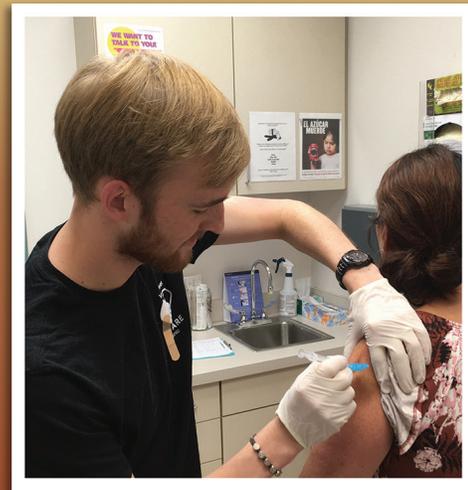


THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 31 No. 2 • October 2022



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



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Cover image: Fr. David Matz, C.P.P.S. (center) with other participants of the Encuentro (Encounter) Immersion Experience

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 United States Province—incorporated members, covenanted Companions, and candidates—united in prayer, service, and mutual support, characterized by the tradition of its 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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Living Our Spirituality

By Margaret Haik, Director of Communications

Our articles this month are bookended with thoughts on the blood of Jesus. The first focuses on the act of consuming the blood during Mass and its necessity for our faith. The final article focuses on the redemptive nature of Jesus' sacrifice for those who suffer. In between, we have articles that show the day-to-day living out of Precious Blood spirituality through the building of relationships with others. That may occur when we provide for others' needs, grow together in a common spirituality, or seek to understand the realities of their past or current sufferings.

Fr. Ben Berinti, C.P.P.S. wrote his first leadership article this month. In it, he asks literally and figuratively if members of the Church will again drink from the cup. By making ourselves vulnerable to the suffering of Jesus, we open ourselves to sharing in the pain and suffering our Lord suffered, thereby sharing in the same sufferings of others.

Becky Summers, the development director for Cristo Rey Kansas City shared the school's thanks for the grant monies from the Human Development Fund. Alliance Kaneza, an alumna of Cristo Rey, along with many other students benefitted from Cristo Rey's unique programs, partially funded by the Precious Blood community.

Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S., recently returned from a retreat in Rome attended by worldwide members of the Precious Blood community and the Adorers of the Blood of Christ.

As part of the Peace and Justice Ministry Team, Fr. David Matz, C.P.P.S., is investigating the challenges for migrants along the Texas border. During his recent visit, he participated in an immersion experience, which he shares in his article this month.

Fr. Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S., shares the highlights and takeaways from a conference he and some members and PBMR staff attended recently.

Finally, Amicus Dennis Keller writes about "Redemption symbolized in the blood in the veins of incarnated Jesus..." Precious Blood spirituality, he says, should emphasize the redemptive nature of the blood poured out for those with broken spirits.

The Precious Blood community celebrates the Feast of St. Gaspar on October 21. Just as our celebrations this month inspire us, I hope these articles further enrich your Precious Blood spirituality. ✠

Will the Assembly Drink the Cup Again?

By Fr. Ben Berinti, C.P.P.S., Leadership Council

The first time I drove through the small town of Rensselaer, Indiana, on the way to begin my life at St. Joseph's College, I fell in love with a beautiful Tudor-style home sitting alongside the lusciously tree-lined highway leading to the campus. I even nurtured dreams of one day tiptoeing through its grand rooms.

As fate would have it, several years later, I became friends with Chris, one of the members of the family! I not only eventually got to see the house but also stayed in the house numerous times, even housesitting while the family was on vacation.

But the first time I ever ate a meal there was a major letdown! Imagine a huge home (the family owned a car dealership), wealth hardly in short supply, a glamorous setting, and sophistication. So, when my friend talked about the "spreads" his mother put on for big family dinners, I was stoked. After all, as an Italian, I generally make most major life decisions based on food!

