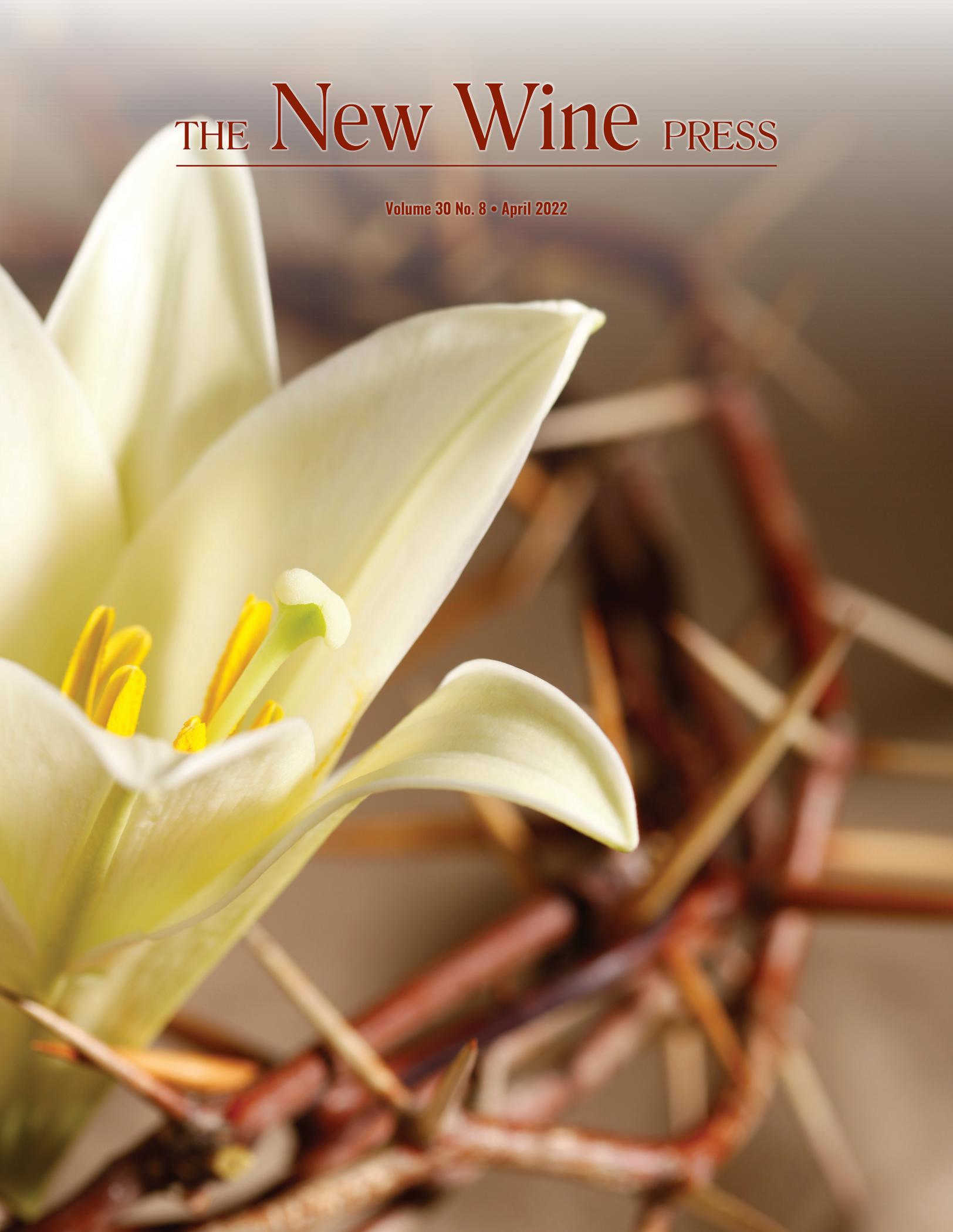


THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 30 No. 8 • April 2022



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



Precious Blood Volunteers
preciousbloodvolunteers.org

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

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

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

THE New Wine PRESS

Missionaries of the Precious Blood
Kansas City Province

Precious Blood Center
P.O. Box 339
Liberty, MO 64069-0339
816.781.4344
www.preciousbloodkc.org

Editor, Layout & Design
Margaret Haik
communications@preciousbloodkc.org

Copy Editor
Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.
rbayukcpps@mac.com

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Radical Hospitality

by Margaret Haik, Director of Communications

In his article this month, Precious Blood Volunteer Vincent Tedford asks how people from difficult circumstances can meet basic expectations when their basic needs are unmet. He further explains that accompanying young people at PBMR goes a long way toward meeting those needs. He is speaking about the basic need for human connection, and all our articles this month focus on aspects of human connection and its power once a person chooses to accompany another on their journey through life.

