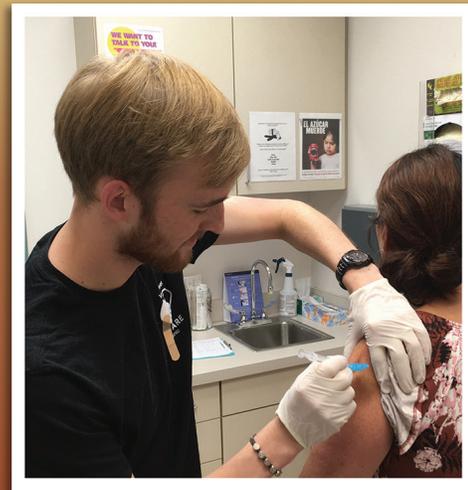


THE **New Wine** PRESS

Volume 30 No. 9 • May 2022



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



Precious Blood Volunteers
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Contents

Missionary 101	2
By Margaret Haik, Director of Communications	
It Shouldn't Be This Way	3
By Fr. Garry Richmeier, C.PP.S., Provincial Director	
Abundance Fills the Soul When Excess Is Stripped Away	4
By Aaron Wise, Precious Blood Volunteer at KC CARE Clinic	
Explosion of Grace	7
By Sister Donna Liette, CPPS	
Carrying Out the Mission of Evangelization	9
By Fr. Dien Truong, C.PP.S., Kansas City Province	
How Long Are We Willing to Live With the "Lie"?	12
by Fr. Mark Miller, C.PP.S., Liberty, Missouri	

Cover image: Precious Blood Renewal Center, January 2022, photo by Fr. Joe Nassal, C.PP.S.

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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Missionary 101

By Margaret Haik, Director of Communications

My son Jonathan graduates from high school this month. He wants to attend a junior college in the fall. Because he has a learning disability, he is going through a reevaluation to determine what adjustments his future instructors need to make for his learning style. Additionally, the testing results will give him a way to practice a new way to learn for college—a sort of “How to Study 101” course.

I think our articles this month create a course for the Precious Blood community: “Missionary 101.”

Provincial Director Fr. Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S., uses the backdrop of the pandemic and the uncertainty it created for the planning of a new province to describe how missionaries can function in chaotic times. Really, it’s not just for missionaries, but anyone trying to do the “best [they] can with what [they’ve] got in the most loving way.”

Precious Blood Volunteer Aaron Wise shares stories of his experiences while working at KC CARE Clinic and living at Jerusalem Farm in Northeast Kansas City. He has witnessed some of the causes of suffering for the people he serves. Aaron also names the aspects of his life this year that have been formative for him as a Precious Blood volunteer: solidarity, living simply, and prayer.

The mothers of PBMR also walk in solidarity with those who suffer, specifically, other mothers who have lost a child, whether through gun violence in Chicago or the war in Ukraine. Sr. Donna Liette, CPPS, writes her experience of grace during chaos that happens when people are given hospitality, hope, and solidarity.

Lastly, Fr. Dien Truong, C.P.P.S., shares the teachings of Saints Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II as guides for missionary work. Missionaries must have a deep zeal in their heart, be present to the people they serve, and practice the skills necessary for a missionary.

This spring and summer will bring many changes—in different ways— for both the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and my son. May these “101” courses be a source of instruction and inspiration as we all move into a new creation. ✠

It Shouldn't Be This Way

By Fr. Garry Richmeier, C.P.P.S., Provincial Director

Two familiar sayings have taken on new meaning for me over the past two years. One is, “Life is what happens while you are making plans.” The other is, “If you want to make God laugh, tell God your plans.”

The pandemic has thrown a wrench into almost everyone's plans. I was elected provincial director shortly before COVID-19 hit. The pandemic totally changed what I thought being the provincial director was going to be like, including how long I thought I would be in office. It also radically changed the plans our two provinces had for coming together.

In addition to the chaos of the pandemic, we have been dealing with the normal challenges involved with two different groups trying to agree on what the united province will look like. All this resulted in a less than satisfying unification process leading up to the Provincial Assembly in June. I do not know anyone who is totally pleased with how the process has worked. At times, I have felt discouraged and disheartened because things have not gone the way they “should” have.

