

THE New Wine PRESS

Volume 31 No. 4 • December 2022



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



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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 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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Cultivating a Servant Leadership Style

By Br. Daryl Charron, C.P.S., Leadership Council

Recently, I attended the funeral of Fr. Don Senior, CP, at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Hyde Park, Chicago. During the service, I found myself reminiscing about his impact on my life.

I remembered him teaching a biblical course in 1993 while we were in the Holy Land with the CTU Israel Study Program. As a young missionary just preparing for ministry, I was amazed at his biblical knowledge.

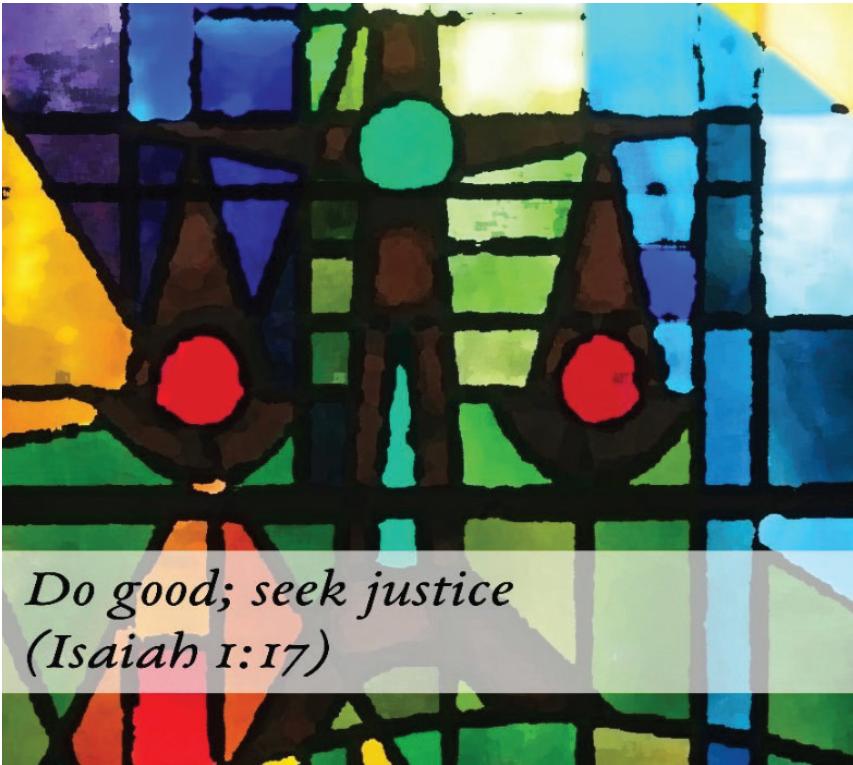
Even more prevalent in my memory was reading his book, "The Gift of Administration." Fr. Ron Will recommended it to me as I prepared to be director of the Vietnam Mission. The book was extremely helpful in developing my leadership skills. I still find it insightful and full of wisdom as I read it again upon Don's death.

In his book, he defined leadership as "the ability to influence others toward a common mission." Further, he said: "Through personal example and inspiration, through organization skill and effective communication, and with persevering effort, the leader can move others to work together for a common purpose. Leaders have to keep focused on the mission and be faithful to it." These words, especially, make me value the importance of carefully planning the mission.

Don believed that the inspiration for all leadership in the New Testament is rooted in the example of Jesus. His qualities of compassion, integrity, and selfless service in the carrying out of his mission are reflected in the virtues lifted up in the examples of early community leaders such as Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and Priscilla and Aquila. I like that Don appreciated both male and female leadership skills in the early church. They certainly were evident and present.

Don's assessment of leadership skills is relevant for any given religious congregation today. I agree with him that one of the most respected descriptions of leadership exercised was promoted by Robert K. Greenleaf, who believed the most effective leader was the "servant leader." Greenleaf stressed that a crucial starting point for practicing servant leadership is reaching out to others in need rather than being absorbed by one's own needs and ambition. He emphasized that the ultimate goal of such servant leadership is to help a community thrive so that through their mission they can contribute to the good of society.

