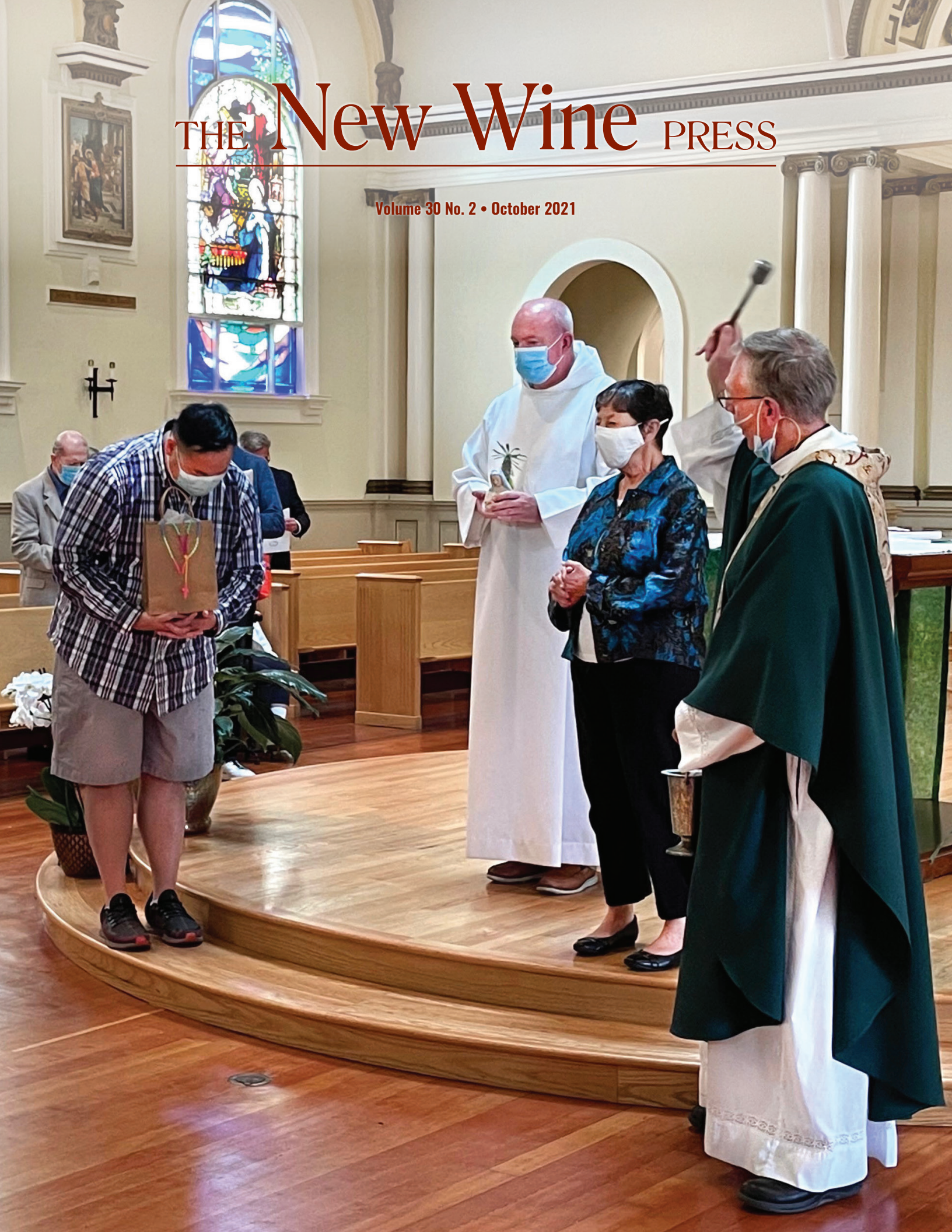


# THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 30 No. 2 • October 2021





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# THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 30 No. 2 • October 2021

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*Front cover: Fr. Matt Link, C.P.P.S. blesses Newton Lih with holy water at Most Holy Redeemer parish*

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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## Venn Diagram

by Margaret Haik, Director of Communications

“Who will we be?,” “rundown,” “blockages,” “voices have been left out,” “bond of charity,” “excitement,” “trust,” “listen,” “creative solutions from new connections.” These are some of the words and phrases that stood out to me as I read this month’s articles. Often, I try to find a theme that ties all our articles together. This month, I think a Venn Diagram would be more appropriate.

