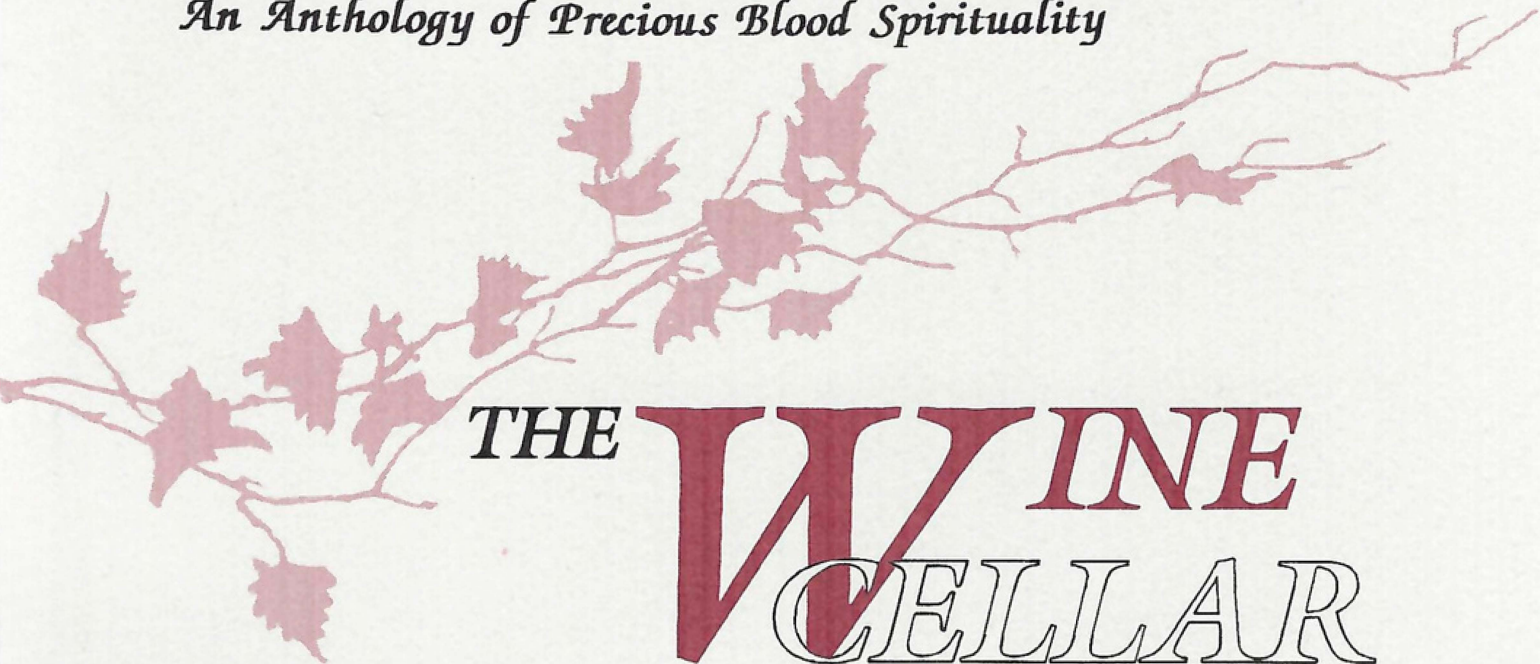


An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality



*THE WINE
CELLAR*

June 1996 • Number 6



Peace

*The heart of Jesus
is the wine cellar
of the Blood of Christ.*

St. Gaspar del Bufalo

THE
WINE
CELLAR

An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality

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The Practice of Peace

O God, remember not only the women and men of good will, but also those of ill will. But do not only remember the suffering they have inflicted on us, remember the fruits we bought thanks to this suffering: our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility; the courage, the generosity, the greatness of heart that has grown out of all this. And when they come to judgment, let all the fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness. Amen. Amen. Amen.

When the Ravensbruck concentration camp was liberated at the end of World War II, the prayer quoted above was found near the body of a dead child. This particular camp, established by the Nazis in 1938, was exclusively for women. By the end of the war, 50,000 women had died there. It is said that cruel medical and biological experiments too horrible to mention were conducted at Ravensbruck.

We can scarcely imagine the torment and torture the author of this prayer endured. But her words reflect a person who spent her life in the practice of peace. She prays for her persecutors. She asks God to accept her suffering and the suffering of her friends and family as atonement for the brutality of her enemies. It is a prayer that reflects how the good in us can redeem the bad in others; how the just can save the unjust; how love for friend or enemy is not only possible but is the only *practical* way the reign of God becomes visible in our world.

As Precious Blood people, our challenge of peace is to fashion faith-filled families and compassionate communities of remembrance and reconciliation. We do this by telling the truth of justice to those forces that seek to disfigure the face of the earth through violence,

injustice, and oppression. We do this by seeing victims as human persons and offering a place where they can find refuge, safety, and a chance to tell their stories. We do this by connecting our own story and the story of our fractured world with the story of a God who longs for a peace that endures and a justice that lingers into eternity.

This issue of *THE WINE CELLAR* explores the true nature and practice of peace. Alan Hartway shows us how our language “reflects attitudes and attitudes shape actions.” A language of peace conveys a sense of story that includes both our wounds and our wonders, our sorrows and our sacred moments of joy. Joyce Lehman tells of her personal journey of taking the vow of nonviolence. Her reflection invites us to hear the music of God and join the dance of nonviolence. This personal involvement in the search for peace in one of those places on our planet today where the evil of violence and war has stunned the world is captured eloquently in Willi Klein’s essay on Bosnia. In a country where the blood of so many screams for peace, Father Klein shows how the spirituality we share holds seeds of hope and reconciliation. Finally, Stephanie Mertens explains how one of our sister communities, the Ruma Adorers of the Blood of Christ, practice peace. Sparked by the witness and memory of the Martyrs of Charity, her community has taken specific steps in becoming peacemakers and justice seekers.

Our hope is that this issue of *THE WINE CELLAR* will inspire all of us to heroic witness for the cause of peace. From the words we use in our daily conversations in community to the witness we give in our places of ministry; from our prayers for peace to the letters we write on behalf of social justice issues; from our attempts to heal the wounds in our personal relationships to our attempts to love those we call our enemies, may our practice of peace in the name of the blood of Christ be a remedy of healing our broken world so desperately seeks.

Postscript: This is my last issue as editor of *THE WINE CELLAR*. Though I will continue to serve on the editorial board, Alan Hartway will become the new editor beginning this summer. I am grateful to all of you for your generous support of this publication.



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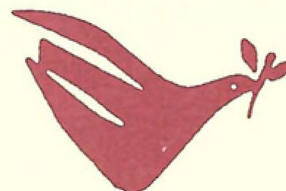
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A Poetics of Peace

By Alan Hartway, CPPS

At the end of World War I, when the French government closed the official *War Journal*, the writer concluded with these words, “Thanks be to God, who gave us the victory!” That final word rang well in the ears of all at the time. It is a word that also reflected attitudes, and these attitudes shaped the way in which the government and society moved into its future. The word *victory* is from the vocabulary of war. Indeed, as humans were to discover all too quickly, it was not after all “the war to end all wars.”

Some of this same language filled our own national consciousness during and at the end of the Vietnam War. It was a war to be won; we had supposed that there was going to be a victory. According to the language of war, there was no victory, and whatever happened, which we still cannot identify, we were not prepared for it.