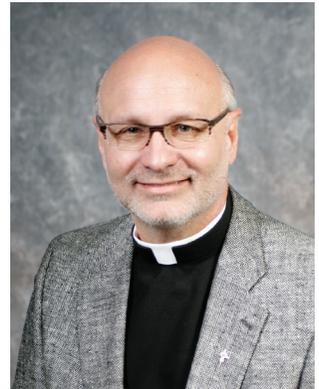
As it turned out, we were from different food planets. Chris's mom followed a meal mathematics with which I was unfamiliar. Set amid their sun-drenched, elaborately styled dining room, his family practiced the "7-people-7-pork chop" dining calculation. In contrast, my family's Italian mathematics followed the "7-people-21-pork chop" equation. For fear of depleting the fare set before us that particular day, I remember checking around the table to see who already had a particular item on their plate before I dug the spoon too far into the serving bowl to take mine.

Gospel narratives, especially those composed by St. Luke, the food master of evangelists, reveal that Jesus' dining habits in the New Testament are more in line with my Italian food mathematics—there is always more food than anyone can consume!

But I've always had a nagging question about the starving-crowd-multiple-feeding accounts, in particular. People clearly are hungry, but aren't they thirsty as well? After all, thirst is the more dangerous, life-threatening problem. We can survive much longer without food than we can without drink. While true hunger is brutalizing, thirst is a more urgent and compelling need.

As Catholics, our experience of the Eucharist is always so much about the bread and about our hungers, but what about our thirsts?

continued on page 4



Leadership, continued from page 3

What about the cup that Jesus commands us to consume? We know the words well. They are as clear and concise as possible: Take and eat. Take and drink! Jesus doesn't say: "Think about it, pray about it, imagine it, spiritualize it, theologize about it, and consider it optional." Rather, it's take and eat; take and drink!

One of the most profound losses for the Church—especially for Missionaries and Companions—in the age of the pandemic, has been the discontinuation of receiving the Blood of Christ from the chalice. Here in the Diocese of Orlando where I minister, receiving the chalice has begun to return ever so slowly, but it is still widely not practiced. I suspect this is true across the country, even in Precious Blood parishes. The Jesuit magazine *America* recently ran a wonderful article entitled "It's Time to Bring Back Communion from the Chalice."

As communities throughout the Church struggle with returning to sharing the Blood of Christ as an intimate, regular experience within the celebration of the Lord's Supper, perhaps the question Jesus poses to Zebedee's sons, James and John, is the same question meant to echo in our ears today: Can you drink the cup?

The initial response of Zebedee's sons was a rousing "AMEN! Yes Lord!" until they heard more about it.

Perhaps our fear of drinking the cup is not really about germs, hygiene, lack of frequency, or deficient theology, but rather about what it means truly to participate in this vital action of drinking the Blood of Christ. To take the chalice and drink its contents is to accept with our hands and place into our very bodies Jesus' own cup of blessing and cup of suffering.

So, in a sense, we are in good company with our hesitations, fears, and excuses. Not only the disciples but also Jesus himself attempted to pass by the cup. Truth is, however, as missionary disciples of the Lord, we never really can. Eventually, we must drink from the cup of our experiences—the wine of blessing and the wine of suffering.

The invitation to drink the cup of the Lord's Most Precious Blood is an invitation to partake in the very life force of God. Just as our blood circulates within our bodies, coming to the heart and flowing out to nourish our body, the Blood of Christ flows to our heart, into every ounce of our bodies, and nourishes us to be life for others. Blood gives us life, and the lifeblood of Christ we are invited to consume must in turn be the lifeblood we offer to others. When I drink from the chalice, I say with my life: "I am opening myself to you, Jesus, and by this action, I am willing to suffer with you. I will walk this life with you, knowing that my life will be splashed with the shared suffering and pain of those who walk near me."

The life force of God, flowing in the veins of Christ, now belongs to us, to the community of Jesus, the Body of Christ, those who are faithful to both his commands: Take and eat. Take and drink. To drink this cup at each celebration of Mass makes us participants in both the life and the blessing of God and in the struggle with God and for God against the suffering, violence, and injustice of our world.

As Catholics, our hunger for the Bread of Life is deep in our bones and in our Catholic psyche. But, what about our real thirsts and the Cup of Life the Lord offers to us?

We can survive a lot longer without food than we can without drink. Thirst is always a more urgent, compelling, and ultimately life-and-death need. Without this nourishment, we shrink and shrivel. We have no vision, no energy, no strength.

