

An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality



THE WINE CELLAR

Fall 2012 • Number 26

A photograph of a window with white curtains, viewed from the inside. A small bird is perched on the windowsill. The image is faded and serves as a background for the lower half of the cover.

Renewing the Church

THE WINE CELLAR

An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality

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From The **Wine Cellar**
by Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

October 11th marked the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. During the past several months and continuing now, this occasion has been observed with numerous articles, presentations, and public events reflecting on the work of the council, the history of its implementation (which continues), and the challenges we as church face moving into the future.

Dolores Leckey, in a recent issue of *America*, summed up some of the significance of Vatican II: “A major shift of consciousness coursed through the people of God, through not only bishops, but also priests, vowed religious and laity—single and married, men and women. The people of God began to understand themselves—in terms of their freedom, their charisms, their competencies, their irreplaceable roles in the church—in new and creative ways. They experienced themselves as authentic bearers of the Gospel and saw the church as circular in form rather than as a pyramid, with the hierarchy at the top. The ‘universal call to holiness,’ set forth in the ‘Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,’ served as a lever for the expansion of Catholic consciousness. Lay ecclesial ministry, after a long and painful labor, was also born out of that graced ferment and is now growing new cells in the mystical body.”

This issue of *The Wine Cellar* is intended to be a modest contribution to the ongoing effort to continue the renewal that began in earnest 50 years ago. Our contributors approach the work of the council and the experience of its implementation from a variety of perspectives.

Bill Heusch offers a summary of the important themes that emerged from the council, the changes in practice and understanding that accompanied them, and their implications for ministry.

Sr. Dianne Bergant provides an overview of the evolving role of the Bible in Catholic life and worship leading up to the council. She then outlines the

ongoing renewal regarding the place of scripture following the council, and looks to some of the challenges for the future.

Sr. Joyce Zimmerman focuses on what she calls the “first work of the council,” namely liturgical renewal. She traces for us the development of this renewal before, during and after the council, and offers some reflections and challenges regarding liturgy and its important place in the life of the church.

Fr. Daniel Torson outlines a history of the understanding of “sacrament,” and explains how the image of Church as Sacrament came to be one of the significant contributions of the council. He explains the theology and ecclesiology that supports this image and offers some pastoral implications as well.

The renewal of religious life was an important result of the council, and one that touched priests, brothers and sisters very directly. Fr. Robert Schreiter and Sr. Regina Siegfried trace the history of this renewal within the Precious Blood men’s and women’s communities respectively.

Companion Gerry Downs reflects on her experience of lay ministry since the council. She shares the sometimes painful realities of the present as well her continuing hope for the future, giving a personal account of her many years of ministry in the church.

Fr. James Sloan, who was ordained the same year the council opened, gives us a reflection on his experience of priesthood and ministry during these past 50 years.

It is our hope that all of these articles can offer our readers an opportunity to learn something new about Vatican II and its importance, as well as help them connect with their own experience of a church in renewal. In addition, these articles can provide an opportunity for individual or group reflection and discussion—all of which contributes to the renewal that we are called to be a part of.

Ladislav Orsy recently wrote in *America*, “...the Second Vatican Council lives, and we are bound to sustain it. The council lives because the impulse of the Spirit that ‘caused’ the council continues in the community at large. The Catholics of today, therefore, ought to call out daily *Adsumus*, that is, ‘We are present,’ just as the bishops in St. Peter’s Basilica cried out at the beginning of every session. The invocation indicates the willingness of the community to be open to the Spirit and to do the work of the Spirit.”





Contributors



Bill Huebsch is a theologian and educator who directs the online pastoral center found at PastoralPlanning.com. In 1990 he established The Vatican II Project which contributes to the effort being made within the Church to keep alive the spirit and energy of Vatican II. As part of that project, he published *Grace: God's Greatest Gift* and *Vatican II in Plain English*, along with several other books outlining key features of the Council, all of which can be found at the web site. He is the past president of Twenty-Third Publications, and has served in management roles in other Catholic publishing houses since 1995.



Dianne Bergant, C.S.A., a Sister of St. Agnes, teaches Old Testament at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Besides lecturing in various places around the world, her writing on biblical topics has appeared in both scholarly and pastoral publications.



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Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S. is a member of the Cincinnati Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. He is the Vatican Council II Professor of Theology at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, where he has taught since 1974. He served in the government of his province for fourteen years, and on the General Council of the Missionaries for twelve years. He is a frequent speaker at General Chapters of religious orders. Among his books is *In Water and in Blood: A Spirituality of Solidarity and Hope*.



Regina Siegfried, A.S.C. has served in the teaching ministry for many years. She currently teaches a group of intercommunity novices, coordinates the RCIA for St. Vincent Parish in St. Louis and does research and writing for the U.S. region of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ.