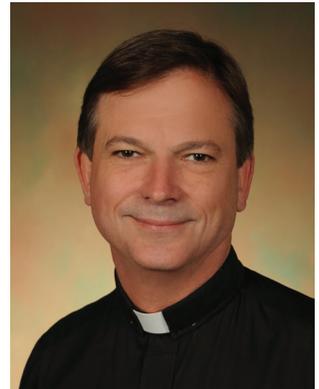
But then I stop and think, “How ‘should’ things go? Who makes that determination?” We often think we are the ones who know best. We think things would go much better if we called the shots. We hate uncertainty, so we fight tooth and nail to bend things (and people) to our way of thinking and doing, absorbed in our illusion of having control. That is especially when God laughs (or cries).

We talk about the working of the Spirit quite a bit. We are very familiar with the Spirit being likened to the wind that blows where it will and our not knowing where it came from or where it is going. But if we are honest, we really don't like that idea, especially when the Spirit sweeps us toward a future unknown. We want predictable outcomes, specific goals, and guaranteed “success.” The Spirit is not very cooperative in this regard—and it scares us.

So how are we control-loving, certainty-oriented creatures supposed to deal with such a Spirit without driving ourselves and each other crazy?

First, it helps to remind ourselves that chaos is the norm rather than the exception. There is nothing wrong with reality or with God when things are chaotic.

continued on page 6





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Abundance Fills the Soul When Excess Is Stripped Away

By Aaron Wise, Precious Blood Volunteer at KC CARE Clinic



Aaron Wise

I called her name. She rose slowly from her chair in the waiting room and hobbled toward me. She gifted me an enthusiastic greeting and a labored smile, that which is socially expected for decency.

We entered the exam room, and I initiated the pre-provider tasks: taking vitals, gathering medical and family histories, conducting necessary point-of-care testing, etc.

Something appeared off.

Clearly, something deeper ailed my patient. I asked about her day, her holiday plans, her family. I found out the upcoming Thanksgiving would be difficult for her—the first one since losing her daughter. I asked about her daughter. I experienced my sister in Christ’s delight in sharing the memories of someone she loved so dearly. She showed me a beautiful, goofy video of her with her daughter—singing, dancing, and laughing. She teared up, a paradoxical moment of sadness and joy. Her heart was broken; from it oozed the Precious Blood, a combination of both suffering and pure love.

Small drops of blood discolored the white floor. The patient had stepped on a nail in his garage, leaving a small, deep hole in his foot. I cleaned and

wrapped the wound, yet this man had little concern for his foot.

He feared for his mind. He told me he wasn't right—that something was wrong with his brain, that he was “messed up” in the head. He told me he'd done many drugs and other substances. He'd seen psychiatrists and been given many medications meant to help. None of them worked. He told me he would try one more thing, and if that didn't work, he had “other arrangements” to take care of it.

I don't know what this man has been through in the past. I don't know what he is going through in the present. But I do know the life of my brother in Christ means something. He has an indelible dignity, despite the ways in which the world, those around him and he, himself, asserts that he is “messed up.”

It was 2:30 on a warm Saturday afternoon. I was driving home with two friends along Independence Avenue, a busy road in northeast Kansas City. On a patch of grass between the sidewalk and the road was a body—just yards from my residence.

I didn't see it initially, but my friend insisted we return to check. People walked along the sidewalk, past the body. Several cars passed. From a distance, I got a better view of the man. His hat was thrown to the side, his body disheveled and uncomfortably positioned. One arm was raised and yellow. It was clear my brother in Christ was not breathing.

As we approached, a lady called out from a car to inform us she had called 911. Later, she revealed she had driven by 20 minutes prior, on a delivery. She was appalled by the indifference of hundreds of people who must have witnessed a man unwell on the side of the road. A life had passed—and nobody cared to notice.

THUD, THUD, THUD, THUD, THUD! It was midnight. I awoke to a cacophonous banging on our door and windows. We answered. Our neighbor frantically reported the house next to ours was on

fire. We raced to the other window to witness the entire west side of the building engulfed in flames.