Suppose we could rewrite that final sentence of the French *War Journal*; suppose we could have written, “Thanks be to God who gave us peace.” Imagine that, during and at the end of the Vietnam War, we

had this goal of peace. Attitudes change. These peace-filled attitudes could shape a very different future. Peace is very different from victory.

These examples among many others suggest that peace is not merely the absence of war or only the cessation of hostilities. Peace is its own state and process, and peacemaking is clearly a matter of language.

Language reflects attitudes and attitudes shape actions. An important part of a condition of peace is the language, the choice of

words, and the vocabulary people use. Our music, media, and mass culture are rooted in language. Poetics is a study of the way we use language, our speech in practice.

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Peace has its own language, its own poetics, its own way of using words. In order to imagine what peace might feel like, it is necessary to begin to reflect and imagine for ourselves what a poetics of peace might contain.

Perhaps we can begin with a consideration of some of the contents of a poetics of peace.

These could include the formation of communal memory, a hearth and haven where stories of wounds would be respected, the quality St. Gaspar called *hilariter*, the language of inclusion, and a direct naming of things for what they are.

Communal Storytelling

In Reconciliation Bob Schreiter speaks of our human need for meaning and identity. We establish these for ourselves through story. Every person's story is selectively composed and told out of the experiences of life. We come to know ourselves and others through

story. At this level these narratives are personal and individual even though the story itself includes many other people. We all know that if several people relate a single event each one experienced at the same time, each telling of the event by these different people will be different. Memories are selective. There are many reasons why we do this, mostly because we work almost unconsciously to fit each new experience and each new person encountered into our own personal story of meaning and security.

Because personal meaning and security are so important to us individually, it requires a new effort and a movement outside of one's self to tell a story again and anew, and in doing so, lift that story up out of one's own smaller story into the larger story of community. Pope John XXIII reminds us of this important principle in *Pacem in Terris*, “[the] peace of each country [is] necessarily connected with the peace of all other countries [130].” We are interconnected and interdependent. There is another larger narrative that tells our story differently.

In our own precious blood family experience, each of us has a story to tell of who we are and why we are here. We have learned to fit the personal, individual story into the larger communal story of our province and society. The precious blood families, in turn, understand the place of our smaller story in the broad history of the Church and our particular historical moment. Even more sweepingly, we have a sense of where we fit into the story of our culture.

This ever-widening circle of story is very important in a poetics of peace. As long as the story remains purely personal and individual, individual meaning is quite limited and security never complete. It is important to tell our story in the context of the larger circles of story and constantly attend to where we and our story fit in. When we lose that sense of place, we are not at peace. A poetics of peace requires a communal sense of story.

*A poetics of peace requires
a communal sense of story.*

A Hearth and Haven for Wounds

When the Soviet Union collapsed in upon itself, we spoke of the peace dividend, which was to use the language of war or to think of peace in some strange economic way. When peace almost befell us, we were hardly ready for it. All our energy had for so long been directed toward maintaining cold war, preparations for defense, and the nightmare of nuclear destruction. We have lived through a century of tremendous bloodshed and violence. What are we to make of all these wounds? How will they ever heal?

St. Paul uses a very unusual expression several times when he writes, “making peace through the blood of the cross [Colossians 1,20].”

Peace is made when there is a place where the stories of the wounds can be told in safety and security, when the stories and the people who tell them are given dignity and respect.

The words “making peace” are only one word in the original Greek. So we understand that just as war is made, and love is made, so peace must be made. It is not just something that happens or merely the absence of war.

Peace is made when our language changes its attitude and vocabulary. Peace is made when there is a place where the stories of the wounds can be told in safety and security, when the stories and the people who tell them are given dignity and re-

spect. The “narrative of the lie,” a concept Schreier introduced to us, must be overcome by the narratives of victim and perpetrator retold in light of the narrative of the truth.

In other words all this blood cries out from the earth and tells us a story, often a story we would rather not hear or tell. Peace will only arise out of our midst when we find ourselves in safety at the common table, and there tell one another the stories of our wounds. At this new

banquet table, in front of the hearth of the empty tomb and in the haven at the foot of the cross, we must tell the pre-eminent story of the blood of the cross, not only as the master story we are all a part of, but as a story giving each of us encouragement to tell the story of our individual and communal wounds.

Peace will appear when all these stories of wounds are heard at long last, given dignity and respect, and remembered with honor. In the poetics of peace, we choose to tell the story of wounds, not from the point of view of our victory over suffering and violence, but as memories of truths and justice. Even the perpetrator, and this is hard for us to practice, has a place at this table.

Hilariter: Mirth and Merriment

A long favorite quote has been: “Angels can fly, because they take themselves lightly.” (G.K. Chesterton) It is this quality of taking ourselves lightly that St. Gaspar speaks of frequently in his letters. He calls it by its Latin name, *hilariter*.

St. Gaspar writes about the kind of conversation of the dinner table, when the community lingers during those spontaneous occasions in the midst of our too busy lives when we take the time just to “be” with one another. We all know and say that this happens too infrequently.

Hilariter is a kind of mirth and pleasure taken in life itself; it moves us to joy. It is the kind of laughter that fills us in the same way the meal satisfies. It is not laughter at someone else’s expense or at the joke bordering on poor taste. It is the laughter about ourselves, or the laughter of “holy gossip” (an idea from the book Dakota) told because we deeply care about one another. It is the laughter of good cheer and sense of being “at home.” St. Gaspar urges the community to remember and practice this regardless of how busy things get in the mission.

So, right alongside the stories of wounds, we are the community who laughs at the darkness because the poetics of peace includes this quality mirth and merriment. *Hilariter* shapes the attitude and ambiance in which we tell our stories.

Inclusive Language

At this table of story and song, poetry and people who crowd into our lives, we include everyone. In the language of war, the pronouns are “I” opposed to “he/she” and “they.” Adversarial roles are defined by the words we use to point to the “other,” the ones who are different from us. Hierarchies, roles, primacy, and power are the issues.

In a poetics of peace, we seek to attend to inclusive pronouns of “we” together with “you,” the other. It is unfortunate that our

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language has lost that formal, almost loving sense behind the word “thou,” which Martin Buber reminds us of in his book. At our table, our language would work to recover that sense of inclusion. Not only in language but also in our practice of inviting to the table and being at the table in ways without power being the issue. It takes a large heart to imagine such a table.

The contemporary issue of inclusive language in liturgical texts takes on an especial importance. Our pastoral and mission habit must be deeply sensitive to the ways we speak about others.

Yet this inclusion itself has become a source of conflict and wound as our contemporary Church undergoes an inevitable paradigm shift in our understanding of power and gender justice in our culture. However painful this may be for everyone on every side, it doesn’t mean we stop talking about it or urging ourselves into this inclusive way of thinking, speaking, and acting. Rather, we learn with more sensitivity than ever ways in which our inclusiveness can be realized and justice can be built up among us.

A poetics of peace includes rather than excludes; it makes small, then ever larger holes in the walls that divide. This language of peace

finds that there really is room for one more chair for the unexpected, or even uninvited guest, at the common table. This poetics creates space for yet one more story within the larger story of the community.

The Direct Naming of Things

In order to make war and conflict more palatable, the narrative of the lie proposes words bordering on a kind of “doublespeak” or euphemisms. Things are not what they seem.