Just as tenderly and lovingly, and yet as firmly and powerfully as Jesus must have gazed into the eyes of James and John, let us imagine the Lord doing the same to each of us today as he asks us the same question he asked them: "Can you drink the cup?"

How can we not? ✠

Human Development Fund Update: Cristo Rey Kansas City

By Becky Summers, Cristo Rey Kansas City

The academic, social, and economic challenges facing low-income high school graduates as they transition to and through college are formidable. Studies confirm that just 9%-14% of students from the poorest families will complete a degree. Eighty-seven percent of Cristo Rey Kansas City's graduates are the first in their families to attend college.

With support from the Human Development Fund of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Cristo Rey's Alumni Department is able to provide supportive services that include:

- Send-off Night – transition support, dorm room essentials, and school supplies
- Alumni Data Collection – logging alumni contacts, tracking outreach, and monitoring progress
- Alumni Outreach – intervention and mentorship on college campuses
- College Retention Funds – emergency assistance for roadblocks with textbook purchases, transportation, and unanticipated fees

Beginning with its initial class of graduates in 2010, Cristo Rey has tracked 60% of graduates to college graduation or persistence to degree completion. The ability to offer these supports is only possible with the support of community partners. The Cristo Rey Kansas City community—students, graduates, families and staff—are deeply grateful for this sign of support.

Helping Alliance Go the Distance

Some 8,000 miles from her birthplace in a Rwandan refugee camp, Cristo Rey alumna Alliance Kaneza is proof that hope changes everything.

Pushed from their Ugandan homeland by historic tribal conflicts, Alliance's parents fled to a Red Cross encampment in Uganda. As the family had a continued need for protection, the United Nations



Alliance, a 2020 Cristo Rey Alumna

High Commission on Refugees held a lottery to determine who would be resettled and where. When she was 12 years old, Alliance's parents won the lottery for resettlement to Kansas City.

When Alliance enrolled at Cristo Rey, she spoke five languages, and hated school lunch, but she soaked up every lesson and piece of advice offered. She sang in the chapel choir, shared native dance, played soccer, and always achieved first honors.

Alliance is the first in her family to graduate high school and go to college. She earned a KC Scholars Scholarship that should have sent her to the University of Missouri; however, she felt more comfortable at Avila University, where she is a standout on the soccer team and pursuing degrees in business and accounting. Alliance is on track to graduate in three-and-a-half years.

Along the way, Alliance has leaned on the support of teachers and staff at Cristo Rey Kansas City, who have taken steps to ensure she has had the tools she needs to be successful. From computers to emergency assistance for her family's basic needs, the school's Alumni Department has helped Alliance navigate and clear obstacles. †



Missionaries of the Precious Blood and Adorers of the Blood of Christ visit Giano

Rome Retreat

By Fr. Ron Will, C.P.P.S., Provincial Council

Missionaries of the Precious Blood and the Adorers of the Blood of Christ from around the world went on retreat together in Rome from Sept. 3-12.

The group included regional superiors and members of their councils from our eight Missionaries of the Precious Blood Provinces and one mission. Also participating were the eight regions of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (ASC) from around the world.

The theme of the retreat was “To Receive Mercy and Find Grace,” based on the letter to the Hebrews 4:16.

Retreat directors were Sr. Patricia Pasquini, ASC, and Fr. Benedetto Labate, C.P.P.S., both Italians in Rome. The retreat was an international experience with 72 participants. Simultaneous translations of the presentations were offered in five different languages.

For me, the retreat was an experience with several layers. The first layer gave us reflections on scripture each day, which led me to new understandings of some familiar scripture passages. It led to personal encounters with God.

The second layer was discussions on Pope Francis’ encyclical “Fratelli Tutti,” which emphasizes better

relationships with those close at hand and worldwide relationships.

The third layer included side trips to Santa Maria in Trivio Church, where St. Gaspar is buried; to the ASC Generalate in Rome; to Vallecorsa, where Maria de Mattias was born; and Acuto, where Maria founded the Adorers of the Blood of Christ after being inspired by Fr. Gaspar del Buffalo's preaching.

We also visited San Felice Abbey in Giano, Italy, where Gaspar founded the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, and Albano, where Gaspar founded a major mission house in our early history.