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*Do good; seek justice
(Isaiah 1:17)*

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

2023

By Dennis Coday, Director of Engagement, Precious Blood Renewal Center

For more than 100 years, Christians worldwide have set aside time in January to remember Jesus' prayer for his disciples at the Last Supper: "That they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe" (John 17:21).

It is the prayer of Christian unity, and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2023 runs from January 18-25, between the feasts of St. Peter and St. Paul. This ecumenical effort began in New York in 1908 with the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute, a ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, who were founded to work toward the unity of the Church and all people through prayer, dialogue, and scholarship.

The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity has organized the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity since 1966. Each year a local ecumenical group is asked to prepare a basic text on a biblical theme.

The Commission on Faith and Order and the Pontifical Council jointly edit, publish, and

distribute materials, which include reflections on the biblical theme, an ecumenical worship service, and biblical reflections and prayers for each of the eight days. Those resources can be found here: <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/settimana-di-preghiera-per-l-unita.html>

The biblical theme for 2023, "Do Good; Seek Justice" is from Isaiah 1:17.

Precious Blood Renewal Center is joining with the Liberty (Missouri) Ministerial Alliance and the Ecumenical and Interreligious Office of the Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2023. Here is the full slate of events that are planned.

- **January 19, Thursday, 7 p.m.**: We launch the week with an ecumenical prayer service at St. James Catholic Church, Liberty, Missouri.
- **January 24, Tuesday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.** in the Renewal Center: Presenters will be Fr. Sunoj Thomas, who is pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Gladstone, Missouri, and holds a

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licentiate degree from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and Alan Edelman, a native of Kansas City, Missouri, who holds a master's degree in Jewish education from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Alan will be speaking on the prophetic tradition in Judaism.

- **January 24, Tuesday, 7 p.m.**: "Introduction to the Church of the Latter-day Saints" will be presented by local LDS member Brent Johnston, who will give an overview of the beliefs and practices of the LDS Church with discussion and comparisons to other churches. This event will be at the Renewal Center.

We would like to invite the full Precious Blood Community to join us in marking this annual octave of prayer. More information about these events and how to register for them will be on the Renewal Center website by mid-December (pbrenewalcenter.org).

In closing, we offer these words for reflection. They come from the biblical reflection prepared by the Commission on Faith and Order and the Pontifical Council:

"Isaiah challenged God's people in his day to learn to do good together; to seek justice together, to rescue the oppressed together, to defend the orphan and plead for the widow together. The prophet's challenge applies equally to us today. How can we live our unity as Christians so as to confront the evils and injustices of our time? How can we engage in dialogue, increase awareness, understanding and insight about one another's lived experiences?"

"These prayers and encounters of the heart have the power to transform us—individually and collectively. Let us be open to God's presence in all our encounters with each other as we seek to be transformed, to dismantle the systems of oppression, and to heal the sins of racism. Together, let us engage in the struggle for justice in our society. We all belong to Christ." ♦

Leadership, continued from page 2

The education I gleaned from Don's book helped me develop my own leadership style. The Precious Blood Community provided me opportunities to expand that preparation with an online workshop last year and a special retreat this year—both of them on leadership. I am grateful for these opportunities in which to grow. I especially enjoyed these two activities in collaboration with the ASC sisters. I learned a lot from them and their ability to clearly live out their guiding principles of collegiality, subsidiarity, and accountability when fulfilling their leadership responsibilities.

While in Rome at the retreat this past September, I especially enjoyed the "Healing of Relationships" session. We were challenged to look at how currently globalized indifference dominates and how it leads to the erosion of fraternal values and cynicism.

At the retreat, we learned that isolation and closure in oneself or in one's own interests are never the way to restore hope and bring about renewal. Instead, we are to be about closeness and the culture of encounter. In a polarized world, we are to say "no" to a culture of confrontation and "yes" to a culture of encounter.