These are but four brief stories among hundreds I've experienced working at the KC CARE Clinic in midtown and living in Northeast Kansas City. Interestingly, a few similar connections underly each of these stories and the many others that remain untold.

First, socioeconomic and racial barriers underpin each situation—access to health care, racism and discrimination, mental health stigmas, or scummy landlords who neglect their responsibility to respond to electrical issues. These injustices fall harder on minorities and those with less money.

Second, suffering seems to be part of the human condition. There is nothing the individuals in these stories could have done to prevent their hardship. I don't say this ignoring the role of free will. Yes, each individual may have made choices that contributed to their situations, but the options they had available were severely screened by culture and society, among several other determinants.

Finally, God is present deeply with those who suffer. These are truths we recognize profoundly in the spirituality of the Precious Blood.

CS Lewis affirmed that heaven is an acquired taste. Jesus is my savior, and it is by His doings—not my own—that I will experience eternal life in union with God. Yet, if you were to bring me to heaven right now, I do not know if I'd like it. I still carry the taste of the world with me: pride, independence, self-servitude, sin. This contrasts with the purity and fullness of love that is heaven. However, through service and the experiences like those shared above, I've begun to acquire the taste of Christ. Community, simplicity, and prayer also have been formative for me during the past year.

I've practiced community on two levels this year: directly with those with whom I live and also with the global community.

continued on page 6

Abundance, continued from page 5

I live with 18 others, including two families with five children, and sharing life with them has been a beautiful joy. I experience this joy in the form of sharing meals, interests, events, and time. I have countless jubilant memories such as tennis, basketball, soccer, football, Frisbee, ice skating (I love sports), faith sharing, music, etc.

In terms of the wider community, we focus on conservation, being involved in neighborhood and city policies, and living on a smaller income. Some of the practical aspects of this lifestyle are eating a vegetarian diet, consuming less water and electricity, composting, using a clothesline, paying attention to consumables and reusing when appropriate, and purchasing natural organic local products when available. There is a richness to sharing resources and life in this way.

Simplicity is a challenging ideal when we live in a chaotic world. Despite this, I still have been able to find simplicity relative to my previous student lifestyle. I live in a house without Wi-Fi and a phone signal because I strive to remove unnecessary and empty lifestyle choices. Often when we think about simplicity, we focus on what we “give up” and an image of emptiness is invoked. In practice, it is quite the opposite! Removing the superficial and unimportant gives way to a spirit of great abundance—especially in time, relationships and charity.

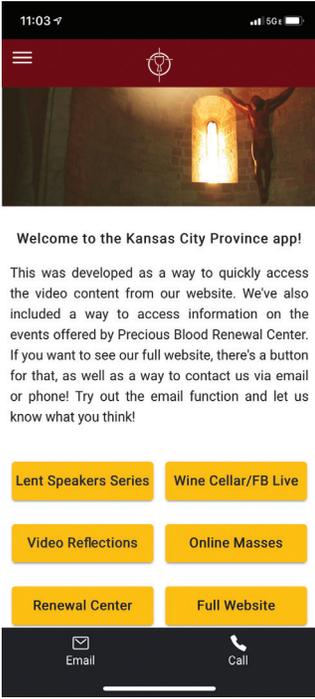
Finally, prayer is the cornerstone that links everything. My relationship with God has strengthened me to participate and grow in all the ways discussed and also has been strengthened through my experiences. Daily Mass is a joyous gift and receiving the Eucharist has been fuller and more transformative through walking with others as a Precious Blood volunteer.

This year has been formative as I’ve taken little steps along a lifelong journey to acquire the taste of heaven. I invite all of you to join in along the way. As echoed at Jerusalem Farm: The way is long, let us walk together; the way is hard, let us help one another; the way is Christ, Christ is the way. ✠

Leadership, continued from page 3

Second, we need to admit that attempts at control will not provide the comforting anchor we seek during chaos. We must anchor ourselves in something that does not rely on outcomes, eventualities, circumstances, or anything “out there.” The anchor must come from within ourselves. The way I describe this anchor for myself is “doing the best I can with what I’ve got, in the most loving way.” We can each strive to make that a constant in our lives if we choose. With such an anchor, we can be less fearful of flowing with the Spirit and can follow where She leads, trusting that the destination is good.