A fourth layer included our daily masses and prayer services together. These were celebrated in multiple languages (English, Italian, Spanish, German, Polish, Portuguese, Croatian, and Kiswahili), which represented our worldwide membership.

The week concluded with retreatants discussing how we as Missionaries and Adorers can empower the laity whom we serve and with whom we work. We confirmed our closeness as Missionaries and Adorers, expressing the masculine and feminine dimensions of our Precious Blood spirituality, and also recognized we have the laity as Companions and associates, who enrich us.

Pope Francis is asking for the involvement of all people through the synodal process. St. Gaspar and St. Maria de Mattias challenge us to see beyond our present ways of living. They encourage us to dream!

There are institutional elements and charismatic elements of our Church. We need both. As Missionaries and Adorers, we are more charismatic; we are called to push the institutional Church so that it grows and doesn't stagnate.

We reported as countries on how we presently live and minister with our Companions and associates. There were different dreams in the room. The role of laity is changing. We need to think about new strategies. We wish to collaborate with the laity in a better way. There are requests for different levels of sharing the mission.

Where do we go from this moment?

Here's what I heard:

Every person is precious—a beloved son or daughter of God. Many people do not believe that about themselves. It is our Precious Blood call to help them discover that.

Empower the laity. That is Jesus' wish. He summarized his mission on earth by quoting Isaiah 42: "To release the captive...give sight to the blind...etc."

Perhaps use webinars by the new Precious Blood Spirituality Institute to help us.

All the layers of my retreat experience were enriching, but the one that had the greatest impact was learning about the Adorers of the Blood of Christ and their ministries. I did not grow up around the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, nor did I ever minister side by side with them, but they are part of our very early Precious Blood family history. Their foundress, Maria de Mattias, knew and was inspired by St. Gaspar in his early years of preaching missions in Vallecorsa. Fr. John Merlini, C.P.P.S., was her spiritual director as she established her new religious community.

Although I became aware of our international Precious Blood communities three years ago when I participated in our General Assembly in Poland, the recent retreat experience raised many important questions I would love to discuss with Adorers. It gave me a surface awareness of the Adorer community that whets my appetite to learn more. I look forward to opportunities to minister with them in the future.

The retreat experience motivates me to explore possibilities of ministering side by side with Adorers and Companions through our Precious Blood Renewal Center in Liberty, Missouri. The new offerings for spiritual growth could be so much more enriching than what we are presently able to offer. We all bring different gifts.

If there are any readers out there who would like to explore possibilities with me, I would welcome it. ✠



Mural, seen during the Encuentro (Encounter) Immersion Experience

Answering Immigration's Clarion Call

By Fr. David Matz, C.P.P.S.

Having celebrated the formation of the United States Province last June at the electoral assembly last June, several of us on the Justice and Peace committee heard a clarion call from Assembly attendees asking why we were not down on the border working with migrants and helping to reform immigration law.

Gabino Zavala, Nancy Clisbee, and I sat down during one of our breaks to create a plan for following through with that call. Part of the plan called for us to visit the border several times during the fall.

In August, I took my first journey: I attended the Encuentro (Encounter) Immersion Experience supported by the Maryknoll priests, brothers, and lay volunteers, in collaboration with the Marist brothers in El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Mexico. I gathered with nine people from around the United States for this encounter. We lived together and visited refugee centers, community organizing centers, and parishes. We

heard many reflections about the diverse and creative ways people are accompanying migrants, refugees, and immigrants locally. Stories from pastors, organizers, Border Patrol officers, historians, religious sisters, and lay volunteers offered us a rounded and complete perspective of the challenges of life on the border.

During our first encounter, a young religious sister, Sr. Krista Fara, who is a third-generation American of Mexican descent, invited us to open our ears and



hearts to the stories of the many people who would be entering our lives over the next few days.

She focused our reflection by asking three questions:

1. Where are your feet?
2. Whose feet are around you?
3. How do your feet interact with others around you?

She spoke of working in a refugee center in Juarez. To get there every day, she crosses a bridge and goes through customs. As she takes each step, she meditates and notices the art on the border of Juarez. This protest art, like graffiti, depicts the “Femicide”—pictures along the path that remember the disappeared women who continue to stand up for unjust practices of U.S. factories in Juarez and the violence inflicted by the drug cartels.