As leaders in our community, we are to strive toward peaceful coexistence and to foster the culture of encounter, which requires placing human dignity and respect for the common good at the center of all political, social, and economic actions. ♦

Precious Blood Renewal Center

St. Lucy Day Celebration

Wednesday, December 13, 10 a.m.-noon

Out of Darkness, Light:

Winter Solstice Celebration

Wednesday, December 21, 6:30-9 p.m.

Visit pbrenewalcenter.org/events
for more information.

All times are Central Time Zone.

Evangelization: A Pastoral Endeavor: Part II

By Dennis Keller, Amicus

Hebrew scriptures chronicle a repeated cycle: freedom attacked by idolatry, resulting in slavery. Idolatry resulted from leadership's political expediency: Power, the aphrodisiac of humankind, became the god they worshipped. Repeatedly, God brought salvation—always through the voices of prophets, those speakers of truth.

Today, a global movement toward authoritarianism appears in country after country. Nations surrender tradition and freedom to a strongman serving self and a cadre of like-minded people. Freedom becomes a corpse created by charlatans. Free democratic elections morph into marketing illusions and lies that oppose a commitment to a free, common good.

This idolatry destroys community and denies the common good. Human dignity and worth are prostituted; ruined lives are collateral damage. The poor and working public lose their voice; the infirm are a drain on society; the old and mentally challenged are encouraged to leave the world—quickly. Compassion, mercy, and love of neighbor are mocked as irrelevant to economic viability.

There's work to be done. There is truth to be revealed; community begs to be renewed; dignity and worth of persons must be restored. Who will rise up as the prophets of our age? Can it be those purveyors of reconciliation, the Missionaries?

Truth

"Teach us to love eternal truth and seek its freedom everywhere." —Hymn Morning Prayer Week I

That short line from the Morning Prayer hymn insists on the necessity of truth for freedom. Do we seriously want the burden of freedom? In the run up to the Exodus, many preferred slavery in Egypt to the impending desert trial. Egypt was predictable, with security for the compliant. Work was hard, but there was food to eat. Compliance and conformity aren't all that difficult, right? For those in charge, obedience, rules, regulations, and precepts equate to control. The covenant of Sinai and of Calvary were different, however, in that each is geared to freedom by the truth of the living code.

The truth we rely on, expose to others, revel in, forget in the heat of daily battles/crosses, struggle to believe, is that truth of the burning bush. God is with us always. God is a jealous God, who calls us. God frees us, makes us whole—each person, all persons. It is God's will all are saved from the thieves of freedom and dignity. God's justice insists each has what is needed to thrive. Richard Rohr, OFM, states the eternal truth of God, saying to each: "I'm going to love you into Wholeness."

Truth today lacks a compelling effect in global socio-economic-political reality. In confirmation hearings, recent Supreme Court nominees appear to have perjured themselves. There has been no uproar about this perfidy. Because their lying ultimately resulted in a desirable effect—the rollback of Roe v. Wade—it is judged a good thing, or ignored. The intent of packing the court was to assure executive influence over the court's decision making, not overturning Roe v. Wade. There was no outcry; no bishop raised a voice of criticism. So, is it now the rule that the end justifies the means?

Truth isn't easy to come by. Pope Francis insists that it requires discernment. It requires freedom from ideologies, from conspiracy theories. It requires setting aside emotional partisanship. Preachers are charged with being prophetic, speaking truth even when inconvenient or contrary to the prevailing influencing of seekers of power, wealth, and fame. Prophecy has as its object the revelation of truth. It is the Blood of the Covenant demanding and supporting truth and its contemporary application the prophet shouts. Evangelization reveals the will of God in lived situations and events.

Community

Ruby Sales, in a meditation by Richard Rohr, writes of the current state of community: "It's hard to love yourself when you follow people who degrade your humanity and teach you to hate other people. It is hard to love yourself when you're being used by powerful people to carry out an agenda that buttresses their power but disempowers you."