Recall how many euphemisms we have for the blood in the chalice and how often we stop to grasp at a hoard of other words to speak of this. Our culture doesn't at all feel comfortable with a spirituality of blood, so we speak of it at angles and indirectly. It is the same in war.

So that we don't think of the enemy in terms of women and children, sons, husbands, and fathers dying, government and society proffer ways to make this easier. Usually this is done by using very professional and technical language, by giving something a “cute” nickname, or by creating a kind of emotional distance and calling it something altogether different from what it is. During the Vietnam War we became quite good at this. An example from a poem by John Fandel:

Silos used to be for wheat for bread.

Now they store warheads to make more wardead dead

A word used for the storage of food, suddenly is twisted into a place for the storage of death. It was easier to think of underground silos all over the Midwest, than to remember that the nuclear warheads were so close, under our very feet. In examples like this, the language of war intrudes upon our stories of meaning and security and would have us accept more easily the narrative of the lie.

A language of peace names things directly with the courage of Hebrew prophets advocating for the poor and protesting the actions of the ruling classes. Read Micah 3, 9-12 where the rulers are accused of “perverting all equity” or Hosea 10, 12-15, where the prophet addresses the upper classes, “you have eaten the fruit of lies, because you have trusted in your chariots and in the multitude of your warriors.”

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A poetic peace would have this strong sensibility of the ancient prophets, reminding us of God's love in the past, reading the signs of our present, and imagining a future heavenly city wherein all the nations gather as one new people.

Conclusion

Stories of wounds and joy told by a community in an inclusive language arising out of truth are some of the makings of a poetics of peace. A deeper reflection would surface others. Another view might help find ways this language can be more directly applied in our pastoral and mission praxis.

As Church we bear the gift of peace from Jesus, peace that was given in the blood of the cross, and invitation to the table of bread and wine, body and blood. It is the peacemaking of reconciliation. So knowing this, we know our need for God's grace which urges us into this work and way of speaking "peace to those near and far." It is the peace that comes from a story well told until we hear the joy of experiencing, "and they lived happily ever after."



For Reflection

What other elements do you think should be in a poetics of peace? In what ways have you found language shaping your attitudes and actions?

When was the last time you were involved in communal storytelling? Recall the stories and consider their importance to the individual and the community. Reflect upon the significant words used.

Why are stories of wounds so difficult to tell? What is your story of wound that you have not yet told? What would happen if you were to tell it?

When was the last time you sat around with a best friend or family and told stories that made everyone laugh? What is your favorite story of mirth or *hilariter*?

In what ways is inclusive language a part of your parish or mission house life?

Who are the contemporary prophets who name things directly for you or us as a Church? What are their words and how are they effective? Share them in discussion.



Target Practice

By Benita Volk, CPPS

When I was fifteen
I got a kick out of shooting gophers
with my brother's light rifle.

It was much more fun
than blasting empty tin cans
from a fence post.
A shrill whistle
would pull the silly things
from their burrows time after time,
straight, still, perfect targets
for a bit of diversionary practice.
I figured anything that stupid
got what it deserved.
Besides, they were a nuisance
in the pasture.

Now sometimes I hear a shrill whistle
and that fifteen-year-old rises
behind my eyes.
I turn my sights on her
and gently squeeze the trigger.



Dance of the Nonviolent God

By Joyce Lehman, CPPS

I used to be stone deaf. I would see people stand up and go through all kinds of gyrations. They called it dancing. It looked absurd to me -- until one day I heard the music. And then I understood. How beautiful was the dance.

This little story from Tony DeMello speaks to my journey of non-violence. Over the years I have slowly and in ever new ways become aware of the music, of melody, harmony and at times symphony. I have seen the dance and have joined in. And how beautiful it is to dance in partnership with God!

I pronounced the vow of nonviolence in December, 1985. For eleven years I have reflected on and explored what this vow means in my daily living, in my relationships and my ministry, and in my being a part of a fractured world. As I take time to think back over how the vow has affected my living, I see discreet occasions that furthered its taking root in me. They come like snapshots or headlines, a scene from a movie here, a line from a book there, the off-hand remark of a friend, a slip of paper with a few lines quoted from an unknown source.

Reflection on these teachable moments have shaped the space within me where God's voice through the vow calls me forth to live with courage in the truth.

Vow of Nonviolence

I became acquainted with the Pax Christi Vow of Nonviolence through a colleague and friend who was in the process of discerning missionary work in Africa. He hoped to go to Zimbabwe, the former Southern Rhodesia, and on his fact-finding trip there for the Diocese of Toledo had the experience of riding in a bus that was shot at by renegades from the rebel force that had overthrown the white unilateral government in 1980. That experience brought home very deeply for him the probability of experiencing physical violence to himself as well as the violence of oppression, hunger and alienation that the people experienced. He was seriously trying to walk the way of Jesus and found the vow of nonviolence a challenge and a helpful approach.

As I accompanied him in his discernment, I felt the call and challenge to address my own violence and my response to violence inflicted on me and on others. We prepared together. Long talks, reflection, and sacred silence led us to realize there were no easy answers. In fact there were no answers, only responses that in turn opened other questions. We talked of how to respond to physical violence and found we could probably be more accepting of violence done to ourselves than to someone else, especially someone we loved. We searched our language and our gestures. We became aware that many of our gestures and words contained violent references or overtones. The gratuitous violence on television and in the movies, violence portrayed in the name of "entertainment" became even more offensive. We tried to sort out when violence was a side effect of something intended to be good, and when violence was perpetrated for its own sake. Sometimes we found illumination and guidance; at other times we were overwhelmed.

When his departure time finally came, we took the vow trusting that we would be faithful to it by being faithful to striving to live it and

by accepting each new understanding along the way. In no way was the pronouncement of the vow an announcement that we were no longer violent in any way. There was still too much to learn.

And I continued to learn in many ways. An incident that helped resolve my conundrum about passivity in the face of physical violence was a scene from the movie *My Beautiful Launderette*. The story is set in Great Britain. An attack on a launderette (laundromat) by a street gang appears to be racially motivated. The Pakistani owner is on the verge of being beaten senseless when a young man, a former member of the gang,

appears. He had previously broken away from the gang and was striving for nonviolence in his life. On seeing what is happening, he moves into the group to defend the helpless man. His style, however, is not one of aggression, but of restraint. From behind he wraps his arms around the gang leader who is most active in the beating. He holds the aggressor's arms tight enough that the man can no longer harm the owner, and he continues to hold the other man, not striking him or attempting to harm him. His nonviolence cannot allow him to harm another, but he can actively restrain the one doing the violence. He is passive in not striking out, but active in taking a role in prevention.

Ghandi believed that no one should attempt nonviolence who could not also be violent. Nonviolence is not an excuse for cowardice, for not wanting to intervene when oppression occurs. Nonviolence is not non-resistance. When oppression or violence occurs, steps must be taken to stop it. God does not mean for us to stand by and watch in the name of nonviolence. Violence denies, degrades, destroys human dignity. Our Precious Blood spirituality on the other hand exhorts us to acknowledge, respect, and protect the dignity of each human being.

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Violence denies, degrades, destroys human dignity. Our Precious Blood spirituality... exhorts us to acknowledge, respect, and protect the dignity of each human being.

Each person is precious in God's sight and through the power of the Blood we can see each woman as our sister and each man as our brother. The Precious Blood leads us to a nonviolent way of life by virtue of this unconditional regard for the value and dignity of each person and by extension to all of creation.

