romanticisms of "radical kinship" and "accompaniment." Those imaginations quickly gave way to the harsh realities of relationship building and the particular challenges that come with accompanying high schoolers growing up amidst gun violence, drug abuse, and the specter of structural racism on the south side of Chicago.

Last week was the final week of One Summer Chicago, an initiative that provides Chicago youth with summer-long employment and enrichment opportunities. Alongside PBMR's other employment programming, the Precious Records Studio hosted three young men as "production assistants." Participants learned how the Precious Records Studio operates, how to record, mix, and master polished hip hop tracks, and how to make beats for local rappers and artists.

When we started Precious Records, we were making amateur demos in a corner of the Education Lab. After clearing out an unused bathroom, removing the toilets and stalls, putting down "sound treatment" (blankets and comforters from Goodwill), and installing air conditioning, the Precious Records Studio now produces rap music that trends toward

professional sound quality while training youth in production practices and techniques. We started with one participant. Now, we have more clients than we can handle.



Thomas Weis

It hadn't occurred to me until staff meeting that the studio has grown the way that it has precisely because it is a vehicle for accompaniment: we meet the youth where they are. The genre of rap/hip hop is a staple of youth culture at the Center. We listen to rap in the car, we talk about rap over lunch, participants watch music videos while waiting for the bus. After a year of daily companionship with the PBMR youth population, I would say that for the majority of PBMR youth, rap is a foundational element of their identities.

Why this is the case could be the sole subject of another article. My point is that our youth need a space to express themselves through rap, and to facilitate each other's expression through hip hop culture. Providing such a space is a mandate of Catholic accompaniment; we are commanded to walk alongside our siblings in Christ, to become like those that are suffering so that they might know they are not in isolation, but always in deep relationship with another.

What are the fruits of accompaniment? It's not a simply answered question. (It seems to me that just about nothing is simply answered in restorative justice.) I might as well ask, "What is the result of deep relationship?" It could be anything. It might be momentary respite from a circumstance that makes life seem like a curse rather than a gift. It might be nothing. But it also might be trust, the kind that begets confidence in one's own abilities to create. It might be the needed affirmation to be oneself.

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When De'Savoyay, the inaugural Precious Records participant, walks into the studio, he knows that he belongs. He knows that he can walk over to the computer, turn on one of his songs, dance around, and that his peers will rap the words along with him. He knows that the Precious Records producers are eagerly awaiting the next "Des Da Realest" track. Esperdell, who has logged by far the most hours in production class, takes pride in knowing more production techniques than any other participant in the program. Jeremiah, our youngest producer at just 14, is already scheduling appointments with a few clients to work as their recording engineer. These boys are creating with holy joy because they know that

they are welcomed in the Precious Records space, that their voices matter, and that what they create truly reflects their experience.

I don't know much about accompaniment. Anything I have learned over the last year comes through the grace and blessing of my peers and participants. That being said, watching my participants come alive in a space that they create is changing the way I approach my relationships outside PBMR. Instead of thinking, "What can I do for you?", I'm shifting toward: "How can I create space for you to flourish?" ✦

Human Development Fund Update

Recipients of Human Development Fund Grants from the Kansas City Province were asked to send updates on their ministries and how the grant money would be utilized. This month, we are featuring the RC Mission VTC Manyoni in Tanzania.

On my behalf, on behalf of the young mothers and school girls around the VTC Manyoni, and on behalf of the entire community of Manyoni, I am very much pleased to extend our cordial thankfulness to Kansas City Province for the \$4,000 granted to us to help vulnerable young mothers and young girls who drop out school due to family/care takers' financials constraints (high level of poverty) in the Missionary of the Precious Blood Manyoni corridor. This grant will be used to provide cookery training to young mothers and young girls in order to promote family nutrition and decrease malnutrition in families in Manyoni, thus alleviate poverty and boost the development of the people in the Missionary of the Precious Blood Manyoni Corridor. Our target group is young mothers and girls who are the managers and care takers of most families.

The granted amount of \$4,000 will be used to procure training materials and other training expenses such as hostel, food, training materials, teachers, electricity expenses, and water expenses.

May I conclude by again thanking you in favour of Kansas City Province for the generous support granted to us to help young mothers and young girls in Manyoni. It is our hope that the fraternal relationship between Kansas City Province and our Institution will continue and last and all for the Glory of God.

Yours sincerely,

Br. Deusdedit Wambura, C.P.P.S.
Principal
RC Mission VTC Manyoni



Celebrating Healing and Renewal Through Nature and the Arts

by Kathy Keary, *Precious Blood Renewal Center*

*“Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God,
But only they who see take off their shoes.”
~ Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

I think it is true that what we see is largely dependent on what we are looking for and the attitude and presence we bring to a situation. If we are attuned to the possibility of “every common bush afire with God,” then it is likely that we will find the Creator in the beauty of nature. In the words of Eckhart Tolle in *The Power of Now*: “Presence is needed to become aware of the beauty, the majesty, the sacredness of nature.... You have to put down for a moment your personal baggage of problems, of past and future, as well as all your knowledge, otherwise you will see but not see, hear but not hear. Your total presence is required.”