I still have my ideas about how the process of coming together as provinces should have gone and how we should proceed moving forward. I don’t just sit back and do nothing, saying the Spirit will do it. I will continue to share my views and do what I think will make things work well. I hope everyone else will do the same. But I know the results will not be exactly what I want them to be. Come what may, I will attempt to take comfort in the fact that I do the best I can with what I’ve got, in the most loving way, and others are most likely doing the same. The Spirit will lead us where we need to go. ✠



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One of the mothers in the Mother's Healing Circle at PBMR

Explosion of Grace

By Sr. Donna Liette, CPPS

Just a week ago, a woman was released after 30 years of living within prison walls. She had been incarcerated since she was 15 and had been expected to die in prison. As I watched her walk out into her freedom, I felt an explosion of grace as God met years of suffering with healing liberation and the promise of a new beginning.

Have you ever experienced an explosion of grace? Recently, I reflected on how many times I have been given this gift—unexpected grace that always overwhelms my heart and moves me closer to God and those around me.

I thought of how many times I have experienced that explosion of grace within the women we accompany at PBMR. It's impossible to count! Every day is full of explosions of grace in the joys and sorrows as we walk together on this journey of life and love.

Just today we had our monthly Mother's Healing Circle. Once again, I heard from the hearts of these women who are broken and bruised. The blood of their sons and daughters poured out on our streets through violent acts, yet these mothers are powerful

continued on page 8

Grace, continued from page 7

witnesses of how God dwells among those most in need and explodes grace and beauty among us.

One mother, who has been traumatized in so many ways, shared how at her adult baptism she felt an overwhelming abundance of grace. She said she found purpose in all her suffering, and a calm came about her she had never experienced. All she could do was go home, cry, and give thanks.

Another mother shared how after her son had committed suicide, she ran out into the middle of a busy street in Chicago and cried out for help. She said God answered her prayer that day by sending her angels and friends to lift her up and providing a job she's now had for years—a job she loves and that gives her purpose. "I saw light in my darkness," she said, "and I was amazed. I have been moving forward ever since that day of God's attention!"

One of our grandmothers shared how when she hit rock bottom, she got down on her knees and didn't stop praying until God heard her cry. She felt an overwhelming movement, and she knew then she had been heard and was being healed. Since then, she has been in recovery and is moving forward toward her goals.

A mother who lost her two sons, murdered in their own home, is struggling with living. Darkness surrounds her, but yesterday she texted me to say that while she was walking and crying, she spotted two beautiful yellow daffodils and suddenly felt a strong feeling of hope (an explosion of grace!). Then she asked if I could teach her to meditate and learn of God's love for her.

Another mother who comes to mind has overcome obstacle after obstacle since her youth. But she keeps walking in faith and grace through these obstacles. Today, she has completed law school and passed her bar exam. She holds tight to her business card that reads "Attorney." She now offers advice and support to other women and mothers who face legal issues. She understands their fear of the unknown and accompanies them through this unjust system with the hope of embracing a more restorative way of being.

When I think of an explosion of grace, I think of the mothers who have forgiven the people who killed their sons or daughters and have asked that the perpetrator receive a lesser sentence.

I feel God's grace alive in all the women who come to us who have hit rock bottom, who have lost everything yet are still holding on—who are still seeking strength, something to eat, detergent to wash the few clothes they have, to care for their children and grandchildren as best they can. They come here, they want to live, they want to heal, and they want to know there is hope for them. Grace creates space for the unexpected—space for these women to let go and let God's grace show them what is possible and what is yet to come as they rise up.

Our mothers are crying out for the mothers and children in Ukraine. They know the pain of violence, of living in fear, of being evicted from their homes, of being without. Yet they see their pain is nothing compared to that of Ukrainian women and children. They want to help. They pray. They cry in solidarity.