She is frightened with every step. But then she remembers Carlos, a Honduran refugee and a father of a newborn son, who said to her: “¡No se teme, hermana. Recuerdes que Dios es tu compañero! (Don’t be afraid, sister! Remember, God is your companion!) Carlos and his family walked through Guatemala and Mexico, but his faith in God—his companion—was firm. Like Carlos, Sr. Krista is aware of where her feet are and in whose feet she walks. Her feet walk guided daily my feet throughout this week of immersion.

We see so much vilification of migrants, immigrants, and refugees today in politics and in our media. As I write this, Governor Greg Abbott continues to bus large numbers of immigrants out of Texas and into other U.S. cities. Like the 30-foot border wall in El Paso, these busing activities are a political statement he is making with little regard for the human lives affected.

On the other side of the spectrum, I was moved with compassion upon seeing pictures of the mayors of New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., welcoming the strangers in their midst. What one state rejects, others welcome. This is our reality in the United States, but it still gives me hope!

One evening during my time in Texas, one of our speakers, a former Border Patrol officer, told us, “You can tell the strength of a country by the way it treats its immigrants!”

Pope Francis challenges us to open our hearts to the world. We believe all human beings are our brothers and sisters.



Labyrinth near border wall

Pope Francis writes we should concretely embody in our responses to our migrating brothers and sisters these four actions:

1. Welcome
2. Protect
3. Promote
4. Integrate

We need to journey together to build cities and countries that, while preserving their respective cultural and religious identity, are open to differences and know how to promote them in the spirit of human fraternity (Fratelli Tutti, #129). In Texas, immigrants are vilified by many. During my time in Texas, I learned many Texans choose to journey with the migrants and refugees and to build up communities—not to put these people on buses to make them someone else’s problem. They are our brothers and sisters!

In a typical Precious Blood hospitality moment, one evening our 20 feet found their way to a refugee center. We were asked to plan and prepare a meal for 50 refugees. Thanks to two of us who knew how to cook and delegate kitchen duties, we managed it. We welcomed the refugees, served them, and ate with them.

I sat with a 40-year-old man from Honduras who had just completed an eight-month journey with his wife and family of four. Abandoning his home and his

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PBMR members and staff in Washington, D.C.

PBMR Goes to Washington, D.C.

By Fr. Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S., PBMR Executive Director

Recently, a group of PBMR staff and partners attended a conference in Washington, D.C. This gathering marked the 10-year anniversary of the 2012 *Miller v. Alabama* case, which overturned mandatory life sentences for juveniles.

Since hard-on-crime legislation, more than 2,500 kids in our country received automatic sentences to die in prison—mandatory life without the possibility of parole. But after years without hope, the tides began to turn. In 2012 the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Miller v. Alabama* deemed this type of sentence unconstitutional and gave these now adults the hope of a resentencing. Since that decision, 950 men and women out of the 2,500 have come home—a number of PBMR staff and community members being among them.

The gathering was sponsored by the Incarcerated Children Advocacy Network (ICAN) as a way to gather and celebrate the resilience and contribution this community of formerly incarcerated men and women are making in the world today.

PBMR's Fred Weatherspoon and Mac Hagerman were among those who traveled to Washington for the celebration. When asked about the experience, Fred said: "I was choosing to take part due to my sentence of natural life that I received at the age of 17 as well as my work at PBMR as program manager for youth-based programs."

According to Fred, this was the first time an event such as this has happened in the U.S. He was struck by how life-giving and moving it was to be in the

company of so many who had similar sentences as he did. Everyone understood each other. “Being with community” he said, “with so many that have shared your journey, will be forever planted in my soul.”

Because of people like Fred, Mac, and countless others, PBMR has become a gathering place—a safe place—for men and women who are returning home. After spending decades in prison, it's amazing to see so many men and women come home, create a support system for one another, and carry such vigor to give of themselves to their communities and to today's youth. We are beyond blessed to have so many as a part of our PBMR family and witness how they make a difference in the lives of today's youth and advocate for systems change.