Christine Valters Painter also comments on this reality in her book, *Eyes of the Heart*: “When our eyes are graced with wonder, the world reveals its wonders to us.... For the poet John O’Donohue, seeing is not

merely a physical act: “The heart of vision is shaped by the state of the soul. When the soul is alive to beauty, we begin to see life in a fresh and vital way.”

A few years ago, I was leisurely strolling through the grounds at Precious Blood Renewal Center on the lookout for the Divine manifested in creation. It was a sunny autumn day with a gentle breeze, nature’s refreshment. God’s presence was palpable in the beauty of the landscape. I sensed that God was inviting me to just be—to clear my mind and embrace the treasures before me. It was a deeply spiritual encounter that I wanted to capture so that the passage of time would not erase my memory of this sacred experience. So, I drew in my art journal a picture of the scene with the word “Be” dominantly running through it. By doing this, I was not only honoring my

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encounter with God but implanting it deep within my heart. When I run across the picture now, it takes me back to the experience with a felt sense of God's presence surrounding me in that moment. It continues to renew my spirit and heal my soul.



The lovely grounds foster the ability of the staff of the Renewal Center to live out Precious Blood spirituality by providing opportunities for people to be soothed and refreshed. An opportunity for this type of renewal and healing is around the corner. On September 18th, the Renewal Center is holding an event entitled "Nature's Revelation: Every Common Bush Afire with God: A Day of Reflection on Creation and the Creative Process."

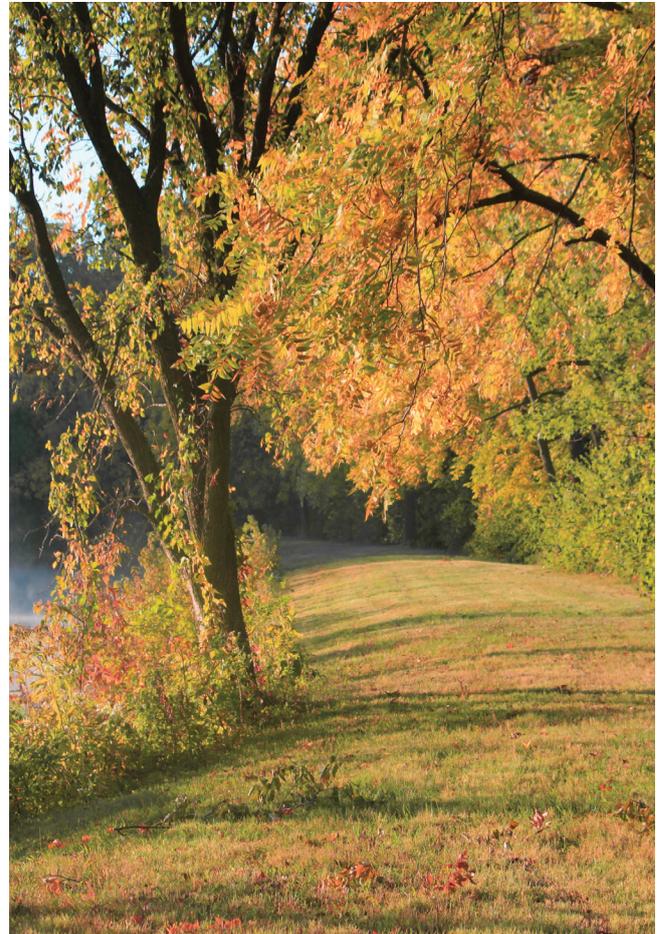
After discussing the spiritual practice of *Visio Divina* (Sacred Seeing) participants will prayerfully explore the grounds on foot, from the deck, or peering through windows. They will be encouraged to have their ears, eyes, and hearts open to behold our Maker through the beauty of creation. As the ninth-century Irish theologian, John Scotus Eriugena, expressed: "The landscape can become a place of theophany or divine manifestation." He taught that both Scripture and the book of creation are required "to know the fullness of the divine presence."

Paintner too comments on what she refers to as aesthetic spirituality: "An aesthetic spirituality is about seeing the beauty of God in more and more places. We might begin to see all of life as what the Celts called a 'thin place,' where heaven and earth are close together."

After taking in the beauty of nature, participants will be given the opportunity to express all that is stirring within them through the arts, whether that be drawing, painting, music, dancing, writing, photography, or in whatever way the Spirit moves them. By reflectively engaging with the insights and emotions sparked by a contemplative walk through nature, the sanctity of the experience will be fortified. Sharing our creations with one another will further implant this sacred time in our hearts.