Fr. Timothy Armbruster introduces the topic with a story about people and connectedness in Albia, Iowa, where he is a pastor.

Fr. James Smith recently attended a presentation and conversation at Most Holy Redeemer parish in San Francisco about ministering to those who suffered during the AIDS crisis. The parishioners of Most Holy Redeemer practiced radical hospitality by ministering to those who were dying from the disease.

Fr. Joe Uecker calls on the Precious Blood Community to facilitate a metanoia—a transformative change—in the parishes they serve. In recognizing our blind spots and making a change in ourselves, we can reach out to others more lovingly.

We have two articles from Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation this month. First, Holly O'Hara, PBMR's communication director, writes, "Growing in relationship means taking the cup of joy and sorrow" of others. Going back to Precious Blood Volunteer Vincent Tedford, he adds to that; in showing up and accompanying others who suffer, he says, "[We] demonstrate compassionately how they are a part of our community not to be neglected." †

Front Porch Community

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

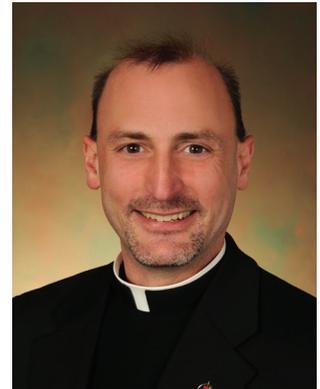
I was invited to a neighbor's house on Halloween night after all the trick-or-treaters had gone home. Since it was Halloween, I decided to have some fun. I dressed in a pair of black jeans, a black hoody, and a black silk face mask that covered my entire head. I knew she might recognize me, so I walked slowly, dragging my foot. As I approached the house, I heard my neighbor mumbling, "Oh, he's a big kid. I hope he doesn't stop here." She freaked out a bit, and I heard her exclaim, "Go away, I have no more candy!" Slurring my words, I called back, "I want cannnnddy. I want cannddy." She was sitting on her enclosed front porch where she had been handing out candy all night. She finally realized who I was and reluctantly let me in. Her husband arrived home a few minutes later. I stepped back in the shadows and waited. After he had greeted his wife, I stepped out of the darkness and, needless to say, freaked him out too. We spent the evening on the front porch laughing and telling ghost stories.

Whatever happened to neighbors gathering on front porches and sharing stories of the day's events and life in general? Families sitting on the steps and enjoy the setting sun. Kids playing in the front yard. Are those just memories of the good old days or do families still have time to hang out together and enjoy the evening sunset? It seemed it was always the older generation of the family that would be sitting and rocking or just hanging out. Has that generation all but died out and this younger generation doesn't seem to have the time or the desire to just sit and chill? Are we so busy and wrapped up in all that we are doing that we don't have the time to be neighborly and visit with one another? Or has the housing market changed so much that houses no longer even have porches that invite us to sit a spell?

We speak of spending time to reconnect and get to know each better as members and Companions. I remember many evenings during my years of formation, having the opportunity to sit together either on the front porch or back porch of the guest house at Precious Blood Center. I recall arriving at St. Charles, and there would be some of our retired guys sitting on the front porch waving hello and greeting us as we arrived.

Where is that front porch that we can hang out on today? Even here at St. Mary's in Centerville, Iowa, the front porch is not very inviting. There is not much space. This past summer I had a concrete patio poured on the north side of the house with the plans of building a pergola style roof. It

continued on page 5





Michael O'Laughlin and Kaya Oakes leading discussion at Most Holy Redeemer Church

Remembering '80s AIDS Crisis

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

In David Levithan's young adult novel, *Two Boys Kissing*, the story's author stands out in its peculiarity and magnitude in a Greek chorus of gay men who died from AIDS. Near the beginning of the book, this narrating chorus says:

“There is a nearly perfect balance between the past and the future. As we become the distant past, you become a future few of us would have imagined.... We are a spirit-burden you carry, like that of your grandparents, or the friends from your childhood who at some point moved away. We try to make it as light a burden as possible. And at the same time, when we see you, we cannot help but think of ourselves.... We were once the ones who were living, and then we were the

ones who were dying. We sewed ourselves, a thread's width, into your history. We were once like you, only our world wasn't like yours. You have no idea how close to death you came. A generation or two earlier, you might be here with us. We resent you. You astonish us.”