At the center of our diagram would be Precious Blood spirituality. Great news, because that is the point of the *New Wine Press*: to offer thoughts and experiences in Precious Blood spirituality. The circles around and overlapping our center would be all the articles for this month.

I invite each reader to fully take in Phillis Fuller-Clipp’s article, “Our Experience as Roamin’ Catholics.” The Precious Blood community spends a lot of time asking questions related to the bond of charity and what voices do we need to listen to, and—especially as the two provinces grapple with electing leadership for the new U.S. Province—who will we be? As you read Phillis’ article, how do all of those keywords and phrases apply? How can this example of marginalization influence the future of the U.S. Province?

If *caritas*—love for all—is the bond of the Precious Blood, then listening is the act of love upon which trust is built. In times of scarcity, whose voices are being left out? As Volunteer Director Tim Deveney and I were discussing the connections in all of this month’s articles, he asked, “Are we listening to one another without an agenda that is outside of building trust and relationship?” Are we listening to recognize God within each of us or are we listening as a way to influence a desired outcome?

Putting my old teacher hat back on for a moment, I invite you to name what words and phrases jump out while your reading this month’s issue of the *New Wine Press*. Ask yourself the questions that our authors and I asked. Use the articles as a jumping off point for member and Companion group gatherings, or as a point of meditation during your prayer time. I hope you find this month’s issue thoughtful and helpful to your own spiritual journey. ✚

# Stumbling Stones

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

Oh, how quickly plans can change. One of the parishioners at St. Mary's in Centerville, Iowa, who is also a Spanish teacher, organized a two-week tour of Spain for this summer. Knowing she had a limited number of students, she opened it up to other adults. A friend and I were all set to go until air travel was discouraged in May and our trip was bumped to next summer. Since both he and I had the time scheduled off, we decided on a cross country trip through the Black Hills and out to Yellowstone.

Our trip began with a stop at Pioneer Village in Minden, Nebraska. It is a collection of antiques highlighting the growth of America from the horse and buggy to more modern times. I had been there before with family and was excited to see it again. My excitement quickly vanished as we arrived and I noticed how rundown and dated the building looked. Unlike other parks that have benefactors and ways to keep it updated, this one seemed to lack any of that.

Not letting that disappointment stop us, we headed into the Black Hills and visited the Crazy Horse monument. I was blown away by its history. I had seen pictures of it, but I never realized it was nowhere near finished. To see the work that is happening and what is yet to come alive, was awe-inspiring. I would definitely make the trip again to see its progress. We traveled on to Mount Rushmore and once again stood in awe of a magnificent monument of history. We eventually made our way to the beauty of Yellowstone.

Driving and walking the trails of Yellowstone was picture perfect. Hiking a trail to a waterfall, I stopped to take a picture of the rocky stone walkway and bridge. As I crossed the bridge, I noticed boulders on the backside that I couldn't see at first. I stood staring at the boulders, partly wanting to admire and partly trying to figure out where to step next. Someone approaching asked me what I was doing. I shared that I was taking pictures of the path but was stopped by the boulders.

Images and photos of pathways have always been an interest of mine. They served as a great tool when working with others in discernment. We would talk about choosing a path in life and where it might lead. After I shared a bit of that story with the stranger, he again asked about the boulders. He made the connection and asked if they were obstacles

*continued on page 5*





# Ministries of the Past or Future?

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

This summer I took a month-long course in German as a language requirement for school. I passed the final exam, but sadly I didn't obtain enough proficiency to understand Angela Merkel when she visited the U.S. this summer and answered questions in German from the White House. I did catch the verbs at the end of the clauses or phrases in her remarks though.

Spiritual memoirs and writings from saints in recent years and centuries ago seem to be popping up on bestseller lists today. A striking component of memoirs and biographies rose to the surface in our conversation in my German class this summer: it's usually wealthier or upper class folks whose memoirs are published. It's not usually lower class or working class people who have the time, let alone the resources, to put pen to paper and produce a transcript for a publisher.