When one is spiritually enriched, it is commonplace for them to be a light to those in their life. With renewed hearts, participants become instruments of healing, hope, renewal, and reconciliation, the very attributes that the Renewal Center strives to bring to our world.

More information and the ability to register for the event is available on our website at pbrenewalcenter.org or by contacting Lucia Ferrara at 816.415.3745 or hospitalitycoordinator.pbc@gmail.com. ✦



A Pioneer Spirit

Fr. Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S. wrote this closing prayer for the Celebration of the Kansas City Province, which took place on August 15, 2021 at the Airport Hilton in Kansas City.

Gracious and Loving God,
the Kansas City Province was born the same year
the Second Vatican Council concluded.
Throughout its history, Precious Blood missionaries in the province
have embraced a pioneer spirit—
to implement the renewal of the Council in our parishes,
to establish safe places for dialogue, healing, and reconciliation,
to take risks in taking stands for justice, human dignity, and peace,
to expand the boundaries of our belonging
by walking with lay women and men as Companions on the journey
and welcoming volunteers to test the waters of service
and swim against the tide of ignorance and injustice.

You have blessed us with founding fathers,
Schaefer and Stukenborg, Cyr and Bushell,
a provincial and a principal, Albers and Sloan,
open to change and new possibilities,
and a couple of Joe's who became bishops, Marling and Charron.
We stand on the broad shoulders of our brothers,
Iggy and Norbert, Matty and Carl,
and those who reclaimed their baptismal names, Robert and Steve.
You have blessed us with pastors and preachers,
hospital chaplains and a hospice founder,
professors and campus ministers,
writers and woodworkers,
educators and dreamers,
missionaries all.

The pioneer spirit has taken us to Tanzania and Vietnam
where our founder's dream of "a thousand tongues"
to proclaim the power of the Precious Blood
has sparked new hope and sacred connections across the miles.
This pioneer spirit has taken us through shivering winters
in North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin
where German-speaking immigrants settled long ago,
to the scorched summers of west Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma
where Spanish-speaking immigrants stretched our hearts
and taught us to widen the circle of our compassion.
We reclaimed our charism on the southside of Chicago
and community organizing and renewal in central KC and south-central LA.
We reached the highs of the Rocky Mountains
and in the early years explored the deserts of New Mexico
with a priest named Rocky.

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From “High Pockets” to “Bigger” to “Truck,” the nicknames stuck.

Satt and Tarby, Bucky and Charley, Schaaby and Foxy,
the Guru and Zeke, formed young men into missionary disciples.

We are so grateful, O Gracious God,
for all the colorful characters who have etched our memories with stories we still tell—
Gutty and Homsey, Roth and Rohling, Fritz and Kilian, Girt and Garn;
and those who died too young, Jarvis and Kolega,
whose untimely deaths reflected a sign of the times
and stirred us to consider if we are drawn near in the blood of Christ,
how close do we want to be?

The pioneer spirit has challenged us to explore the meaning of membership and ministry
with those on the margins of society and church.

We sought to make a home on the edge with those pushed away from the table—
sisters and brothers, sons and daughters who are lesbian, gay, bi and transgender,
immigrants turned away and separated at the border,
and those who sit on death row.

We are grateful for those members who left for new journeys in life and love,
but who never left our hearts, minds, and memories—
Joachim and Joey, Tren and Gerard, Leonard and Luke—brothers in the blood forever.

Even as the number of incorporated members decreased due to death and departure,
the number of Companions increased as men and women from all walks of life,
already living Precious Blood spirituality and embracing the charism,
continue to enter into relationship, a covenant of love,
as the blood of Eucharist is thicker than the waters of Baptism.

As always was and will be, the signs of the times call forth change—
from a high school seminary on Ruth Ewing Road to a renewal center on Saint Gaspar Way;



from the wide-open plains of North Dakota to the crowded streets of San Francisco;
from Siegman in Chicago to Sonnino in Berkeley, and Green to Gaspar in Kansas City,
we followed the founder's vision of Mission Houses, forming community in the bond of charity.

This bond was nurtured, expressed and strengthened through communication—
from a mimeographed *Newsletter* to the *New Wine Press* and the *Wine Cellar*;
from the *C.P.P.S. Tomorrow* and the *Rock House Files* to *At Home with the Word*.

From calls on rotary phones to emails and texts,
the ways we keep connected have changed
but the web that has woven us together continues to bind us.

As the litany of those members and Companions who died grew longer at every Assembly—
from George Knapp to Vince Hoying, from Steve Swymeler to Joe Miller,
from Lorraine Ramos and Frances Flanagan to Gerry Downs and Joan Mattingly,
we hear echoes of Gentle Ben singing “Danny Boy” as their love hangs in our hearts
like incense at a winter's funeral.