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Evangelization, continued from page 5

This is the culture and politics of division, destroying community.

Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, defines followers of Jesus Christ as an integral community, sharing common table, common worship, and common care for one another—always in truth. Lying is destructive to community. That is the importance of the story of Ananias and Sapphira, for example.

In every healing, Jesus' miracles returned ostracized persons to participation in community endeavors. Disease, mental illness, and physical incapacity were healed. Peter's mother-in-law is such a case. She was bedridden, but healed, got up and served Peter's guests. Central to community is active participation of its members.

Evangelization is about community. Those charged with preaching and witnessing to the faith are sustained because they are in community. The more inclusive, engaging, and life-filled an assembly, the more connected are its community members. The visible signs of community are works of charity, liturgical participation, and prayers for those absent so they may return to community.

Preachers and martyrs—witnesses—discover in the Body of Christ a great connection to communal awareness and relationships. This is the Blood of the Cup, a sharing in the vitality of the Living Blood, nourishing and healing. A thriving community is connected by the Blood of the Cup. Think of the “Way” Jesus established, and its effects. Those early communities abolished “exclusion,” “hunger,” and “poverty.” That’s Luke’s message in Acts.

Personhood

In the signs of the times, there is much that masks freedom-robbing slavery of spirit. The sexual revolution, so quickly embraced by the secular world, remakes into pleasurable biology the Genesis admonition of “the two shall become one flesh.” Continuing to consider and live human sexuality according to Augustine and his neo-Platonic disregard for the body denigrates this tremendously wonderful gift of God. Augustine insists human sexuality is just a source of

concupiscence, an effect of his coined phrase, “original sin.” Only practice of virtue overcomes it. His is an adolescent view of sexuality. There is needed an intense study of human sexuality made by married persons, not celibates.

Despite the mistaken secular view of human sexuality as recreational playing with another, there is much more to human sexuality than being an object of pleasure or enjoying a toy.

The clerical sex abuse scandal has scandalized the faithful. The terrors and tragedies of child abuse permanently affect the psyche of victims. The horrific hierarchy mistake is a failure to understand this. There was/is no understanding that post-traumatic stress disorder arises with sexual abuse as well as other traumas. Abuse robs its victims of viable personalities and freedom to choose, actually freedom to intimately love another. Child abuse was no mere sin of an offender to be forgiven with the admonition to go and sin no more. Abuse is and was an attack on the very spirit of victims, modifying personalities to the point where normal marital relationships became impossible and a fearful reenactment of the horrors by the abuser.

Jesus tells us we ought not be frightened by those who kill the body. We must fear those who kill the spirit (soul). Abuse diseases the soul and threatens relationships as well as love given and received. Why is this not on par with a necessary focus on abortion? A life/lives are murdered. Is not pro-life a movement for all human life?

Despite this understanding, we continue to tolerate murder, violence, and enslavement. Our hearts should grieve about the lives lost in Ukraine just as much as the murder of students in school shootings. How is it so easy to forget the narratives of human creation in Genesis? In one narrative, God stoops down and breathes breath into the nostrils of formed clay. In the other narrative God states, “Let us create humanity in our image and likeness: male and female they created them.”

In both narratives, there is something of God that brings life. This is akin to a spark given, left to be fanned into a bright flame of a growing personality.

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Fight for Justice: Eliminate “Isms”

By Pam Demasi, Liberty, Missouri Companion

All of us are called to do the work of justice—and that work will look different from individual to individual. Personally, I want to use my voice, through my writing, to awaken others to the reality of suffering and injustice in the world. I want to encourage others to allow God’s love to flow through them, transforming and healing pain.

What is justice? It is simply love in action. Love, charity, compassion, generosity, and selflessness are clear signs of God’s presence. War, pandemic, violence, starvation, poverty, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and other ills and discriminatory behaviors call us to respond with justice.