I sometimes describe graduate school as an endless experience of professors, classmates, and others recommending 5-10 books each week for me to read, on top of class reading. In today's digital age it also includes recommendations for Substack subscription emails, including Boston College history professor Heather Cox Richardson's "Letters from an American." On Labor Day, Richardson wrote about Frances Perkins' tenure as Secretary of Labor under President Franklin Roosevelt and her influence in eliminating child labor and securing unemployment insurance, health insurance, 40-hour work weeks, and a minimum wage for working Americans. Although the work of the first woman to serve in a presidential cabinet gets a lot of attention, Richardson's Labor Day letter centered mostly on what motivated her to serve in the Department of Labor: the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire in 1911, when 147 young people died in a fire at a factory on Washington Square in New York City where the factory owner had locked the roof exit doors to keep workers from stealing.

From the years of massive industrial work at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the U.S., we have so few memoirs or stories of some of the poorest

immigrants. So too in the volumes of the lives of the saints we rarely get stories from the margins of wealth or privilege. The irony here somewhere between blessed are the poor and the canonical of title of Blessed accorded in the canonization process. My German professor this summer shared with us that she wrote her dissertation based on her interviews of the experience of the *Shoah* (Holocaust) for poor and middle class women. The reason was that most of the memoirs of those who survived the Shoah were from those who went back to being upper class or wealthy and who had the time and resources to write about their experience. The women interviewed by my professor didn't have time to write on top of their jobs in factories, farms, or elsewhere.

The last few years in the church have seen a turn toward the church of the poor. With the center of the church in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America (55% of the global church) and a decrease of North America as the center (only 8% of the global church), it makes sense to speak of a church of the poor when most of the church is with some of the poorest in the world. Yet just because the demographics of the majority of members of the church are poor or in a particular region, this does not necessarily mean they are included in the story we tell. The lead writers of the narrative of the church, like those of spiritual memoirs, usually are not from the economic margins. The ghost writers or focus groups for bishops or cardinals usually do not take up residence at the local homeless shelter. We are a church of the poor, but the way we tell the story of the church, at least the history of the way we tell the story of the church, tells a different story.

If the doing part of our faith today—the side of the church Gen Z's and Millennials are far more interested in than the doctrinal or dogmatic side—is the interweaving of the story of God and of God saving God's people, then whose voices have been left out and whose voices are we continuing to leave out?

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood are preparing to take a big step in the formation of a single

province in the United States. A single province of the Precious Blood community is not something entirely foreign in the United States in our history. It is a history that includes German-speaking Catholics in the Midwest, a community that was undivided between religious men and women in the community for decades, and also a community that reached nearly from coast to coast within a few decades of arriving in this country. Any moment of change presents the potential of nostalgia for what was—or rather for what we think it was. But as a step towards the viability and vitality of the Precious Blood community in this country, the creation of the United States Province is a step towards the future. Who will we be in 50 years? 100 years? These are questions every religious order is grappling with these days. At the same time that this is a step towards the future, it is a step towards a history too, hopefully a history full of vitality and vibrance in the church. One of the key pieces of this active history writing is who is writing this history and whose narrative or perspective is getting lost or being excluded.

A dominant strain for every community today is what ministries to let go of and what ministries to staff, though our phrasing of it turns back towards nostalgia: what do we keep and what do we let go of. The German-speaking needs to which Fr. Brunner responded are not the needs 50 and 100 years down the road, though we sometimes position our ministries and parishes as needing to maintain what was started more than a century ago. If our focus of who we are or where we serve is centered in the era of a century ago, we are not stepping into the future or even the present, but instead a museum of the past. The church today in the United States is moving out of the Northeast and Midwest, substantially being shaped by Hispanic/Latino Catholics, as well as immigrants from around the world, and is caught at the intersection of wealth and privilege for many White Catholics and immense poverty and struggles to make ends meet for a growing majority of Catholics in the country. If our present moment as a community is in the midst of the margins from a century ago and not today's margins of the church and society, we are writing a history for the next generation that might be anything but reflective of the Precious Blood. ✚

### *Leadership, continued from page 3*

or opportunities? He also noticed that the way I was standing was as if I was afraid to take another step. And maybe I was.