We often hear that "hurt people, hurt people." But in our PBMR women, I see that "healing people, heal people." The women we accompany have experienced unthinkable trauma from violence, racism, poverty, and rejection. But as they find healing and hope, they are eager to pass on these gifts and graces to other women in the circle and beyond.

So, at PBMR we are blessed to help create those spaces where women, youth, and neighborhood friends (myself included) can experience explosions of grace, spaces of hospitality, hope, and healing; where there can be new ways of being together; where new relationships can form; and where new energy can be created for building our beloved grace-impacted Community.

May we all be aware of those "explosions of grace," be amazed, and give thanks! ✨

Carrying Out the Mission of Evangelization

By Fr. Dien Truong, C.P.P.S., Kansas City Province

I've taught a class at the mission in the pastoral center of the Archdiocese of Saigon. So, many people ask me, "What should we pay attention to most while carrying out our mission of evangelization?"

There's no single answer, because it is an ongoing process that changes in response to each time and place, reflective of different societies and cultures.

This article helps to find the answer.

First, disciples of Jesus need to be concerned with the missionary zeal deep in their hearts. Second, it is necessary to renew their presence in the environments they are sent to. And finally, it is necessary to hone one's missionary skills.

Statue of St. Gaspar at St. Wendelin Church, St. Henry, Ohio, Wikimedia Commons



Missionary Zeal

The car engine does not start, possibly due to lack of fuel. The lighter doesn't turn on, maybe because the gas is out. No ink comes from the pen, so maybe the ink has dried up. If the faucet won't run, perhaps the water is shut off. Depressed? Not wanting to preach the Gospel? Maybe the fire of enthusiasm has been extinguished!

Several reasons hinder the evangelizing mission, or make it ineffective. But the biggest and deepest reason is the lack of missionary zeal. This situation was mentioned by Pope Saint Paul VI in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 80 and repeated by Pope Saint John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio*, 36.

Why is lack of missionary zeal the greatest and deepest hindrance? And how does it manifest?

The lack of missionary zeal is difficult to discern because it does not come from the outside; it comes from within disciples. Moreover, the destructive power of a lack of zeal, though silent, dries up and destroys the life of faith. It also dulls the personal relationship between the disciple and the God who is the source of the message. A lack of missionary zeal is outwardly expressed in a state of "tiredness and discouragement, perversion and indifference, especially a lack of joy and hope." [1]

Disciples of Jesus lacking missionary zeal do not give up. They still carry out their mission, but in a perfunctory manner. Because they are still carrying out their mission, the lack of zeal can be difficult to see, making it harmful.

Such disciples are more drawn to the outer than to the inner dimension, preferring to be a missionary according to their own feelings and ideas rather than pursuing a long-term plan and following the instructions of the Church.

Disciples of Jesus who lack missionary zeal may find excuses to avoid preaching the Gospel. Pope

continued on page 10

Missionary Zeal, continued from page 9

Saint Paul VI pointed out the fallacies of missionary zeal: "We often hear, for example, that to impose a truth, even that of the Gospel, is to force a child. The road, even the way to salvation, is a violation of religious freedom. In addition, someone added that there is no need to proclaim the Good News, because everyone is saved if they live righteously. Moreover, if the world and history are filled with the Seed of the Word, is it not an illusion of wanting to bring the Gospel to a place already overflowing with the seeds sown by the Lord himself?" [2]

In short, it can be said that lack of missionary zeal is an extremely dangerous disease because it dries up the "evangelical substance" in ecclesial communities. Disciples who lack missionary zeal are like people with anemia: They always feel "dizzy," sluggish, tired, uninterested, and persistent in carrying out their own mission. For the mission of evangelization to be highly effective, therefore, the disciple of Jesus is always on the lookout for this "serious disease."

Reinventing Presence

In the basic guidelines for evangelization, the Church has always emphasized her presence in the world for the purpose of evangelization. [3] "Presence" is different from "being." Presence is the presence of being with a definite purpose (e.g., the presence of a student in a classroom for research) Being, however, is the objective presence of being (e.g., the presence humans and animals have).