These healers are all around us. This month, PBMR held its first healing circle for formerly incarcerated women. Many having been inside for decades. Pamela, our restorative justice advocate and trainer, and Teresa Davenport, our Family Forward Housing Coordinator, helped create an incredibly welcoming and healing space for these women. One could both hear laughter and see tears as they shared their stories with one another.

Our spirituality calls us to remain hopeful in the midst of struggle and trauma. It is not a Pollyanna type of hope meant to sooth and gloss over; rather it is the hope that slowly emerges from deep within, from the stories of pain and trauma. It is the hope that resides even in the face of death and allows us to move through our sorrow, with the promise that this is not the end, and we are not alone.

Thomas Merton maintains that although conflict will always be a part of the human experience, beyond that suffering lives hope in the promise of transformation and healing. He remarks that we can allow God's grace to seep into the crevices of our lives and make us into a new creation.

Let me close with, perhaps, an unlikely author, Tupac (Shakur):

*Did you hear about the rose that grew
from a crack in the concrete?*

*Proving nature's law is wrong it
learned to walk without having feet.
Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams,
It learned to breathe fresh air.
Long live the rose that grew from concrete
when no one else ever cared.*

At the end of the day, as I reflect on the many difficult stories and realities, I am strengthened knowing there are those who, in the midst of their own stories of pain, offer themselves to the world. In allowing abundant grace to seep into their cracks, they bring so much light and goodness into the world. ✦

Immigration, continued from page 9

construction business in Honduras, they left to seek a new life for themselves. He was convinced that the existence they knew, disfigured as it is with violence, corruption, or lethal poverty, did not measure up to the promise that is every person's birthright.

Fernando showed me pictures of his journey to the border, and I began to understand why it took him so long to arrive at Juarez/El Paso. At the road stops along the way, he worked for contractors in the various communities, making money and also helping to create communities of desperately hopeful migrants, each nurturing solidarity as a skill in order to survive as authentic human beings.

I asked Fernando where his wife and children were. He said they were visiting another refugee center where his wife cooks and feeds other refugees. Fernando said: “Through all of this, Padre David, God has never left our sides and will continue to walk with us!” Firmly fixed in faith, he reminded me of the lesson to be aware of my feet, the feet around me, and how my feet interact with others! God walks with us all and never abandons us! Experiencing the strength of Fernando's faith caused me to confront that my faith pales in comparison to his.

There is so much more that I gained from my immersion at the border.

There is more to come from me as well as the other members of our committee. My feet have not finished walking. Join us on the journey! ✦

Evangelization: A Pastoral Endeavor

By Dennis Keller, Amicus

Several months ago, the *New Wine Press* published an article I wrote after visiting family in Ohio. It focused on the announcement of the Beacons of Light project in the Cincinnati Archdiocese.

That project seemed accountancy-driven rather than pastoral. Years ago, a discussion about John Paul II's "Redemptoris Missio" at the Brighton Deanery of Lansing diocese created in me an awareness of evangelization. Based on that discussion, I believe the Beacons of Light project would have more redemptive value were it focused on evangelization. Paul VI wrote of evangelization in "Evangelii Nuntiandi." Pope Francis recently addressed evangelization in his encyclical on the reform of the Curia, "Praedicate Evangelium."

Evangelization opens humanity to awareness of God's presence. When based on sound scriptural, theological, and liturgical enactment and expression, evangelization plants seeds in the consciousness of people.

The Hebrew scriptures are moral guidelines revealing how horizontal and vertical relationships can work. Hebrew experience tells of a people's cycles of failure, enslavement, and redemption by God's freedom-creating presence. Always, failure leads to God's intervention to restore freedom.

Christian scriptures present God as near, always with a foundation on Mosaic law. Christ reveals God as compassionate, merciful, just, and giving undeserved loving kindness. The ministry of Jesus is a constant promotion of freedom to those broken in body and spirit. Our liturgies—Word and Eucharist—deliver transcendence to humanity with impactful immanence. Through miracles, Jesus returns victims to full participation in communal life. Again, freedom is the result of God's presence. Our world is broken and succumbing to autocracy and rapacious theft of personal dignity. Wealth and power hold sway over truth and faith.