We discern our path and at times are forced to make decisions. But what about the stumbling stones? Do they stop us dead in our tracks or do we see them as an opportunity to experience something new, something different? As we look ahead to the future of our community, many have questioned what path are we taking and what decisions will need to be made in regards to ministry. It is a path both familiar and unfamiliar to us as we discern new leadership and our future. We have encountered many boulders and stumbling stones and have had to alter our course a bit. As we keep looking ahead, will those stumbling stones stop us or give us more opportunity for dialogue and building better relationships? As a New Creation, we are embarking on a new path—or maybe an old path with new shoes—but we will still encounter the boulders and the stumbling stones. Will those stones stop us or will they be opportunities for growth?

Standing there that day, all I needed to do was take another step and I would be beyond the boulders. That stranger just stood there and watched me. He finally spoke and said, “Step aside so I may pass.” I didn’t realize I was blocking him as well as myself. I stepped aside and not only cleared his way but also stepped beyond the boulders. ✚

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# Our Experience as “Roamin’ Catholics”

by Phillis Fuller-Clippis, Cleveland Western Reserve, Ohio Companion

Precious Blood spirituality is the welcoming feeling you receive when you enter a parish or a room for the first time and you feel at home. It is feeling appreciated as a person; it is being welcomed to share your gifts and talents with your church community. It is being missed when you do not attend Mass. It is the overwhelming feeling of “Hey, where have you been?!” when you return to Mass after missing a few Sundays for whatever reason, with no questions or judgement. It is the love and support you receive through the struggles of life just by attending Mass.

Our nurturing and spiritual stories as African American Catholics in Cleveland are intertwined with the history of St. Adalbert/Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament (SA/OLBS) and St. Edward parishes. Both were staffed by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and Precious Blood priests, brothers, and sisters. We learned life lessons about faith, family, perseverance, and challenging work. Some of us attended Catholic schools and were taught the value of daily prayer and discipline. Some of us are converts as a result of our children becoming interested in the Catholic faith while attending St. Adalbert school.

Our introduction to Precious Blood Companions was a courtship. Our pastor invited a group of us to dinner, where he prepared the meal, we had light conversation and discussions about spirituality and Precious Blood Companions. In retrospect, he served us and taught us about Precious Blood spirituality the same way Jesus served and taught his disciples. There were about fourteen of us; nine completed the process to become Companions and have enjoyed our relationship with the Precious Blood community since 2005.

These are the lessons and charisms we learned from our Precious Blood priests and brothers for over seventy-two years, but when our parish was suppressed in 2010, we were forced to see how unloving, unwelcoming, and unappreciated we really were as African Americans in the larger Catholic Church. We visited approximately fifty churches within the



*Phillis Fuller-Clippis (front row, center) and members of the Cleveland Western Reserve Companion Group at their first covenant*

Cleveland diocese. Sadly, the ethnically-centered churches (Hungarian, Sloven, Slovak, Polish etc.) tended to be the most indifferent as well as intolerant.

Because we understand that Catholicism is really “universal,” we continued undaunted and revisited places that were unwelcoming, not to intimidate or agitate, but to show that we are the Church, not our nationality or the color of our skin. Some treated us the same as the first visit, while others were more welcoming. The coldest comment we heard was, “We hope you find a parish.” The most insensitive gesture we experienced was when no one would join the line we were in for Communion but joined a separate line. During the same Mass, the priest refused to distribute the Blood of Christ, leaving it on the altar. It should be noted that though this occurred in a Hungarian parish, it is located in the heart of the African American Community. The church had the appearance of being closed, but we found the Mass schedule on the Diocesan website. Thank God for technology.

We were not looking for a church home; we were being challenged to continue the life lessons we had learned through our relationships with the Precious Blood community while appealing the decision to close our parish. We had become “Roamin’ Catholics.”



The visits had a range of eye-opening experiences, both positive and negative, and gave us opportunities to form and continue relationships. Along our journey, we met people from other churches that had been closed who appealed their parishes' closings. Like us, some of those parishioners had begun visiting other parishes or just stopped attending Mass. The Mass was and continues to be important to us because we are one with Jesus each Sunday that we gather at the table of God and share in the Eucharist. The body and blood of Jesus sustains us always, gives us the encouragement, energy, and hope to continue.