In that sense, the Church does not exist in the world but is present with the very clear purpose of proclaiming the Gospel. Because there is a purpose of being present to proclaim the Gospel, the Church must be present for the Gospel to be proclaimed. In other words, the Church's way of being must be able to convey the Gospel message "to all creation" (Mk 16:16) and "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). For that reason, a missionary-oriented renewal of presence is an important issue upon which the Church constantly strives to reflect.

Daily life has many images that help us understand more about presence. For example, because the nature of water is to wet, water penetrates to

where it wets the object. The fragrance of flowers fills the room because the nature of flowers is to give off fragrance. Wherever the true disciples of Jesus go, the Good News spreads, because disciples are missionaries by their very nature. In other words, disciples just need to be present, not necessarily to act, to convey the Gospel message. Indeed, to be present is to live a living witness to proclaim the Gospel. Pope Saint Paul VI emphasized this point:

"Contemporaries are more willing to listen to witnesses than to teachers or if they do, because teachers themselves are witnesses." [4] Later, Pope John Paul II also asserted that the first form of evangelization was witness. [5]

The Second Vatican Council affirms: "By her very nature, the pilgrim Church is missionary." [6] This can be generalized that the Church is a missionary being. In other words, the substance that constitutes the Church is the "missionary substance" or the "evangelical substance"; therefore, wherever the Church is present, there the Good News is preached. So, if the disciples of Jesus are present, but the Gospel has not been preached (or is preached very weakly), then it is necessary to reexamine the way the disciples are present, because it may be "missionary" or "evangelical." The soul of those disciples have dried up. This condition is called a faulty presence or deviation from the Gospel.

In short, presence is the most fundamental level, and wordless, message for evangelization. If disciples have an evangelical presence, there is sure to be an effective evangelization activity. On the contrary, it will be difficult to have an "activity" that conveys the Gospel message in disciples whose presence is full of the Gospel. When carrying out a mission, disciples need to be more concerned about how to live (be present), rather than about "doing something" for the Gospel to be proclaimed.

Cultivate Missionary Skills

Skill is a person's ability, accumulated through practice and experience, to perform smoothly and to bring high efficiency to an action (e.g., public speaking skills). Skill is different from instinct. Instinct is the natural tendency to react to outside influences (e.g.,

raise your arm when attacked). Thus, skill is active, and instinct is passive. Skill is a conscious response, and instinct produces an unconscious response. For the work of evangelization to be highly effective, it requires discipline to have skills, not instincts.

The phrase "missionary skills" refers to the skills Jesus' disciples need to practice and hone so they can taste the happiness in the witness life. At the same time, the mission they carry out will bring joy and happiness to them. In general, there are more skills disciples of Jesus need to cultivate than the basic skills mentioned here.

Given a person's three relationships—with himself, between himself and God, and between himself and the world—disciples of Jesus need to pay attention to the following three types of skills: skill of coming to God, to himself, and to others.

First, coming to the Lord will help disciples maintain a deep relationship with Him and "test" their missionary zeal. To hone this skill, disciples need to practice a life of prayer and study and to share the Word of God according to the guidance of the Church.

Next, coming to oneself helps disciples know who they are, and to recognize their strengths and weaknesses in order to renew their presence in evangelization. To hone this skill, disciples need to practice an inner life that is quiet and simple—a lifestyle that avoids the frivolous and lavish and that focuses on external appearances.

Finally, reaching out to others will help others. Disciples have good relationships with people and are able to cooperate. To hone this skill, disciples need to practice listening, encourage dialogue, and work together, avoiding a patriarchal, dictatorial, condescending attitude.

Missionary zeal, renewing presence, and cultivating missionary skills are the most basic things disciples of Jesus need to consider when carrying out their mission of evangelization. These three things are organically and closely related to each other to make up the whole missionary person; they can be distinguished but not separated. ✠

References

[1] Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) (Romans: 8/12/1975), 80; Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) (December 7, 1990), 36.

[2] EN 80.

[3] x. Vatican II, *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church Ad Gentes* (AG) (Roma: 7/12/1965), 2; EN, 41; RM, 42.