The thread of those who died from AIDS was keenly present at Most Holy Redeemer Church on Tuesday, February 15 when Michael O'Laughlin shared from his first book, *Hidden Mercy: AIDS, Catholics, and the Untold Stories of Compassion in the Face of Fear*. Michael and Bay Area writer Kaya Oakes discussed the book and the commonly untold history of AIDS ministry in the Catholic church. Fittingly though, at MHR

this Tuesday evening, this ministry was not and is not untold or forgotten. This was the epicenter for the San Francisco Bay Area, with 14 funerals in one day at the peak of the AIDS epidemic.

O’Laughlin’s book continues a conversation started in America Media’s podcast, “Plague,” launched at the beginning of 2020. There, and in *Hidden Mercy*, O’Laughlin connects with priests, sisters, brothers, and laymen and women who stepped into the thick of ministering with those dying from AIDS, at a point in American history and culture where doing so was a far step out of the mainstream. The book presents a history that is nearing the edge of being lost, both in the time-lapse from the beginning of the AIDS crisis in the early 1980s and to the sheer number of lives lost to the crisis.

At the brief reading and conversation among parishioners and visitors at MHR, O’Laughlin and several young adults attending noted the generational gap between those who re-founded MHR as a parish of the “gays and the grays” and the faith community that stood in the breach of such immense loss, devastation, and tragedy. A number of those attending the event noted the gap between their young adult generation and the generation lost to AIDS and those who survived but are multiple generations ahead of them. O’Laughlin shared input from a friend he sought for advice before beginning the project for this book. “If LGBT people don’t know their history, they don’t know what their identity is. History isn’t just knowing facts—it’s also important to learn our identities. There’s a lot of history here (AIDS ministry and LGBT persons in the church), it’s just we don’t learn about it.”

The small part of the AIDS quilt displayed at Most Holy Redeemer Church throughout December gave a tangible reality to the intangible but still deeply felt history in the cloud of witnesses, many of whom were those dying from AIDS and ministered to by some featured in *Hidden Mercy*. This history of AIDS ministry and LGBT persons in the Catholic church is critical for us today. Ministering to those in need has always been a part of the church. What is lost is when we forget to carry these stories down to the next generation and when we forget that this history continues in the present tense of those who are excluded and

marginalized. An MHR parishioner provided one insight to *Hidden Mercy*—that they did not quite make it through the book because the book centers mostly on sisters, priests, and brothers in ministry and does not center on lay ministers as much, even though so much of AIDS ministry in the 1980s was done and led by lay ministers. The present history being written in society and the church tells that story even more powerfully—lay ministers work at the margins far more than priests, sisters, and brothers, and when they arrive at the margins it’s at the invitation and insistence of lay ministers already doing the work.

Hidden Mercy presents a brief history of AIDS ministry in the Catholic church and begins a history of LGBT Catholics in the church that is significantly needed. At the same time, the book presents a slice of Most Holy Redeemer Church in its extension of hospitality and God’s inclusive love in a critical point in LGBT history, and in a critical present moment where AIDS may not weigh as much upon Americans as it once did, but where inclusion and hospitality are as desperately needed as ever. ✠

Leadership, continued from page 3

is decorated with two lawn chairs and bordered with flower boxes. Hopefully this summer I will have the opportunity to sit outside, watch the sunset and invite others to join me in conversation. Or will that never happen? Have we grown so accustomed to Zoom meetings and “virtual front porches” that we think that is just good enough?

Either way, we still need those human connections. We still need the places to meet and share the stories of our day and of our hearts. I drive around town and see a front porch swing sitting empty swaying in the wind and wonder who once sat there and what great stories did they have to tell? Will someone ever sit there again or will the wood just rot and the chains rust away? Maybe I’ll sit outside one evening connected via a Zoom call and share a story from the front porch while watching the sunset. Or maybe it’s time for a road trip to visit a friend, relax on the front porch, and share some candy. ✠



Embracing the Passion

iStockPhoto.com

by Holly O'Hara, PBMR

Recently, I heard this statement at Mass: “The Passion leads to the Glory of the Resurrection.” Hearing it, I was surprisingly shaken. I wondered if this is really true. Does our passion, our suffering, really lead to a resurrection?