Gerry Downs has been a Precious Blood Companion for over 20 years and is the convener for the Alameda, California Companion group. She is the coordinator of Liturgy at her parish, and the mother of four adult children and grandmother of eight. Gerry has degrees from the Rensselaer Program of Church Liturgy and Music at St. Joseph College, Rensselaer, Indiana; the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, California; and the Graduate Theological Foundation in South Bend, Indiana. She Lives in Sonoma, California, in the wine country.



James Sloan, C.P.P.S. spent his early years in the priesthood as a hospital chaplain; principal and teacher at Precious Blood Seminary in Liberty, Missouri; and following graduate studies in Florence, Italy, as instructor at the Kansas City Art Institute. After moving to California in 1981 he served as pastor in Alameda, California; as Provincial Director of the former Pacific Province; and as Companions Director for the province.



Fifty Years Since Vatican II: We've Only Just Begun!

by Bill Huebsch

I'm just a CCD teacher," a 26 year-old woman at a parish in Wisconsin told me one night. "Why do I need to learn about Vatican II? And why on earth would I want to teach the kids today about it? They're not interested."

To many people today, young and old alike, Vatican II is ancient history. It is seen as an event that occurred so long ago that it's no longer relevant to ministry now. Some feel that it's time to move on, to start talking about the next council rather than the last one. Others believe that Vatican II was the ruin of the Church and they're happy to try to put it behind us. Some even say that it's too late, that Vatican II is now forgotten, lost in the pages of history and the bureaucracy and politics of the Church.

But there is actually great value in knowing about and teaching about Vatican II. We should all understand the vision of Pope John XXIII and why he called this remarkable council. It changes our approach to ministry when we understand what happened there. Keeping the vision before us, telling this story over and over again, and knowing our history well are all ways to help make Vatican II powerfully effective.



“Vatican II,” Pope Paul VI once remarked, “was the Advent Liturgy of the New Millennium.” It is vital for us to understand and implement this council at every level of church ministry and faith formation.

Everyone is Affected by Vatican II

Vatican II launched a major renewal and sought to present the ancient truths of our faith in language and ritual that is more accessible and understandable for modern women and men.

The council undertook many reforms on a broad range of topics. The resulting shifts in focus were vitally important, and touched everyone involved with the church at any level. What were some of these shifts in focus? How did we re-imagine ourselves, re-describe ourselves, and re-understand ourselves as a result of Vatican II?

Grace

Remember grace? In those years on the eve of the council when everyone currently over 50 was growing up, “living in the state of grace” was the goal of Catholic life. And it goes without saying that dying in the state of grace was the only way to heaven.

This grace, we believed, was “dispensed” by the church. Only Catholics could get it. There was a popular sense that one could “earn” it. And in our thinking about it sometimes we muddled it up with indulgences as though the two were the same.

Our new understanding of grace, our new horizons on it, has significantly changed how we go about the business of pastoral ministry.

The most fundamental shift that occurred at Vatican II is right here—in our understanding of grace. Our new understanding of grace, our new horizons on it, has significantly changed how we go about the business of pastoral ministry.

Grace, we say today, is God communicating God’s own Loving Self to us. God offers God’s self to everyone, to every human, not just to Catholics. To be conceived is to be offered grace. It is experienced as a loving, divine energy (or power) that fills our bodies and our souls. It’s free. It’s absolutely free and it cannot be earned. It comes from God alone. The church doesn’t so much “dispense” it as lead us to discover it by providing moments of grace through education, liturgy, and social teaching.

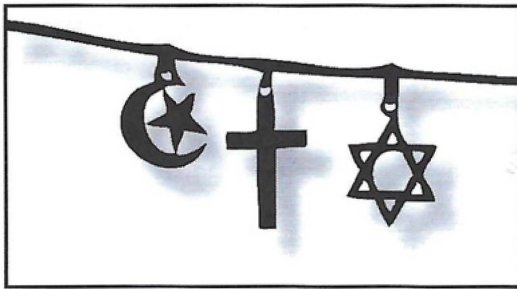
And what is the effect of grace? Put simply, it “lets us be” what we’re made to be, which is precisely how we eventually reach heaven—by being what God wants us to be.

What this means for pastoral ministry is exciting! It means we must allow ourselves and our students to wade around in the stuff of life, everyday experiences of the “joys and sorrows, the grief and anxieties of this age” and find in that, the mystery of God’s presence. The late Bishop Ray Lucker (Diocese of New Ulm, MN) said it this way: “What I came to see during the Second Vatican Council is that revelation involved God’s self-communication to us. God communicated the inner mysteries of God to us. And we can never...adequately explain or express the revelation of God.” All of us in pastoral ministry would do well to leave a little more room for mystery, to be just a little less certain about all the content that we teach.