[4] EN 41.

[5] x. RM 40.

[6] AG 2.

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Speaker at anti-racism protest in Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 16, 2016. Photo by Fibonacci Blue via Wikimedia Commons

How Long Are We Willing to Live With the “Lie”?

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

Many of us grew up with the unspoken acknowledgment that a “white” lie is harmless and perhaps even told as a means to defend the innocent.

We know that not everything is a “white” lie, however. Racism, redlining to restrict property ownership in certain sections of the city, discrimination in hiring and promoting upward mobility, educational resources that are available to some and not others, and even political redistricting so those in power can maintain it are not “little white lies.” To what extent would we be willing to go to expose these outright “lies”?

Just recently a teacher in Russia was relieved of his teaching position because he was exposing the lie that was being spread about why Russia invaded Ukraine. In 2020, I went on a pilgrimage to Central America where Archbishop Romero and Blessed Stan Rother were murdered because they were exposing the lie of how the Mayan people were being discriminated against. They paid the price with their own blood.

On April 9, I listened to a webinar entitled “White Supremacy and American Christianity.” The main two presenters were Robert Jones and

Rev. Bryan Massingale. The event was sponsored by Network, a lobbying organization of the Catholic Church in Washington, D.C. They reminded us of the “Doctrine of Discovery.” Perhaps many of us have never heard of this doctrine. It is a part of our Catholic history, although it is seldom talked about or shared in our educational systems. This doctrine is at least partially responsible for why white supremacy exists today.

The “Doctrine of Discovery” is a concept based on Catholic documents that say that any land not occupied by Christians was available to be “discovered” and claimed by Christian rulers. Its origins were in 1452 when Pope Nicholas v issued the papal bull *Dum Diversas*. It authorized Alfonso v of Portugal to reduce any “Saracens (Muslims) and pagans and any other unbelievers” to perpetual slavery. This doctrine facilitated the Portuguese slave trade from West Africa.

In 1455, Pope Nicholas reissued *Romanus Pontifex* (a papal bull originally issued in 1436 by Eugenius IV)—that extended to the Catholic nations of Europe dominion over discovered lands during the Age of Discovery. Along with sanctifying the seizure of non-Christian lands, it encouraged the enslavement of native, non-Christian people in Africa and the New World.

In 1493, Pope Alexander VII issued the papal bull *Inter Caetera*, stating that one Christian nation did not have the right to establish dominion over lands previously dominated by another Christian nation, thus establishing the Law of Nations. Taken together, these three papal bulls served as the basis and justification of the Doctrine of Discovery, the global slave trade of the 15th and 16th centuries, and the Age of Imperialism.

Modern-day theologians have refuted the “Doctrine of Discovery,” but it has yet to be officially rescinded.

When I was pastor of a parish that sponsored a school, I was often reminded that we needed to express a Catholic identity. I often wondered, “Exactly what is a “Catholic identity?” I once heard

of a study, in which on a scale of 1-10, the Catholic Church rated a 7 in terms of being racist. Was this the identity I was to promote?

When there were many immigrants coming to the U.S. from different parts of Europe, they established what were called ethnic communities or churches. When the African Americans began moving into these neighborhoods, it was to the benefit of these ethnic communities to begin to identify being white. There was power and prestige in being white. It wasn’t so much that they hated Black people, but rather that it was easier for them to “belong” to the white community. The webinar presenters spoke of our having historical amnesia. Our understanding of Christianity has been deeply corrupted by how we have come to interpret the Scriptures in light of white supremacy.

After the death of George Floyd, an artist painted a picture of a present-day Pieta in which Mary is holding the lifeless body of a black man, somewhat imaging George Floyd but not an exact portrait. This painting was displayed at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Someone asked the artist whether the man depicted was George Floyd or Jesus. The artist’s response was “Yes.” The student government passed a resolution to take the painting down, but the university president said the university would not cancel speakers or prevent speech and declined requests to take it down. According to media reports, the original was subsequently stolen and the university replaced it with a smaller version, which was also stolen.