Causes of Violence

What causes violence? What makes one person violate another and what does it accomplish? I found a cause of violence clearly defined and imaged in An Indecent Obsession by Colleen McCollough. One of the featured characters is a war nurse in a psychiatric ward. It is the end of a war and there are only a few men remaining in the ward. One of them acts out violently against others and himself. His actions deepen the alienation with the others. They avoid him, "excommunicate" him. The nurse tries, to no avail, to discover what causes these violent outbursts in order to help the soldier come to wholeness. Finally after one particularly violent episode, she remarks about how much pain this man had suffered to cause him to act the way he did.

In that observation, she cuts through to a main cause of violence: pain. We usually mark greed, envy, and lust for power and control as causes for violence, but even these have causes. Underneath it all may be an attempt to stop pain or its memory. How differently I treat an aggressive person when I am centered enough to recall this basic truth.

Creative Responses to Violence

The discipline of nonviolence provides us with a new source of power to deal with a situation creatively and with what is at the heart of the relationship between two human beings. A group of street dwellers in India, when threatened by a brutal policeman with eviction from their makeshift homes, responded by surrounding him with singing and handclapping. They drowned out his brutal threats and invectives until, worn down by their actions, he left. Each time he returned they did the same thing, never touching or harming him, only singing around him. An equally creative group of South African women realized they could protect themselves when confronted with the white policemen who brought bulldozers to evict them and destroy their dwellings. Responding to the puritanical aspect of the white Afrikaners, they stripped off their clothes and stood naked in front of the bulldozers. The embarrassed police withdrew. The village remains today.

The creativity that comes from nonviolence turns on its head the cultural tendency to decide what or who is “in” or “out.” Precious Blood spirituality urges us to immerse ourselves in the gospel mandate of inclusion. Jesus draws into his inner circle those whom culture, religious or social, has put at the margins. A 1960s refrain has a gospel ring to it and nonviolence builds on its truth:

*They drew a circle which shut me out,
Hypocrite, rebel, someone to flout.
But love and I had wit to win,
We drew a circle which shut them in.*

Violence excludes through fear, anger, and oppression. What we do not understand we fear and we destroy, cast away, or trod underfoot. But we can never know or understand if we do not engage. Nonviolence at its most creative, takes the time to get to know and to understand the “other,” works from what is similar, and uses to its advantage the differences. When we take the time to know and recognize another’s pain, another’s loss, another’s weakness, another’s fear, we recognize the other in ourselves. With the recognition comes

Nonviolence at its most creative, takes the time to get to know and to understand the "other," works from what is similar, and uses to its advantage the differences.

compassion. With truth and love we enlarge our circle to draw the other in.

Walter Wink in Engaging the Powers tells of a woman accosted by an intruder in her own home in the middle of the night. Although fearful for her life, she recognized the inherent human dignity of this man. She engaged him in conversation: about what time it was, about how he had entered the house, how she did not have the money to replace the window he had broken to

gain entry. He in turn talked about his financial troubles. Finally, when they had passed over the line of being faceless strangers, she asked him to leave. He refused. He had no place to go, he said. She then got clean sheets for him and asked him, politely but firmly, to make his own bed downstairs. The next morning, when he was still there, she fixed and ate breakfast with him, and he finally left. Her concern for guarding the dignity of both of their persons and her awareness of his pain allowed her to go beyond her own fear to draw him in.

Including others is a movement to engage them in partnership. It is only together that we can reveal the fullness of the Kingdom among us. Both nonviolence and Precious Blood spirituality share the movement from domination to partnership. Building an inclusive community that overcomes fear and pain to embrace the weak as well as the strong brings the Kingdom to realization. We do not do this alone. It is in fact, God who does so in us. Our ultimate collaboration and partnership is with God.



Violence Within: Overwork

A frequently unrecognized aspect of violence is addressed in Thomas Merton's Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander. Merton refers to Quaker theologian Douglas Steer's observation about violence to which many idealists who attempt to fight for peace with nonviolent methods succumb: activism and overwork. Our busy days, always ready to be crammed with one more thing that has to be done, contain an innate form of this violence and can become a cooperation in a larger form of violence. Merton goes on to say that the frenzy of the activist neutralizes the work for peace by destroying the inner capacity for personal peace. The fruits of all the activism are ruined because the root of inner wisdom dies from neglect.

I easily recognized this kind of violence within myself even though it is subtle. Like many, I tend to be a "workaholic," a person who finds both joy and challenge in working hard, but who also is compulsive about that work. Many of us are taught that hard work is a virtue and leisure a time of caution because the devil loves idle hands.

The quotation from Merton became a spotlight shining on my activism. I discovered the violence I was doing to myself. A good end does not and cannot justify any means that takes me away from reflection, prayer, and silence, from my very center where God resides. This violence permeates my actions as my perspective, my patience, my energy are eroded and I no longer serve the person but let the project become more important. I also forget the source of the good work. I come to depend on myself and my hard work when it is God who brings forth the fruits.

Vow of Nonviolence: Taking Root

Through the years I have become aware that the vow of nonviolence has indeed taken root in me. I know it is not I who have succeeded because I am sometimes surprised at what actually does happen. One memory that highlights this for me is of an incident that happened two years ago. I was driving in a part of the city with which I was

I realized that the intent of the vow of nonviolence had made a space for God to work in me.

unfamiliar. It was raining hard, and rush hour traffic was beginning to pick up. I missed my turn and tried to find a side street in which to turn around. I started to move over to the left lane when I saw a car moving up quickly, so I immediately moved back. The car went flying by me

then suddenly swung in front of me and stopped. I nearly had to stand on the brakes to bring the car to a stop on the wet pavement. As soon as my car was stopped the other driver bounded from his car shouting and gesticulating. I felt my blood pressure rise; the adrenaline rush of avoiding the accident put all my senses on full alert. I was ready for battle. Equally as fast, however, I felt myself drawn to my center from which I made a series of rapid-fire decisions: don't get out of the car; open the window only enough to hear and speak; keep your voice low and calm. This man was angry and had acted stupidly in my estimation, but he was still a human person. When I could finally hear and understand him I was informed that I had almost caused an accident which may have injured the child riding in the car. I simply listened and then calmly (even though my heart was beating a rapid reggae beat) told him I had not intended to cut him off and was sorry to have frightened him so. He stopped his yelling, muttered a few words and walked back to his car. My passenger was thunderstruck with amazement at the sudden and complete change in the man.

When my own adrenalin rush had subsided, I reflected with wonder on my ability to respond to such anger with such calm of my own. I realized that the vow of nonviolence had made a space for God to work in me. Even though I was feeling my own anger and my whole body was ready for fight or flight, I recognized that I did have choices for another way of responding. I had that center within myself from which I could call up my beliefs in the dignity of each human person.

In our 1995 Assembly, our Congregation identified nonviolence as a focus for our vision for the next four years. Even as we set this goal we struggled with our language. We recognized that to speak of

combatting violence evoked a violent image. When we suggested “standing against” violence or “eliminating” violence we acknowledged these words, too, had an element of aggression in them. If it is true that “the only way out is through,” then it is necessary to journey **through** violence and nonviolence to the other side. Nonviolence is not a movement against, toward, or even away from. Rather nonviolence is a “standing in.”