Other Christians

The shift in thinking on grace nearly forty years ago in Rome at Vatican II is what made it possible for the bishops of the world, in union with the pope, to promulgate a document like the one on ecumenism. “Yes,” one of my professors at Catholic Theologian Union in Chicago once told us, “even Lutherans have grace!” The idea that grace is not a Catholic commodity, that it is offered by a generous and loving God to all people, was shocking at first. But today nearly half of the marriages in the church are ecumenical. Religious education tends to remain much more sectarian than the households in which most children—and many volunteer ministers—live.

All Other Religions of the World



The shift in our understanding of grace also made it possible for those bishops to promulgate the document on the church’s relationship with non-Christians: Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, and all the many native peoples of the world. Grace, after all, is not offered only to Christians but to all

peoples. But even though we believe this is true, and we can see in today’s world how important it is to understand one another, pastoral ministry still has not really begun to grapple with how to teach about the world’s many religions.

How We See Ourselves

Surely the most significant shift in thinking came in the document on the Church itself. There are many remarkable shifts in focus about how we view ourselves as church contained within this document, but I’m going to mention only three.

First, we have that beautiful description of ourselves in chapter two where we are called by a new name: the People of God. What a major change in thinking! And yet, when we teach about the church and the church's teachings, most of the time we refer to the church as something outside ourselves, normally meaning "the people in Rome who run the church's central office." When we say, "the church teaches this or that," we mean "the magisterium in Rome teaches this or that..." It's them, but not us. We don't want to think the church is "them." We want to think it's us—but after so many centuries it's difficult to think of ourselves as the church. We forget that we are the Church.

Second, in chapter four of this document (as well as in the documents on the Liturgy and the Laity) we see another shift: Baptism is raised in status to a par with Eucharist. In the early

years of the Church, Baptism was a major sacrament that, along with Eucharist, initiated the Christian into a life of faith. But on the eve of the Council, Baptism held a much more minor place in most parishes. Vatican II tried to correct this. We still teach about Baptism as though

The bottom line is this: This loving presence of God is already active and powerfully present in the lives of those parishioners we face every week. God, in other words, is acting in the lives of those people.

it's "just one of the seven sacraments." In fact, though, Baptism is on a par with Eucharist and we should teach about it with more enthusiasm than we do, say, a less central sacrament like Reconciliation.

I was sitting with a group of parents one evening at a parish, asking how we could best teach about Baptism to their third grade children. "How do you do it now?" one mom asked. I explained our textbook, that we had a chapter on it that treated the history of Baptism, the meaning of the symbols, and the words of the rites.

"Well," she said with a shrug in her voice, "that's your problem. You're doing it all wrong. How do you teach about birthdays?" she asked me. "You don't teach about the history of birthdays and the meaning of the symbols," she said. "No. You bake a cake and buy some presents. By the second year, the kid gets it. And they have it for life. They never lose it. You must have Baptisms," she said. Of course she's right. And it is for this reason that we now baptize on Sundays in our liturgical assemblies.

Third, in chapter five we find that lovely section calling everyone to holiness—a major shift in Catholic thinking. And the greatest way to live in holiness, the document tells us, is to live in love. This universal call to holiness has radical implications for pastoral ministry. The bottom line is

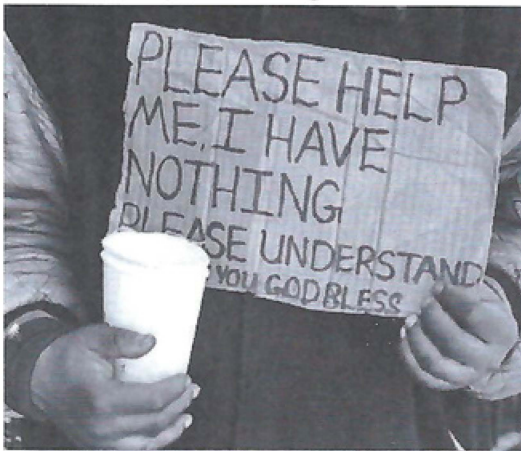
this: This loving presence of God is already active and powerfully present in the lives of those parishioners we face every week. God, in other words, is acting in the lives of those people. God is not absent or distant. God is there and active. So no matter what else we do with those who come to learn, helping them discover the presence of God is always our first goal.

This is a change. Before the council the goal of pastoral ministry may have been to pass a body of facts and information on to the next generation of Catholics to make them loyal to the Church in which we wanted them to place their faith. Then it was seen that priests and sisters were holy; the rest of us were merely lay people. But now the goal is to help these parishioners encounter Christ who is present there, to know, love and serve Christ. It isn't so much leading them to have faith in the Church, as leading them to have faith in the Lord who is beyond and above the Church.