The Catholic Church and our own Precious Blood Community have not always been upfront in addressing the lies that have perpetuated a racist mindset, thus allowing the fruits of racism to continue in the lives of our black, brown, yellow, and red brothers and sisters. May the “lie” stop in our generation. ✠

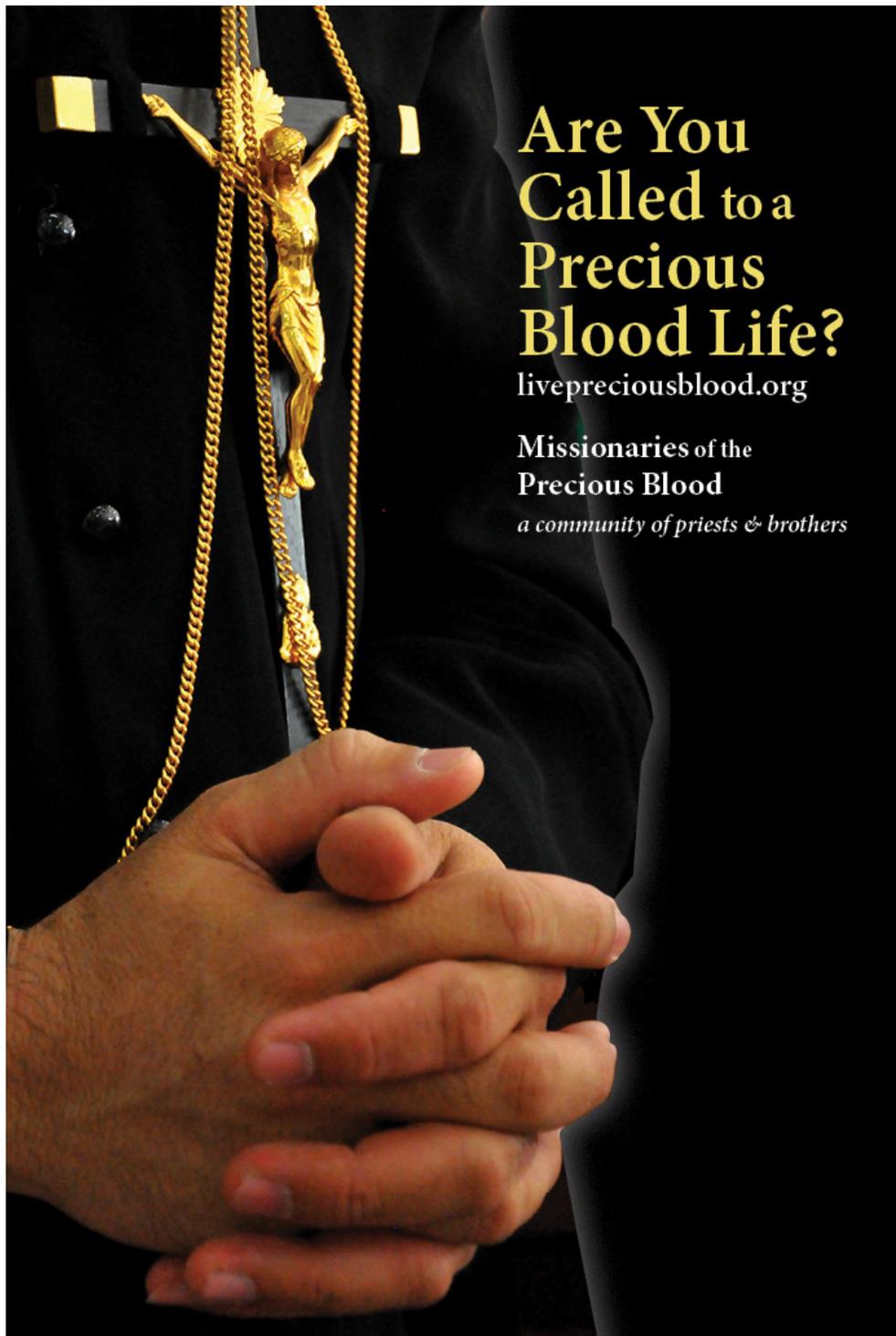
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