Nonviolence is about standing in the Truth. As Precious Blood people, this is where we stand. We may not all need to make a vow of nonviolence, but we all recognize a world fractured with hate, greed, oppression, alienation, control, and great pain. We are about recognizing human dignity and the sacredness of creation, about inclusion and partnership. We are about the work of justice and peace, and letting that work be done in us. We are about reconciliation; about naming the pieces of the world’s brokenness and bringing them to God so God can effect the reconciliation. We are about recognizing that the blood of the cross makes peace and about believing in Jesus who shed the blood in which all fullness resides (Col 1:20). We are about being faithful and passionate followers of Jesus, followers who reach out and take risks, who go where the needs are, and who take the time and space to deepen a love relationship with God, others, and the created world. Having had the eyes and ears of our hearts opened, we hear the music. How beautiful is the dance of our nonviolent God.



For Reflection

What other aspects of our Precious Blood spirituality call us to a more nonviolent way of life?

How does activism and overwork contribute to the perpetuation of violence in our society and in our Church?

What more can we do to open our ears, to hear the music and join in the dance of nonviolence?

*The most remarkable
miracle is not the
transformation
of water into wine;
it is the
transformation
of an enemy
into a friend.*

James Forest

Peace, My Gift to You

By Madeleine Kisner, ASC

After storm and deluge,
Peace hovered o'er the bounding sea,
And sought its rest on the dormant land.
The ribbon of peace, the rainbow across the sky,
Etched the promise of God's reconciliation
Toward fallen humankind.
Gifts of peace, spoken and unspoken,
Filled the towns and hearts of those in Christ's ministry.
His days were filled with miraculous moments of peace –
"Rise and walk, be calm, peace I give to you."
His words echoed throughout the land,
Evoking praise and joy for cures.
He did all in hope of reconciliation for His loved ones,
His weak and fallen brethren.
Again, amidst the rending of the temple veil,
And the darkening, ominous clouds,
"Father, forgiven them," He begs from Calvary's cross.
"It is finished" – My work is done – I thirst for you
To follow Me in your struggle for peace.
My work is over but yours now begins
In righting the wrongs of nations and peoples.
Your clarion call will again be Peace –
Peace within my followers, peace among nations,
And peace in the minds and hearts of all.
"Do this in remembrance," He pleads, as He bows
His head and expires in an aura of peace!



The Search for Peace in
the
Blood
of
Bosnia

By Willi Klein, CPPS

In the spring of 1988 the Provincial Assembly of the Teutonic Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood decided to establish a mission in the former Yugoslavia – more precisely in Bosnia – and to develop an apostolate there specific to the Community. Decisive for this action had been an official invitation from the bishop of Banja-Luka. During the immediately previous years I had already come to know a number of interested young men in Bosnia and Croatia. In the diocese of Banja-Luka I began to build a small community in the parish of Nova Topola, with the support of the bishop and some of the local priests.

We went there purposely, to the southeastern “edge” of Free Europe, to the “suture” between the Western-Roman and the Eastern-Byzantine cultural zones, to the “trenches” where for centuries Latin and Orthodox Christianity had contended with each other, to the Balkan peoples who for seven centuries had been entangled in bloody wars and upon whose backs the powerful governments of the West,

South, and East, especially in this century, had carried out their vendettas with each other.

The Serbian and Croatian peoples had come from the East and settled in the Balkans in the seventh century, at which time they began to become Christian. For five hundred years the greater part of this territory was under Turkish rule, when many Christians became Muslim. The present-day Muslims in Bosnia are for the most part descendants of formerly Catholic Croats.

The Church was almost always a bleeding church, and remains so to this day.

In an alliance with Vienna and Rome the Catholics of Bosnia waged a centuries-long war of resistance against the Turks who continued to press into the West, who themselves were allied with the Byzantines.

In all this confusion, the Catholic Church was a source of strength and safety for the people of Bosnia and Croatia. There

were only brief periods of peace. The Church was almost always a bleeding church, and remains so to this day.

We had gone there purposely, to the place where Christ in his members, in his Church, was bleeding. In 1988 these peoples were still under the Serbo-Communist regime that persecuted every kind of religion. Fathers of Catholic families could not get work if they sent their children to the parish priest for religious instruction. Any connection with the Vatican was considered treasonous. Catholic school children were beaten by their teachers if they went to Mass on Sundays. Zealous priests were sentenced to prison in show trials. Catholic villages could not get paved streets, electricity, or telephone service. An all-encompassing network of informers sowed distrust among the people.

We had gone there purposely to be near Jesus in his Way of the Cross in Bosnia. We wanted to gather up his Precious Blood shed in his brothers and sisters, and offer it up to the God, so that it might be fruitful for the Church, its persecutors, and for all humanity. We had gone there purposely to find God and to discover God's infinite love.

Roots of Missionary Vocation

From the time I was eighteen, the contemplation of the cross of Jesus, the crucified love of God, had moved me deeply time and again. This interior movement touched my heart tenderly but decisively so that gradually the desire grew in me to imitate Christ. I discovered in the Scriptures the way of life of the disciples of Jesus. In the end I came to the certainty that I must “come away,” leave all things, in order to get secure ground under my feet. The image of a dying God on the cross, his crying out, his powerlessness, his abandonment, his unbounded love was engraved on my soul.

I left home and went far away. In Salzburg I encountered the charism of St. Gaspar. I discovered the symbol of all that had moved me in my innermost self so deeply: the blood of Christ. This encounter confirmed for me that I was on the right path. I was enthralled by the unbounded love of God for humankind and came to understand that this love was the source of healing for all the physical and spiritual ills of every human being. This had taken possession of me and for this I wanted to live my life. I wanted to show this love of God to as many people as possible, so that they could participate in it and could experience the joyous freedom of the children of God.

Getting to know the Missionaries of the Precious Blood pointed me also into a way to live my life. As a priest and missionary of the Precious Blood I could realize the perspective I had found for my life. Today this ideal and the joy that goes with it is as fresh and lively as it was twenty-five years ago. Likewise there is in my heart since that time the desire to be led by Divine Providence. Only through that do I have the inner confidence of being in the right place at the right time, of being and working in the unbounded love of God. Only in this way can I live in the hope that my life is successful and is bearing fruit.

During the past thirty years I have often experienced dark, painful, and despairing situations. But gazing on the blood of Jesus on the cross has put me back on my feet every time and always with the unbounded love of God. This is how I have experienced my life, my work, my missionary vocation – as an ever new gift of God.

First Steps to Bosnia

When I went to a Catholic people in the Balkans, I knew one thing about them for sure: for centuries they had yearned for freedom; for centuries they had suffered violence and bled; for centuries they had remained true to their Christian faith and to the bishop of Rome. In my heart I carried along the charism of St. Gaspar, the liberating message of the blood of Christ.

In the autumn of 1988 I came into Yugoslavia, at that time still under the Communist regime. There a Catholic priest from abroad was considered an enemy agent of the Vatican and was therefore an undesirable alien. There was interrogation by the police for hours, and I was regularly subject to inspections. The secret of my missionary undertaking I protected like a precious pearl. Already within a few months I became ill to the point of death, but a little luck and medical help allowed me to regain my strength. This experience pointed clearly to what it would mean to live the charism of the blood of Christ.