Some days here at PBMR, it doesn't feel like it. At times it's hard to find hope amidst the suffering and injustice that envelops our youth, families, and neighbors. Some days, it just feels like passion after passion with no clear resurrection in sight. But every time I get to this place of darkness and desolation, God always greets me there, holds me close, and brings me an unexpected radiant light, a renewed hope lifting me from my darkness.

A couple of weeks ago, Sr. Donna invited me to deliver some gift cards to a mother in our

community. Grateful for the break from my office and growing to-do list, I accompanied her to the house of one of our youth and his mother. I had heard a great deal about his mom, but this would be the first time I'd get to meet her. As she opened the door, we were greeted with warm hugs and words of welcome. She invited us into her home and introduced us to her children, grandchildren, and others who live under her roof and care. I instantly felt enveloped by the love that flowed through the house, and that emanated from the tiny yet mighty woman standing before me.

As she took us through her house, she shared about some of the struggles she and her sons have endured over the years—children incarcerated, deceased, and impacted by violence in the streets. As she invited us downstairs into the basement, I

was introduced to her son—a young man around my age, paralyzed from the waist down after being shot two years ago. Sitting with him, my heart ached as I listened to the rollercoaster these past two years have been. His mom explained that for years it was just her and her sons, but that they always knew they would be okay because they were together. “We always had each other through it all.” Through the pain and suffering, there was a strong undercurrent of faith, hope, and deep love burning bright between mother and children. As I sat on a box in that basement, a light of hope flickered in the darkness.

Driving home that night, I was pretty overwhelmed. I could feel my heart was bursting with an overabundance of joy and sorrow. I thought about how tempting it would be to not feel this pain and sorrow that I now feel for this family who suffers so greatly, and in not feeling their sorrow, not grappling with my call to do what I can to care for them. But to block out the sorrow and the responsibility, to shy away from the passion, would be to block out the divine joy of being in relationship, and to block out the light of hope that I found in our togetherness. I realized that growing in relationship means taking up this cup of joy and sorrow; embracing the passion to find a resurrection. Meeting our neighbors, growing in relationship with them, feeling their pain, and uniting ourselves to their wellbeing transforms us. Because now that I know you, I love you, and I care about what happens to you. Now that I know you, I am with you to confront whatever comes our way, together.

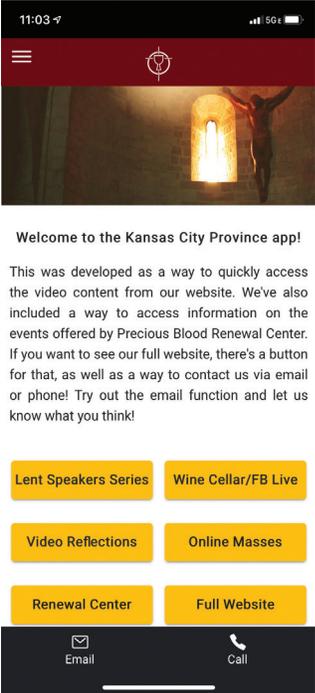
I guess the first step to resurrection is allowing ourselves to see, feel, and experience the Passion—opening ourselves to the sorrows that surround us, and discovering how God is bringing new life and love into the most unlikely of spaces. Jesus’ heart was pierced by a lance—blood and water spilled out—and from that passion, the resurrection followed. So what happens when I allow my heart to be pierced by the sorrows that surround me? Inevitably, it will hurt, and it will likely end my life as I know it, but the love and community that will be born in the most desolate of spaces will shine radiantly like the Easter sun.

Every day, I just pray for the grace to open my heart to the people around me—to draw near to

their joy and sorrows alike. To love with arms wide open, unafraid, radically available. People are in pain and suffering whether we look or not, but when we choose to draw near to those who suffer, they no longer suffer alone, and that can change everything. Now we are in it together, and now, at least, we have each other.

There is great hope in knowing that we are not alone and we always have each other, even in our darkest moments. When we stay together through our times of passion, flames of love and community flicker through the darkness and renew our hope in the promised Resurrection. ✚

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Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S. blesses the congregation at Mass in 2015

A Proposal for the New Creation

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

In recent months, we have seen articles in our publications about the new creation and some questions about what is new. I have a suggestion as to what could be new.