The “ism” words give us the language to discuss specific forms of discrimination and oppression. “Isms” are beliefs and behaviors based in stereotypes, fear, and ignorance. They are inextricably associated with identity—created through culture, education, class, race, friends, gender, clothes, and money.

I recently watched a documentary about Dolores Huerta, an American labor leader, civil rights activist, and farm labor leader. Dolores spent three decades advocating for safer working conditions with the United Farm Workers (UFW), which she co-founded with Cesar Chavez. While fighting for the rights of others, she endured racism and sexism. Even now her name is not widely known.



Dolores Huerta picture by US Department of Labor, Wikimedia Commons

Although Dolores married young and had 11 children, she did not stay home. Instead, she was a community organizer. In the documentary, Dolores and her children explore how growing up with a mother as an activist impacted the family.

She challenged gender discrimination

within the farm workers’ movement. As a woman and a Catholic, Dolores consciously incorporated feminism into her fight for workers’ rights and impacted how female workers were treated. Dolores fought for unemployment and healthcare benefits for agricultural workers. As the feminist movement expanded, she showed it was no longer a movement just for white women. A key part of Dolores’s platform was reducing the use of harmful pesticides in farming. As her work grew more feminist in nature, this became more important because pesticides cause pregnancy complications such as decreased fertility, spontaneous abortion, stillbirth, and developmental abnormalities.

Later, Dolores worked as a lobbyist to improve workers’ legislative representation and to elect more Latinas to political office. She was an honorary co-chair of the Women’s March on Washington on January 21, 2017.

Dolores said, “Hatred and racism are extensions of violence, and if we become that which we are trying to end, then we are becoming like the oppressor.”

In addition to Dolores, I thought about others who do this work and what they have to confront. I thought of Lora McDonald and Ann Suellentrop, two Kansas City activists, who like Dolores, confront gender discrimination.

As the executive director of More2 (Metro Organization for Racial and Economic Equity), Lora tackles issues such as criminal justice, education, healthcare, and immigration. “A regular challenge that I face with the public is that I can be seen as ‘mean’ or ‘aggressive’ when pursuing systemic change. Challenging the status quo is never seen as kind or nice, even if the change we are pursuing is in the interest of the common good. Meaningful change comes at a price, at times, and sometimes that price is how people see me.”

Ann Suellentrop has been involved with human rights causes and the abolition of nuclear

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Participants in a reconciliation circle at PBMR's new healing center

You're in the Right Place

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

In his latest book, "Forgive Everyone Everything," Fr. Greg Boyle, sj, writes that scripture scholars contend the original language of the Beatitudes should not be "Blessed are the singlehearted" or "Blessed are the peace workers" or "Blessed are those who struggle for justice." Instead, he posits, a better translation would be "You're in the right place if you are single-hearted" or "You're in the right place if you work for peace."

As we began to dream and plan for PBMR in 2000, there were a couple of non-negotiable points. First, we had to be in a neighborhood/community that knew first-hand the pains of violence and incarceration. It would have to be a community that allowed us to be proximate to those we served/accompanied.

So, in 2002, when the doors of PBMR opened, we moved into the Back-of-the-Yards community on the south side of Chicago. Beginning in a small janitor's apartment at St. Michael the Archangel parish, the four of us (Joe Nassal, Bill Nordenbrock, Denny Kinderman, and myself) began our work. Little did we know what exactly would lie ahead. But, committed to the spirituality of the Precious Blood and the gift of the ministry of reconciliation, we set forth to try to be witness to God's presence and love amid the trauma of incarceration and violence. In addition, we sought to be a resource of renewal for the church.

In 2004, we had the opportunity to move into the second floor of a converted school building that

was once the St. John of God Parish. After the parish closed in the mid-90s, the building was used as a residence for youth in the care of the state. Today, with more staff and community members, we still seek to be that presence of God's overwhelming and healing love. We have opened several houses that serve as a home for people who are coming home from prison and families who have unstable housing situations.