In Nova Topola the bishop put a run-down house at our disposal, of which two rooms were more or less inhabitable. This was the parish house. About three hundred Catholics of Croatian, Polish, and German ethnic background belonged to the parish. About eighty-five percent of the population of this area was Orthodox Serbs or Muslim Bosnians. A church, badly damaged in World War II and in two subsequent earthquakes, stood next to the parish house. Next to the church was a convent of the ASC Sisters, who had been there nearly one hundred years. Nearby was a small construction shed where we moved in for the time being. "We" were a young Bosnian priest and a couple of candidates for the Precious Blood Congregation and myself.

Quietly and carefully we began our apostolate in different parishes. Our mission was supposed to become a pastoral center for the diocese (about 130,000 Catholics), a real mission house!

The War

Toward the end of 1989 there began in the capital city of Belgrade a campaign of lies and hatred which caused anxiety among the people and fanned racial hatred. Belgrade could not accept the democratization and the independence of the individual Republics and began arming itself for war to maintain by force the Yugoslavian multiethnic state. It was supported in this by several of the major world powers. A gruesome tragedy was unfolding that endures to this very day.

In the meantime we had established a second Precious Blood mission house in Zagreb, the Croatian capitol. I moved there with four candidates for the Congregation.

The young Bosnian priest went to Rome to study. Nova Topola was entrusted to a diocesan priest for the time being. Because of the terrorist actions throughout the entire country people were afraid to travel and stayed home. In September 1991 the invasion of Croatia had already begun on a broad scale. Hundreds and then thousands of refugees began to pour into the city every day. We were in our still uncompleted house only three weeks when it became filled to the rafters with refugees from Croatia and Bosnia. The war kept coming closer, as houses,

streets, and squares were filled with more and more refugees. Fear and misery increased every day. I experienced the event as an ever tightening death grip around the neck of the nation.

All kinds of people came into our house. First there were some

The war kept coming closer, as houses, streets, and squares were filled with more and more refugees.

Fear and misery increased every day. I experienced the event as an ever tightening death grip around the neck of the nation.

families from Bosnia, young couples with small children. They could no longer endure the noise of the tanks, the explosions of the hand grenades, and the constant fear. Some of them later went to Austria. And then there were some families from Osijek in Croatia, driven out by the nightly showers of grenades. They came in panic and fear in the middle of the night with many small children. Later they went to Switzerland.

When the city of Vukovar fell to the Serbs, thousands streamed into the city. The winter was cold.

Hundreds of people sat or lay on the floor of a large sport arena. The arena was drafty and unheated. I saw a newborn child and went

*...then came the soldiers who had deserted
from the murderous invading army:
young men who arrived after weeks on foot.
They had killed because they had been forced
to do so. And now they shook with inner
anguish and could not be consoled.*

looking for its parents. I promised to make a place for them in our house. After two weeks they were able to come: the parents, the child, and the grandmother. They had been driven from their home by barbaric human beings; they had seen their brother murdered before their eyes.

Because there was still many barracks of the enemy army in the city, there was continual fighting in the streets and city squares. The hospitals of the city were filled to overflowing with the wounded, the operating rooms and wards filled beyond capacity. Blood was everywhere.

And then came the soldiers who had deserted from the murderous invading army: young men who arrived after weeks on foot. They had killed because they had been forced to do so. And now they shook with

inner anguish and could not be consoled.

In a lightning action I drove to Sarajevo to rescue a young man from a Serbian barracks. The trip back was so dangerous that to this day I cannot permit myself to think about it.

I do not know how many people sought refuge in our house. Immeasurable sorrow, shrieks of terror, depression, anxiety attacks, despair – day and night I talked with individuals hours on end. Everyone had problems all the time. There was hardly ever a night that passed quietly.

Then came the air raids. We had to spend days and nights together in the cellar.

The Cup of the Blood of Christ

As a rule we celebrated the Eucharist together in the house chapel every day. It was a blessed event that transformed our pain and fear into trust and thankfulness. The Word of God often struck us as being so concrete, illuminating our human darkness with divine light. The presence of God in the Eucharist gave us security. People had lost everything, but no one could take God away from them. This “thread” of faith remained unbroken, the stream of the blood of Christ could not be stopped; no one doubted, not even for a moment, that God was love. We were all immersed in the cup of the blood of Christ. It was an uninterrupted adoration, day and night, a constant presence of a dying and loving God which found its expression and explanation in the cup of the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ: continuous pain and continuous divine love. We remained steadfast in our adoration. In all the necessary and multifaceted activities we undertook – humanitarian aid for thousands of refugees, letters to church and political authorities, speeches in Austria, Germany and Switzerland – we remained steadfast in our adoration.

I discerned in myself that I had to stay here. I could not walk away from all of this. I could not betray the blood of Christ.

The burden became too great. My strength gave way. First there was a facial paralysis, then digestive difficulties. In the end I could no

*I discerned that I had
to stay here.*

*I could not walk
away from all of this.*

*I could not betray the
blood of Christ.*

longer eat or drink or sleep or even think. In a letter to my Provincial I said that I was prepared to stay, even if it meant the risk of ruining my health. The Provincial and his Council decided that I was to go to Schellenberg in Liechtenstein for two years to recover my health in our Community there.

Of the two candidates who remained with us, one went to the Diocese while the other, a sixteen-year-old, wanted absolutely to become a Missionary of the Precious Blood. When we parted, he said, "I believe that you will return and that we will rebuild our Community." At that time everything was very unclear and I figured that we would abandon our project. But this youth ignited a fire of hope in my heart that burns to this day! (Since then the project has been taken over by the Polish Vicariate, and the sixteen year-old is now in Poland in our Novitiate along with two other candidates.)

Continuation of the Missionary Project

After a stay in a hospital in Austria I went to Schellenberg. Soon groups of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina started coming into Liechtenstein. There were also individual refugees, arriving legally or illegally.

In a letter I had written much earlier to the Provincial I said, "We cannot stand idly by." A network for dissemination of reliable information came into being, and from that proceeded all kinds of humanitarian aid campaigns. Contacts were made with the Yugoslavian Major Superiors' Conference, with the Caritas organizations of different countries, with diplomatic representations, with the international Red Cross, with various UN organizations, with bishops' conferences. Partnerships between parishes began to take shape.

Soon a "floating parish" of a special kind began to form in

Liechtenstein and the bordering countries. It consisted of Catholics, Muslims, and Orthodox, all of them refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The missionary project had found its continuation. The battered and bleeding heart of all of these people was once again in the cup on the altar. An encounter in the parish of Schellenberg brought this to expression. For refugees in exile the Catholic priest plays a preeminent role. He is accorded incredible trust, and he is for most the only guarantee of safety; but it is not he himself, but what and who he stands for. Even the Muslim refugees have great trust in him, something that they brought with them in their hearts from Bosnia.

The Cup of Reconciliation

Here in exile the coming together and reconciliation of members of different ethnic groups who have been enemies at home is often possible. It is a long and thorny way with many setbacks. A broader aspect of the eucharistic cup, of the blood of Christ, is evident here: reconciliation. Psychologically ill people seek healing from experiences of loss, from shock, from deep-seated anxiety, from feelings of hatred, from endless sorrow. And such healing is not possible without reconciliation with the enemy – at least interior reconciliation, even if external reconciliation is often not possible.