William Barclay's commentary on Second Corinthians contrasts Mosaic law with the Law of

Christ. Law by itself makes us defaulting criminals of God's law. Christ refreshed that law, making us children, albeit often disobedient children. For Jesus, the Father waits for us to come home. Individual and corporate brokenness block that path. Like the Hebrew nation before Passover, we need the Blood of the Lamb to rob death of its sting.

Evangelization reveals the truth of God. That truth is repeated in the Our Father phrase "thy will be done." God's will is that all—all—be redeemed and live. Gerhard Lohfink explained that to me in his book on the Our Father. Salvation is God's response to human choices, whether healthy or disease ridden. Our hearts—the organ of listening and choice—need to be tuned to God's interventions for us so we partner with God's work. Brokenness stands in the way of God's will.

What my formation, priesthood, and more than 40 years of human resources work have taught me is that all are wounded by personal brokenness. It is a type of PTSD. The ongoing study of veterans returning from war teaches us about the impact on the psyche of abandonment, loss, abuse (sexual and/or trauma induced), racism, poverty, rejection, and failure of affection. Most brokenness begins in childhood but is buried and suppressed. Where the psyche—the spirit—has been broken, it develops triggers that drive involuntary acting-out each time the psyche encounters an event, a word, a threat that matches the event(s) creating those triggers. Violence and anger are examples; acceptance of abuse and self-defeating behaviors are manifestations. What is broken is deeply rooted in our psyche.

In this situation of brokenness, we instinctively search for redemption. As members of Community, Companions, and Amici, we focus on honoring and imitating the Precious Blood.

In "The Message of the Precious Blood Spirituality Today," Robert Schreiter asks, "How does God offer us redemption?" Redemption symbolized in the Blood in the veins of incarnated Jesus, is life lived—something we should emphasize alongside "life poured out." His

life is an integral contribution to the efficacy of “life poured out.” The Blood sealing the covenant, the validation of suffering accepted and endured in concert with the Cross, the Blood collected in the Cup for transfusing the broken. These are the crux of redemption for broken spirits. Jesus healed and gave back as living value those whose brokenness alienated them from the needy community.

How does this work now? Schreiter answers his question by saying it is grace, the life of God supplanting and assisting person-life. That lifeblood of the Incarnate God entering time and space changes cultures and society. Culture derives from living, not from law. Law enforces by threat of punishment, adding another deterrent to freedom. Brokenness does not respond to punishment, except to assign guilt and more loss. Evangelization confronts death, heals the brokenness in spirit, and applies vital life to hearts of the needy.

Why do we fail to recognize brokenness? Often the antidote to stress from brokenness is to get over it and suck it up. Such advice does not take the place of redemption. Humanity tends to stifle what hurts, to overlook it, to discover distractions. It offers denial in place of healing. Settling for materiality over healing, we rush toward spiritual and corporeal death by pursuing “stuff” that lacks strength and permanence to heal. Materiality, consumerism, pursuit of power, wealth, fame—all are merely a third coat of cheap paint over rotten wood.

Evangelization is not for membership, creating a voting majority to influence policy, legal judgments, and enforcement. The goal of evangelization is redemption/salvation, individual and collective. Evangelization begins when we recognize brokenness and seek redemptive relief.

Achieving wholeness means liberation from what possesses us, steals our freedom. The PTSD model demonstrates what it means to be held captive. Every time a trigger is squeezed, terror is revisited and/or self-defeating behavior occurs, adding to the brokenness yet unhealed. People suffering from abandonment, real or imagined, created by abuse—sexual, combat created, verbal, physical, poverty driven,

self-value stealing—these people are us. A prominent psychologist insists all living persons are challenged by brokenness. Understanding this, preachers find here an answer to the recurring complaint of religion’s irrelevance.

How to begin a “new” evangelization? As preachers and modelers of the Blood, we need to search into the spirits of worshiping assemblies. Jesus came to reveal God who loves us unconditionally. The Blood in living veins and Blood poured out are proof and medicine. Our God is a saving, compassionate, merciful being. God never seeks to condemn, only to save. According to Hebrew Scripture scholars, God’s justice sees to it that all have what is needed to thrive. Release from brokenness is necessary for thriving.

Part two of this reflection will look at signs of the times and themes to address those that harm. †

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