Early in November of this year, we opened a small center about a block from PBMR's main building. It had been a well-known neighborhood market selling food and liquor for many years. In recent years, it stood abandoned, a sign of the devastation our neighborhood faces. Because of generous benefactors and supporters, we were able to obtain the building. In a community effort encompassing supporters, staff, and young people, the building that houses the center has been completely rehabbed and restored.

We've dedicated this space to become a healing center where families and young people can experience the love and care that is at the heart of the spirituality of the Precious Blood. In this center (yet to be named), we will focus solely on healing: individual, family, and community. It has already become a space where people can build, renew, and repair relationships.

At the very first gathering, even before the building was fully complete, Sr. Donna held a circle for mothers who had lost their sons or daughters to homicide in

the past year. It was a powerful circle from which families could finally speak of their loss and pain among people who were willing to listen without judgment.

Since that first circle, several gatherings have been held in this new space—for young people coming home from jail and detention, men and women previously incarcerated who work to support those returning home, and PBMR staff who rely on strong community relationships to do the work we do.

Sr. Elaine Roulette, the founder of My Mother's House in New York, was asked, "How do you work with the poor?" She answered, "You don't. You share your life with the poor." As we have found so often, it can be as easy as crying together, laughing together, or sharing time with one another.

I remember the very first conversations we had about the creation of a ministry of reconciliation. We asked one another, "What if there was a place in the community where people could experience care and support, a place where we could concentrate on healing and transformation? The "old May Street store" has become such a place. It is solely dedicated to healing and transformation. Perhaps that should be the name—PBMR's "Center for Healing and Transformation."

I am often asked how I have been able to do this work for as long as I have: "With all the heartache and disappointment, how do you keep yourself going?" I genuinely believe I have persevered because I am in the right place. I am where I should be. When you are where God wants you to be, incredible things happen.

As we close out this 20th anniversary of PBMR, know of my deep gratitude for all the encouragement, care, and support for the hospitality, hope, and healing for our youth and families here in Back of the Yards. ♦

Evangelization, continued from page 6

Each person has such a flame. Racism, nationalism, gender bias, language, skin color—anything that is used to lessen the stature of any person—is an affront to the creator. Evangelization must point out the sinfulness of discrimination and replace it with the compassion, mercy, and loving kindness of the creator

of all of us. But first, the preacher, the witness, must discover within the faith to believe God creates all persons equally, deserving of respect and dignity.

God's work in salvation history frees people. Jesus heals to return afflicted ones to community and full participation. Communities must have core values in which all people are respected, welcomed, made safe, and have a role. It is in community—more than in a socio-economic relationship—that the Blood of the Cup provides continually and effectively the medicine and nourishment for healing. And that healing is a dynamic word: Reconciliation.

I believe if we were focused on the three considerations of truth, community, and person, our preaching would welcome those returning for nourishment, for healing, and for engagement in the Will of God. Study, dialogue within assemblies, and intense prayer are essential steps in this New Evangelization. ♦

"-ISMS", continued from page 7

weapons for many years. She has been a member of PeaceWorks KC, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability for more than a decade. She is a follower of the Catholic Worker movement and the Gospel of Nonviolent Love of Friends and Enemies.

We can trace the issues that Dolores, Lora, and Ann work to eradicate back to "isms." So many problems are tied to racism, classism, and sexism. Precious Blood spirituality sends us out to the edges where people are suffering because of discrimination. As members of the Precious Blood community, each of us must commit to coming to terms with our social location and how it relates to systemic racism, poverty, militarism, ecological devastation, and some of the distorted moral narratives that are so prevalent. Do you struggle with seeing assertive women as too aggressive? Are there privileges you need to acknowledge or let go of? Are there commitments you need to reevaluate?

I hope you will check out the documentary on Dolores on PBS. To find out more about Lora or Ann visit More2 at <https://more2.org> or PeaceWorksKC at <https://peaceworkskc.org/>. ♦

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"For me, life in community
is everything."

-Saint Gaspar del Bufalo,
founder

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