A refugee, who is a wife and mother, explained it to be in this way:

I do not know why such a way of thinking has been forced upon us: this person and that person hates you, this one and that one is dangerous for you, these people or those people have always been our enemies, and so we must be against them. All at once we were divided into 'us' and 'them'. And sad to say, this propaganda led to war. And because of war in our homeland we are all now here.

I have always thought that this was not really so in our hearts. I cannot bring myself to believe that we ought to consider one another as strangers, even as enemies. After all, we all come

from the same homeland. We have all become very poor, and many have even lost family members. But in our hearts we are not poor.

In this situation I looked for something to give me the strength to believe in the good in every other person and to overcome enmity. I found this strength in the Gospel: the Word of love – love that knows no boundaries and is prepared to give of itself to the point of shedding blood.

*I cannot bring myself to believe
that we ought to consider one another
as strangers, even as enemies.*

*After all, we all come
from the same homeland.*

*We have all become very poor,
and many have even lost family members.
But in our hearts we are not poor.*

And so I decided to fight with the weapons of love. In many situations I was able first to overcome my own fear and then also different obstacles. Contacts and friendships began to come about among us, even though we belonged to different ethnic groups who had waged war against each other. Love gave me the strength to take the first step. And then the second step was somewhat easier. That is the only way to give the other the possibility of doing the same.

This makes me happy. We are speaking to each other again like we used to, we laugh together and we cry together. It's

really true; I am happy when others come to this conviction. Because of the war I have found a great treasure, namely, the blood of Christ, a faith in a real, genuine love.

Love is the most effective weapon to fight against all evil. I wish that the peoples in our homeland would change their war strategy and only use love as the sole weapon. With love you can win every battle, and everyone is a winner and no one is a loser. That is why we want to regard those who are supposed to be our enemies as our neighbors and love them as ourselves.

The fruits of doing this will not be long in coming.

I have tried to write this article as it comes from my heart. To do that I have gone down into the "Wine Cellar" and have put here on paper what comes from the most profound experience of my inner self. One thing I know for sure: God can use us for his liberating activity among other human beings even when we are weak, fallible and sinful. St. Paul writes: "Yet Christ was crucified in weakness, but he lived by the power of God. And we are weak in him, but we will live with him before your eyes by the power of God (2 Cor 3:14)."



*We must be prepared to make heroic sacrifices
for the cause of peace--
the same as those that we make ungrudgingly
for the cause of war.*

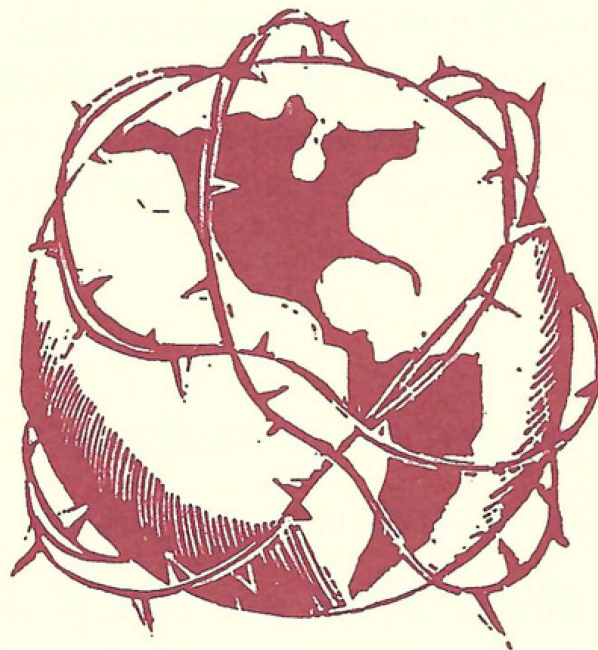
Albert Einstein

For Reflection

Are you ready and willing, in the spirit of the Gospel, to listen to your inner voice before making a decision?

How do you try to bring your daily life and activities into harmony with the “cup of Jesus” during the celebration of the Eucharist in such a way that you become a well-tuned instrument of God’s work?

Reflect on how you seek to live with courage and in obedience to the charism of St. Gaspar by trusting in God’s action to use all your strength even to the limits of your possibilities.



Precious Blood Peacemakers and Justice Seekers

By Stephanie Mertens, ASC

Does the spirituality of the Precious Blood and the charism of Maria De Mattias call us to be peacemakers and justice seekers? This article is going to begin by offering the description of the nature of our spirituality and the power of our charism as presented in the Constitution of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. The words found there clearly place the many-faceted work of peace and justice at the center of the experience of the spirituality and charism to which each Adorer is called. Much of the profound depth, richness and beauty of the Mystery of Redemption, source of that spirituality and charism, are captured in the Constitution narrative:

To be Adorers of the Blood of Christ means to be wholly consecrated to the adoring and redeeming love of Jesus Christ, who shed his blood to free us from sin and reconcile us in love. Accordingly, our congregation itself must become 'a living image of that divine charity with which this blood was shed, and of which it was and is sign, expression, measure and

pledge. (1857 Constitution) If we remain humbly open and pray with confidence, the Spirit of God who worked powerfully in the heart of Maria De Mattias will continue to pour into our hearts the fullness of charity. The spirit of our congregation will thus be all love and charity - 'charity toward God and toward our dear neighbor.' (Maria De Mattias 1841) Our congregation will then become an ever more credible witness of God's tender love, of which the blood of Jesus is vibrant sign and unending covenant pledge. [Constitution #2]

The following passage continues the story of the call to work for justice through the bonds between Christ, each Adorer, all God's people, and the whole creation as expressed in the Constitution:

Our corporate mission in the Church is to collaborate with Christ in his work of redemption. We accomplish this mission by witnessing to God's love and ministering that love to others, especially the poor, the oppressed, and the deprived. Through our varied ministries of evangelization and human development, our prayer, and our sharing in the cross of Christ, we participate day by day in the building up of the body of Christ, so that all creation can move toward 'that beautiful order of things which the great Son of God came to establish in his blood.' (Maria De Mattias 1838) We serve in joy and simplicity, confident that the Spirit will sanctify us as we minister to others, identifying us more and more in likeness to Christ crucified and risen. [Constitution #3]

Living this reality is challenging, energizing, exciting for the Adorer. The charism and spirituality find many expressions in many places in the world according to each sister's unique and varied gifts and talents. Adorers work for peace and justice with poor people in the inner city, with refugees, with prisoners, with the frail elderly, the sick, with youth, with young adults, with those in need of pastoral care. Adorers carry on this mission not only in the United States, but also in Bolivia and Guatemala. In each setting the struggle for justice and

human development is moving ahead and the work of reconciliation and nonviolence is fostered.

Witness of the Martyrs of Charity

A strong new challenge and call to reconciliation and nonviolence came to all Adorers and to the whole church through the martyrdom of five Adorers in Liberia in October 1992. Each member of our community had to cope with this violent event at deep personal levels, and at communal levels. Adorers tried to learn from the example of charity and solidarity our sisters had given. The community also sought to respond in a public and socially responsible way to the violence of their deaths through a program called "ASC Martyrs of Charity - Peace in Liberia Campaign" which was undertaken out of love of our sisters and love for the people of Liberia.

The nonviolent campaign launched in collaboration with the entire ASC network of associates, friends, and families called for prayer and fasting for peace in Liberia. The campaign shared resources of information and action. Media events were held. The campaign contacted the President, all legislative offices in Congress, the State Department Officials, the UN Ambassador and others calling for support for all necessary steps for peace in Liberia. Response and expression of concern was received from a number of these contacts. Trips to Washington were made to present testimony before special U.S. Senate and House Committees to heighten awareness of the situation and call for action. The struggle for peace in Liberia continues to this day, and we continue to keep in touch and hope and pray.