During the appeal process, we gathered with former SA/OLBS parishioners in January to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.; early summer for Black Catholic Sunday at the Sorrowful Mother Shrine in Bellevue, Ohio; and in the late summer for a healing Mass with Fr. Gene Wilson. We also continued to gather monthly as Companions, visit with fellow Ohio Companions for an annual gathering that rotates between Cleveland and Columbus, as well as attend retreats at Maria Stein and St. Charles.

Finally, exactly two years after our parish was closed, it was allowed to reopen. Although we were delighted, we were also heartbroken because the Precious Blood community had taken its leave from Cleveland and would not be returning. We worked through our adjustment with a diocesan priest using the circle process with the assistance of the Precious Blood community to help us express our fears, expectations, strengths, and weaknesses.

We Companions met with our new pastor and a Precious Blood priest at the main altar of our church. It was a very difficult and rewarding process. We were able to openly and honestly express how each felt about the two years without our parish, the loss of Precious Blood community, and the acceptance of a diocesan priest. We were able to acknowledge our differences and were reminded it was new situation for each of us. We shared stories of our spiritual growth and traditions. Most importantly, we learned of our similarities. We agreed to disagree and work together to glorify God and carry his message in our community.

Our new journey has been challenging. Over sixty percent of our parish members had joined a new parish, stopped attending church, changed churches, or had passed away. All of the "Roamin' Catholics" returned to SA/OLBS and have served as church leaders and organizers. Developing a relationship with our new pastor was difficult for us because we longed for the spirituality we had experienced with the Precious Blood community that wasn't there with our new pastor. He is a wonderful person, and we have grown to know, love, and trust each other. We were blessed to learn that he had volunteered to be our pastor when he learned we would be allowed to reopen. And so we let go of the past, treasure our memories, and forge ahead with new relationships, a new beginning, and the opportunity to continue to share our lessons learned.

We continue to share our Precious Blood spirituality with everyone who attends our parish. We continued the practices and lessons learned from the Precious Blood community. ✠

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## God Bless You Newton!

*by Fr. Matt Link, C.P.P.S. and  
Trudy Miller, Newark, California Companion*

Recently, the Kansas City Province accepted Newton Lih into initial formation. Newton has been a parishioner at Most Holy Redeemer Parish in San Francisco, where he joined the Catholic Church about four years ago. Before he left, the parish community blessed him as he prepared to move to the formation house in Chicago to continue his spiritual journey.

The community of Most Holy Redeemer will miss Newton's voice in the choir and as lector, and his involvement with the Young Adults Group.

Please keep Newton in your prayers as he moves to Chicago, and consider supporting him through letters via the formation house at 845 E. Drexel Square, Chicago, IL 60615-3753.

*A photograph of Fr. Matt Link, c.p.p.s. and the MHR community blessing Newton is featured on this month's front cover.*

# Use Assembly Delay as a Time to Build Trust

by Fr. Mark Miller, C.P.P.S., Liberty, Missouri

After reading Fr. James Smith's article in the September issue of the *New Wine Press*, I began thinking about how that might apply to our ongoing planning and discussions regarding the entry into the New Creation of the one U.S. Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. What is our memory of the past 57 years and what is the truth of the past 57 years since the American Province was divided in April of 1965?

I was in the Novitiate at the time the American Province was divided into three separate provinces. At the time, it did not mean much to me because it did not affect my life as a student and candidate in the Community. At that time, those of us in the major seminary were considered to be a part of the "Parent Corporation" which meant that we did not belong to any of the provinces at the time. It was only when we became ordained that we were "chosen" to be a member of a particular province, with each class being divided by percentage as outlined by the "Parent Corporation."

When I was ordained and began participating in the retreats sponsored by the Kansas City Province, I was impressed with how excited about that new beginning the members were. There was a sense of creating a new reality, creating our own understanding of what it meant to live in the "bond of charity" and how this might be expressed in a variety of ways. For those first few years, even before Precious Blood Seminary was completed, the Kansas City Province was financially struggling. The provincial at that time, Fr. Daniel Schaefer, put out a plea to the members that if they had personal monies that they could lend to the province, he would be eternally grateful. The members responded and the province was able to continue to prosper. Through the generous support of our members and the creative financing of our treasurers along the way, we have been extremely blessed through the years.

But I want to focus on the "excitement" part of those initial years of our province. The district meetings contained animated conversations, and the members expressed a great desire to create a more inclusive community between the priests and brothers.