We thank you for all those who have walked with us through the years
and now accompany us in that great cloud of witnesses to remind us
we are people of life, not death.
“People of the Spirit,” our founder called us, and so new adventures await,
and a new province beckons us onward.

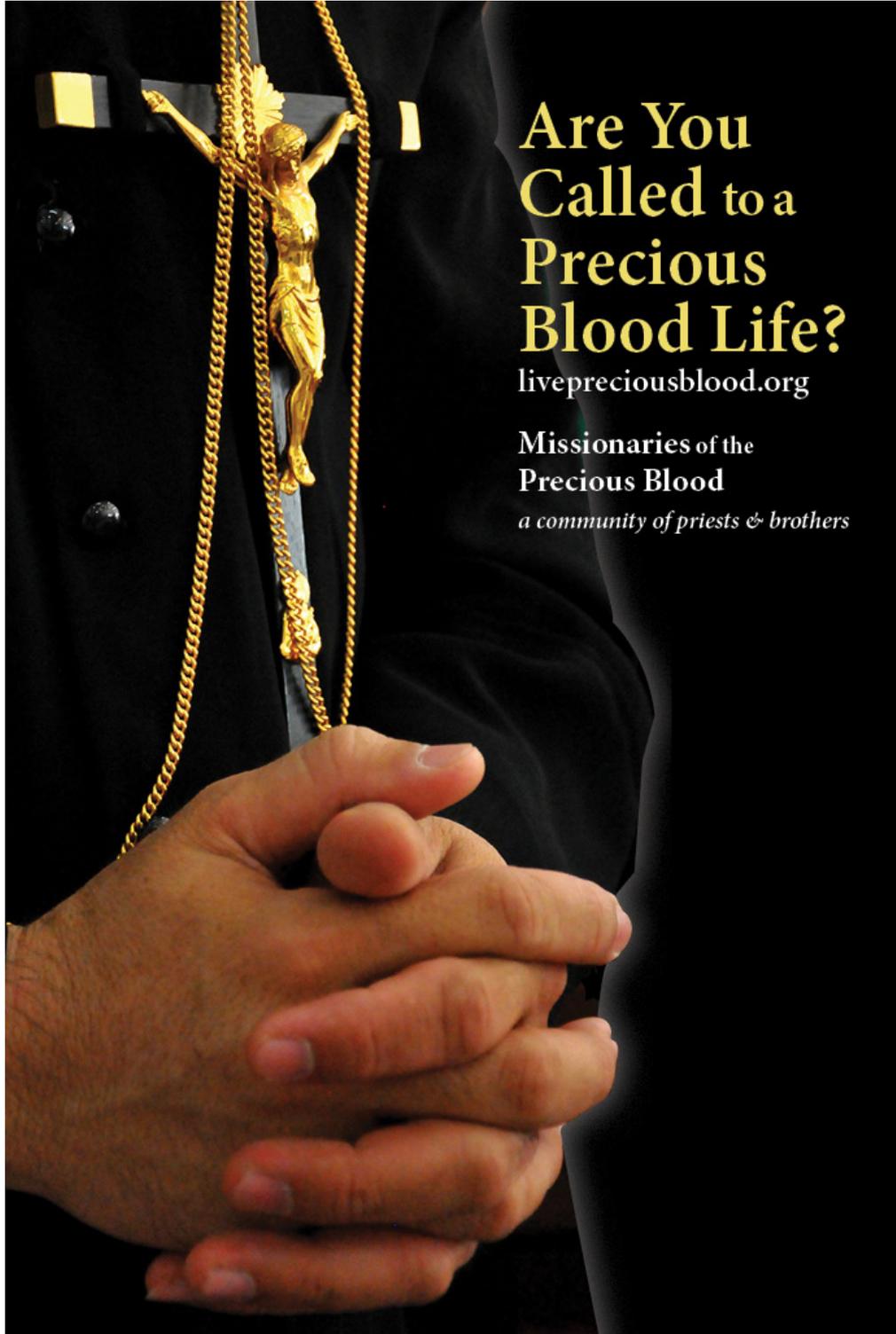
With grateful hearts, O Loving God,
we thank you for our pioneer spirit that has shaped us and sustained us,
marked us and motivated us,
moved us and made us who we are:
the priests and brothers, Companions and volunteers,
missionaries of the Precious Blood, Kansas City Province,
always striving to be a New Creation in the Blood of Christ.

+ Glory to the Blood of Jesus! Now and forever! Amen! ✠



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Are You Called to a Precious Blood Life?

livepreciousblood.org

Missionaries of the
Precious Blood

a community of priests & brothers



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