The experience of the martyrdom of our sisters has not

The experience of the martyrdom of our sisters has deepened our experience of our charism to live lives of reconciliation and nonviolence wherever we are.

only led us to the campaign for peace in Liberia. It has also deepened our experience of the call of our charism to live lives of reconciliation and nonviolence wherever we are. We realize that violence here as well as there is of one piece. The experience has strengthened our response to the call "to be wholly consecrated to the adoring and redeeming love of Jesus Christ, who shed his blood to free us from sin and reconcile us in love." [Constitution #2]

The entire province engaged in a process to discover a corporate stance that would enable us to make a greater difference in our world as we move into the next millennium. The process led to the August 1993 Provincial Assembly adoption of Reconciliation as a province corporate stance. Adorers made the following statement:

*We, Adorers of the Ruma Province, adopt Reconciliation as our corporate stance. In our violent world, this stance commits us to living nonviolently; to becoming a reconciling presence personally, in community, and in our ministries; and to taking appropriate personal and corporate action on significant issues. All of us are responsible for implementing our stance, but we ask our provincial leadership to * challenge us to fidelity to this stand; * provide assistance in understanding and motivation through Offices of Ongoing Formation and Peace and Justice which will collaborate in providing helpful programs and materials; * provide, through the Assembly Coordinating Committee, for an annual report and evaluation; * provide for appropriate collaboration with other Precious Blood congregations, mindful that this stance is deeply rooted in our charism; as appropriate provide for publication of this corporate stance of the Ruma Province.*

Corporate Stance: A Nonviolent Heart

An opportunity to deepen our commitment to the corporate stance took place through a program titled "Reconciling In Love, A Day to Reflect and Act" held at Ruma October 29, 1994. Over one hundred Adorers and Associates gathered for the day. Sister Meg Kopish, our provincial, gave a beautiful, inspiring, and challenging presentation on "The Creation of a Nonviolent Heart." Respondents S. Cunegunda Mueller and Associate Cathy Eberhardt shared moving personal experiences of reconciliation. The Pax Christi Booklet, *Love Beyond Measure: A Spirituality of Nonviolence* was used in a small group process by the participants as part of the program. The booklet through prayer, reflection on Scripture, related readings and discussion questions, offered a full and most powerful insight into gospel non-violence. The call to specific actions for reconciliation and nonviolence took place through opportunity to commit to the Violence-Free Zone Pledge; The Declaration of Life - an anti-death penalty action; the INFACT Tobacco Industry Campaign; The Children's Peace Statue-an anti-nuclear campaign. Adorers and Associates took the opportunity to sign one or more of the action pledges. The day closed with the Pax Christi Prayer for the Year of Nonviolence.

Further implementation of the corporate stance on reconciliation took place through the development of a sixty-second radio spot on reconciliation which was aired 30 times. The radio spots, sponsored by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, featured a peace parable which told the story of the pain of being caught in an unforgiving attitude. The

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radio spot gently urged listeners to “Pray for a forgiving heart” and asked, “What hurts do I need to forgive? Whose forgiveness do I need to seek?” The radio spots called people to a new mindset that would help them to become nonviolent and peaceful.

The support for reconciliation and nonviolence took another turn through the offering of a workshop on domestic violence in July 1995, as well as participation in a radio talk show on this topic. The goal of the workshop was to help ministers and lay leaders to recognize the signs of domestic violence and learn actions to take on behalf of the victims. The workshop was co-sponsored by the Peace and Justice Office and the Metro-East Women’s Crisis Center in Belleville, Illinois.

Networking for Peace and Justice

The story of the work for peace and justice would not be complete without description of the networking that supports and makes possible the many-faceted agenda being pursued. Numerous national and local groups such as Bread for the World, Network, Infact, Pax Christi, Guatemala Human Rights Commission, USCC Social Development and World Peace, Africa Faith and Justice Network, Church Women United, Catholic Conference of Illinois and others contribute research and avenues of joint action for the Peace and Justice Office and for Adorers and Associates. This networking allows the community to become part of a large effort to bring peace and justice to our nation and world.

In addition to, and in unique ways going beyond all of the above steps which address violence and injustice, is the work of the New York-based Global Education Associates (GEA) with a program called Project Global 2000. This program is taking worldwide initiatives to address the underlying *causes* of violence and injustice. The project is working on ways to develop new frames of reference, new mindsets, new paradigms that will assist the human community to move toward a more just and humane world order. The Adorers of the Blood of Christ, through both financial assistance and personal membership commitment, are partners with Global Education Associates in Project

The Adorers of the Blood of Christ are partners with Global Education Associates in Project Global 2000. Through taking part in this Project Adorers have found a new way to take steps toward establishing "that beautiful order" heralded by our foundress.

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Kinship with Earth

A special facet of the experience of the charism arises from Adorers' relation to the land. The Adorers of the Blood of Christ see a profound, essential relationship between the Precious Blood charism and kinship with the Earth. The apparent devastation of the Earth is desecrating a place made holy by the Precious Blood of Christ. The Earth has been redeemed at such a great price. The Community is called to enter into this suffering as compassionate healers and renewers of the Earth. This is done in part beginning at home, ensuring that our physical facilities and natural resources (air, land, water, energy, waste resources) are used in ways which reflect a deepening communal environmental consciousness and ecological spirituality. An Earth Kinship Committee promotes care of the earth through seasonal prayer services, workshops, assistance with recycling, and hands-on experiences for sisters and guests.

A major assist in our earth care efforts came through work with Jesuit Father Al Fritsch and the Resource Auditing Services from Livingston, Kentucky. The community was enabled to develop a "Ten

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Year Plan” which incorporates many steps toward greater harmony with the Earth, arising out of our spirituality. This experience continues to help us move toward eco-justice.

Most recently the General Assembly of the Adorers meeting in Rome in June 1995 passed a resolution calling for a commitment of the entire congregation worldwide to global ecology. All sisters and lay associates are being asked to respond to a consciousness raising instrument which raised the question of the threats facing the environment, asks about our hopes for the Earth, and what steps are being

taken to care for the Earth. An Earth Summit will be held in the Summer of 1997 to focus on an ecological spirituality and plan ways to take radical initiatives for a more ecologically responsible lifestyle.

The few words offered here can hardly capture the experience of seeking to respond to the call to work for justice as it comes to us from the Gospels, from the strong, clear church social justice teaching, from the cry of the poor, from the Earth, and above all from the person of Christ himself. The story being told here has been continuing for hundreds of hours and thousands of miles...and the journey continues.



For Reflection

What gift might the Precious Blood spirituality and charism bring to the next millennium?

How do you envision “that beautiful order of things which the great Son of God came to establish in his blood?” (Maria De Mattias to Bishop Vincenzo Annovazzi, November 13, 1838)

In addition to direct service to the poor and work for systemic change, what are ways for us to address the deep underlying causes of injustice, such as false values and false paradigms?





*Great ideas,
it has been said,
come into the world
as gentle as doves.
Perhaps then,
if we listen
attentively,
we shall hear amid
the uproar of empires
and nations
a faint flutter
of wings,
a gentle stirring
of life and hope.*

Albert Camus