There seemed to be a constant search for greater collaboration and this was passed on to our seminarians throughout their formation.

I don't feel "excitement" as we engage in our discussions regarding the present "new creation." I don't get a sense that people are experiencing a "resurrection" as we move towards creating our new U.S. Province. I keep asking myself why there seems to be such low energy or even apathy regarding our future. Recently I was talking with Fr. Jim Urbanic, who pointed out to me that "by and large, our members like each other from the two provinces, but we are distrustful of the image of the 'Provinces' themselves." This made sense to me. There seems to be a mistrust in perception and perhaps in reality of the image of our two provinces by the other. I would like to know what the perception is of the Kansas City Province by the members of the Cincinnati Province. I would like to hear how the members of the Cincinnati Province experienced the event of April 1965, because I believe it was a totally different experience from those of the Kansas City and Pacific Provinces. If my perception is wrong or misguided, then I need to hear how the members of the Cincinnati Province experienced new life at the time of separation from the American Province.

It has been said that "we don't really know one another." That may be true for some of us, but the more divisive obstacle seems to be that we don't "trust" the provinces themselves, not so much the members. I would encourage our leadership teams, now that our Assembly has been postponed again, to develop some kind of process by which we can name the areas of "mistrust" between the provinces so that we can indeed move forward with some sense of excitement in creating something new for the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

There may be other issues that are based more on an institutional level rather than a personal level that ought to be addressed. I am suggesting that this should be the agenda for our gathering in the spring of 2022 and then have the vote for the new leadership in the fall of 2022. ✠



# Turning to One Another

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

It was a Saturday afternoon and I just finished doing some lawn work around PBMR. As I was walking from the Center to the Mother Brunner Home, I noticed Michael sitting alone on one of the benches near the basketball court. His phone was by his side, book bag on the floor, and head buried in his hands. I could sense that something was bothering him and, so, I walked over to see if he was ok.

Michael is a real quiet kid, tall and thin, around 15 years old and loves basketball. Even while he wasn't quick to share much, I did get a little something out of him. When I asked about who he lived with, he told me his 23-year-old brother. I asked about his mother, and he said he didn't know where she was. She left some time ago. We talked some more, and he said that he wanted more hours, meaning he wanted to earn more money. He is part of one of our programs and earns a little money, but, apparently not enough for his needs.

It would be easy to fall into judgement or condemnation. What kind of mother could leave her child? But of course the underlying reality is much more complicated, and the only way to know the answers is to sit and listen to the child, to listen to the mother, and to seek to understand. I have found that when you begin to untangle the story, when you hear people's experiences of homelessness, trauma, poverty, etc., those initial judgements are quieted and understanding begins to set in. Judgement always impedes my ability to understand.

There is a poem that has helped us in these uncertain times. It is by Margaret Wheatley, entitled "Turning to One Another." Here is just a bit of it:

*There is no power greater than a community  
discovering what it cares about.  
Ask "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?"  
Keep asking.  
Talk to people you know.  
Talk to people you don't know.  
Talk to people you never talk to.  
Be intrigued by the differences you hear...  
Remember, you don't fear people whose story you know.*

For me the poem calls us to not fixate or simply cast judgement on the problems we see in others, but to seek solutions, paths of healing for their flourishing. Michael doesn't need people judging him or his mother; he needs a world that cares. He needs people to hear his story without judgement, to listen with understanding, and to accompany him toward solutions that meet his and his family's needs.

Both in the church and in society we have become polarized; we have become a society of judgement and exclusion. Richard Rohr says Jesus was never about exclusion or expelling or isolating people. Quite the opposite, for him that was the problem. Jesus was about transforming and integrating. He was always sending the lepers and those healed back into the city, back to the priests (Rohr, *Hope Against Darkness*).