After 30+ years in full-time parish ministry, I certainly understand any reluctance of our members engaged in parish ministry to leave that ministry. But is it possible to renew parish ministry? I think it is. I submit that there is still deep-seated racism present in our country and that racism still exists in our Catholic

Church. It shouldn't surprise us if the parishes we serve are no exception.

I'm thinking back to when I was younger. I grew up in Precious Blood Parish in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Once in a great while, we would see a Black or Hispanic family in church. That would make for conversation that was not welcoming. It wasn't hateful, but something like: What are they doing here? I do not recall having even one Black student in our school. There may have been one or the other, but I do not recall it.

Black people lived on the southeast side of town. We would see them downtown, but that's about it. I don't remember seeing any Black boys on the other Catholic schools' sports teams, except maybe St. Peter's Parish because that was on the southeast side.

My point is that I grew up in a lily-white environment in the 1940s and 1950s. We were not intentionally racist; we were fish swimming in racist waters. It rubs off. I wish that it were gone, but it is not.

During the pandemic, I read several books on racism and white privilege. This has been a wake-up call for me. The lady who lives in the apartment next to mine is Black, and one day I showed her one of the books on white privilege and asked her if that is real. She just smiled as if to say: "Are you just finding this out?" Yes, ma'am, I am just finding this out!

I don't think I'm the only white person who is just now being awakened. I am part of a group of white people who are actively trying to be awakened. I know that many white people are awake and I'm happy that they are. They can help me and others who want to wake up. I also know that there are many who deny they are asleep. The author Ibram X. Kendi says: "Denial is the heartbeat of racism."

I am recommending for 2022-23 (or longer) for the parishes we serve, the goal of waking ourselves up and waking up our people to white privilege. This would be something quite new for many people. I am proposing a concentrated, intentional effort to wake ourselves up and wake up the people in our parishes to the white privilege we white people enjoy. This might not sound like traditional parish work, but it is one way to free the oppressed. Along with Jesus (Lk 4,18), Mr. Kendi also says: "To be a Christian is to free the oppressed." I see this as an achievable and measurable goal. Maybe not scientifically measurable, but people know for certain if they are on the road to being awakened. I feel certain that if this goal is met, some great changes can take place in our parishes. Being aware of white privilege is not the whole ball game, but it is a good start.

It is no secret that there are those in our parishes and on social media those who push back whenever racial issues are brought up: "Not here." Others accept

the notion of the personal sin of racism but take issue with emphasis on structural inequity. In the *National Catholic Reporter* article cited at the end of this article, Matt Kappadakunnel says: "What these Catholics (who take issue with emphasis on structural inequity) lack is an experience of metanoia in terms of the sin of racism. By seeing through the eyes of the Trinity how the heart of God suffers with those who experience racial oppression, their eyes, like mine, can be opened anew." That is what I am advocating: metanoia, that our eyes be opened, opened to white privilege, as a starter. Once we wipe the sleep from our eyes, we will be one step further along on the road to a new creation. I recommend the following as tools:

Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2018.

Debby Irving, *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race*. Cambridge, MA, Elephant Room Press, 2014.

Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist*. New York, One World, 2019.

Jim Wallis, *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America*. Grand Rapids, MI, Brazos Press, 2016.

Jim Wallis, *Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus*. San Francisco, Harper One, 2019.

Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. New York, Random House, 2020.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/how-be-ignatian-anti-racist-lent> †



Precious Blood Volunteer Vincent Tedford tutoring a student at PBMR

Accompaniment

by Vincent Tedford, Precious Blood Volunteer

Last year, I was meditating on Christ's Passion. Christ's sacrifice and suffering were a focal point for all my emotions surrounding the injustices I witnessed in the world around me. Nothing else evoked the same emotion for me. However, when I became a Precious Blood Volunteer, I witnessed human suffering on a scale like never before.

In August of last year, I moved to Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood to begin volunteering at the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR). Within a few hours of landing, I met and heard the stories of those wrongfully convicted and/or formerly incarcerated, the victims of gun violence, the medically underserved, and generally marginalized people with whom I would be spending my year as a Precious

Blood Volunteer. I thought I knew what I was getting into, but even on day one I was surprised at the reality our PBMR community was facing.

Death and loss are in constant competition against the backdrop of hope we try to maintain at PBMR. In the forefront were the daily struggles. I went to the woodshop and worked with guys trying to make enough to get by while learning what it takes to maintain a job; showing up and staying on task often prove to be a struggle for our participants. Early on I was enlightened by the question, "How can you meet basic expectations when your basic needs are lacking?"