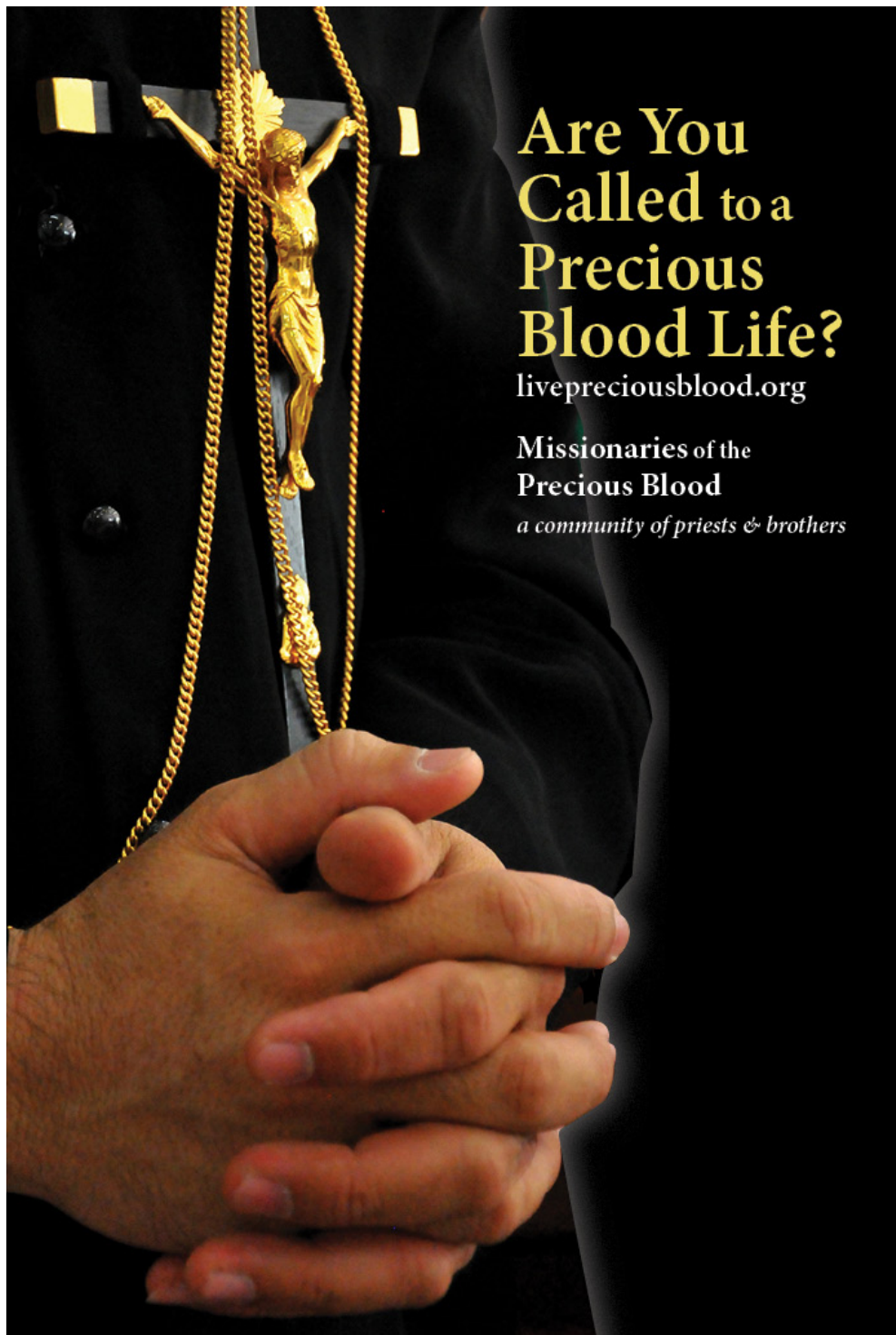
PBMR was founded almost 20 years ago because we were confronted by a system that only knew punishment. There was no healing or transformation for people experiencing brokenness, only punishment and expulsion. And so we set out on a journey to focus on healing, reconciliation, and understanding.

Isn't that what the world needs? To be listened to? To listen? I dream of a world where more people are willing to listen to those they know, those they don't know, those they never talk to, and rather than being offended by or afraid of the differences we hear, to be intrigued and compelled. I long for a time where instead of casting judgement about "What's wrong," we can come together in relationship and begin to ask, "What's possible?"

Now, because of that short conversation with Michael, when I see him in the parking lot or in the neighborhood, he stops, reaches out to shake my hand, and says hello. "Creative solutions come from new connections" (Margaret Wheatley). ✦

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## Are You Called to a Precious Blood Life?

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*a community of priests & brothers*



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