"I don't have a bed. My family is taking in people all the time and I gave mine up for my brother. He's in

high school, playing sports, so I want him to have the best shot at success.” One of our participants shared this with me while talking about his own journey to a career as an athlete. This young man is willing to make sacrifices, despite the drain on his own potential, for someone else to get a leg up he never had. Something as simple as a good night’s sleep should never be taken for granted.

For some, the threat of violence keeps them up at night; most are experiencing perpetual trauma which would make anyone restless. Just trying to get by, living each day on high alert, and/or self-medicating are enough cause for them to fall behind. Every day at PBMR I have seen elements of this cycle in people’s lives.

I am reflecting on my life before August and how the time since then has impacted and will continue to impact me going forward. Before graduating last May, I had no image more viscerally compelling to meditate on than the Passion. Now, while I walk the streets of Back of the Yards on my way to PBMR, I feel an intense emotion being evoked. As I take the bus to my meetings and appointments, or towards my leisure activities and outings, the reality of human suffering is present and inescapable. I realize now my life was sheltered from this pain; my vision—even though imagining the Passion was important—was limited to this far-off concept of despair. Having been drawn near to my heart through my experience, the people of the PBMR community have shown me how I must go forth in spirit to my future.

When I go to the EdLab, our room for tutoring those trying to go back and get their high school diploma, I prepare myself to encounter the students wherever their minds are. Some days I know there is nothing I can do to help someone in or out of the classroom. On others, I feel the slightest gift makes a big difference. The common factor, though, is showing up and accompanying. When I was told that the core of this program was to walk with those who suffer, I merely drew upon my experience sitting with people in pain. Now, even though I do often sit next to students to tutor, being seated speaks nothing to the difficulty of the walk we take. The walk they must take every day and to which I merely opt-in.

One student tested my proverbial ability to walk. I often hear incoherent stories of their life and I witness their unstable condition, both physically and mentally. They often challenge my ability to respond with compassion. Accompaniment, I learned, can mean frequent stopping for breaks and reminding someone to take a breather while you keep watch for them.

One day in the EdLab, I was grading papers and supervising students while they studied. A student was talking to themselves and getting louder. I asked if they were okay which they promptly brushed off. Thankfully, one of the religious sisters had reflected on these situations for years and helped me respond. “Hey, you’re doing some great work today. I can tell you have a lot on your mind, so how about we take a break and get some water? Let me know if you want to talk, okay?”

I learned through moments like this: the little bit of discomfort I would have during an interaction with someone during bouts of schizophrenia could be pivotal to their educational progress and more importantly, demonstrate compassionately how they are a part of our community not to be neglected.

I want to keep sharing my skills with my community. Someone once said, if you want to change the world, go home and love your family. From there, serve your community, and keep carrying that out across the global community we all share. For now, my roommates and I take care of our home together and share our experiences at PBMR while supporting, reaffirming, and imparting wisdom to each other. I’m grateful to Missionaries of the Precious Blood, who support me during this year of service, the people looking out for me and my fellow volunteers, and the PBMR community, who appreciate the gifts and talents I bring.

The liberty of our communities at large is bound to the liberty of each community. Wherever I go, no matter what I do, I now know my liberty is bound to my neighbors and we can work together. Marginalized, far-off, and/or rejected, you carry within you the same Precious Blood we all share. ✦

2022 Precious Blood Scholarship

from Al Ebach, C.P.P.S., Precious Blood Scholarship Committee Chairperson

Application Deadline: May 1, 2022

Members, Companions, and province staff again have the opportunity to nominate students for the Kansas City Province Scholarship. The scholarship application packet is available at <https://preciousbloodkc.org/2022-scholarship>.

Ten \$1000 scholarships will be awarded to students attending, or planning to attend, a Catholic high school or college. Students must be recommended by members, Companions, or province staff. Student nominees should be those who may not have the means to attend a Catholic institution unless financial assistance is available. The young people should be involved in their local church, community, or school. Students may be awarded a scholarship twice, not necessarily in consecutive years.

Thank you to those who have recommended students to receive scholarships, and thanks to the province for continuing to fund this cause. Recipients will be notified of their scholarship award in late spring/early summer. The students' schools will receive the scholarship money in October 2022.

2022 Precious Blood Human Development Fund

by Fr. John Wolf, C.P.P.S., Human Development Fund Chairperson

Application Deadline: May 1, 2022

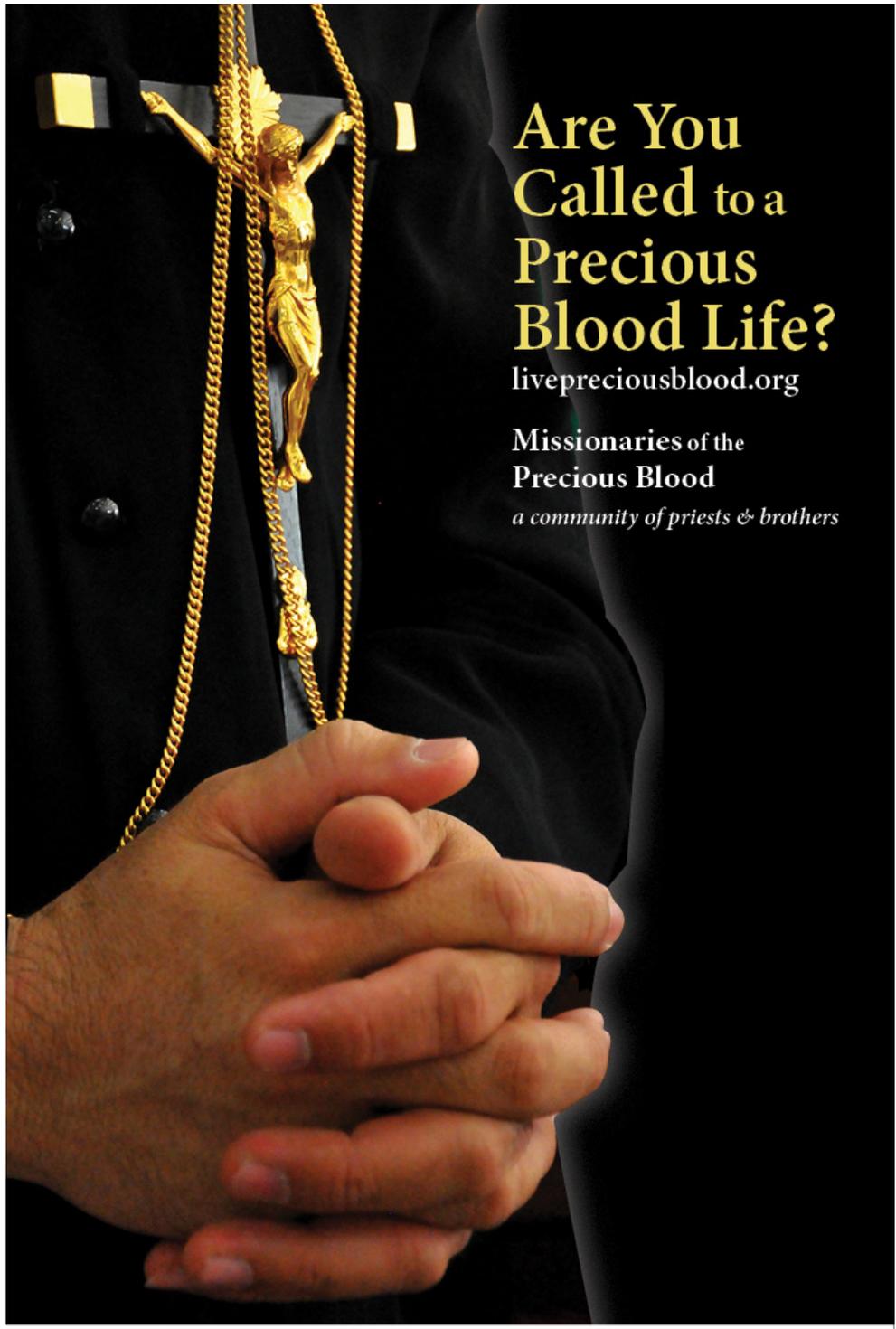
The application for the province Human Development Fund is available for 2022. The application packet is available at <https://preciousbloodkc.org/2022-human-development-fund/>.

The criteria for the Human Development Fund include demonstrated need and a connection to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Amounts up to \$10,000 can be requested. Projects in the United States not directed by C.P.P.S. or A.S.C. members will be funded for a maximum of three years. After that, the project leaders are to seek funding from other sources. Other projects will be judged on an individual basis. Human Development Fund awards will be announced in July 2022.

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