The Poor and Rejected

One of the powerful new ideas that emerged from the dialogue at the council is that working for peace and justice is essential for Catholics and all Christians. It is, as we say, constitutive, meaning that one cannot really say that he or she has faith in Jesus if one doesn't also embrace the work of justice and peace. Powerful and challenging, isn't it?

But pastoral ministry has been slow to make teaching about justice, peace, missionary work, and the preferential option for the poor as central to its work as, say, teaching about the sacraments. We have not yet adopted this new emphasis heart and soul.



For Jesus and the New Testament, the poor are not just one theme among many. The poor are the starting point where one begins to understand the Gospel as the Good News of liberation. The poor stand as the final criteria of salvation or damnation. If we have no love for the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the refugee and the

prisoner, we have missed the central plank of the Gospel. The Gospel is not about doctrine. It's about changing our view of God: God is love, love for the poor. The question of the poor is so essential to the tradition of Jesus, that when Paul went to verify his doctrine before the apostles in Jerusalem, they demanded of him the care of the poor (Galatians 2:10).

The Paschal Mystery

Any spirituality grounded in Vatican II must be grounded in the paschal

mystery, the dying and rising to which we are called. This is a life-changing, radical posture toward the world and its people, just as Jesus also faced the world with unconditional love.

The Constitution on the Liturgy was the first major document on which the bishops worked in the very first months of Vatican II. In article six, they clearly remind us that we are all incorporated into the paschal mystery. Bishop Ray Lucker, who was present for all this, later said that, when he realized what this meant, he went through a personal conversion. He shifted from thinking of faith as giving assent to a group of theological propositions, to understanding it more as a response of faith to an encounter with the living person of Jesus Christ.

The bishops at Vatican II go on in article six to say that the early followers of Christ were so centered on this mystery, that they baptized those who experienced and believed in its saving power. Likewise, they shared in the Eucharist together which was the full celebration of the sacrifice of Christ for us. It was both in their loving actions (living out the paschal mystery) and in their worship that they came to know their profound call to “be church.”

The paschal mystery is not a theory of faith, but an actual practice. It's what we do. We die. We are buried. We rise. And we go out to love the world.

We might say that the encounter with Christ and the paschal mystery are the central experiences on which our faith rests. As Bishop Lucker came to realize, this is not merely some theological proposition. It is instead what connects us here and now to the very person of Christ who lives among us and is very near to us. The paschal mystery is not a theory of faith, but an actual practice. It's what we do. We die. We are buried. We rise. And we go out to love the world.

Later in the Council, as the bishops were working on the constitution on the church in the world of today (called in Latin, *Gaudium et Spes*) they described the dignity of the human person, proclaiming that the mystery of humanity becomes clear only in light of the paschal mystery. Christ has opened up a pathway for us to follow, the bishops wrote. This pathway is that of dying to self, enduring the uncertainty of the grave, experiencing the joy of new life, and responding to this by loving the world. “If we follow this path, life and death are made holy and acquire a new meaning,” they wrote.

Just an Overview

In sum, then here are some of the shifts that have occurred as a result of The Second Vatican Council:

- We understand grace to be God revealing God's own self to us, to everyone. We understand that God is present with us right now.
- And this opens the door to Christian unity; God is also present in the lives of other Christians.
- Just like it opens the door to what is true and good within all of the world's religions; God is present there, too.
- But most of all, it helps us see ourselves as the People of God, a new view of the church.
- Baptism and Eucharist as the cornerstones of our Community life, the source and summit of all we do. It restores the place of Initiation in the Christian life.
- Everyone is called to holiness, that God is present in the lives of all people, including all of our parishioners.
- The place of the poor and rejected shifts from a forgotten corner to center stage: their welfare is on a par with our own.
- And all of this is rooted in the dying and rising of Christ – but really in our own call to die and rise in our daily lives.

Of course, I didn't share the long answer that is this article with that catechist in Wisconsin. I simply said to her that night, "If it weren't for Vatican II, you probably wouldn't even be a catechist!" She paused for a moment eyeing me, and then said, "You're right, I guess. So what else did Vatican II do?"



The Bible in Our Lives Today

by Dianne Bergant, C.S.A.

Has the Second Vatican Council changed our appreciation of the Bible? The very title of this article is evidence of a profound change. Before the Council, the Bible played an insignificant role in the lives of most Catholics. Very few Catholics were acquainted with its content, with the exception of popular Bible history stories or the dramas produced by Hollywood. Sermons were usually catechetical, doctrinal, or moralistic in their focus. Many people even felt that it was dangerous to read the Bible without the explicit direction of the church. Protestants may have been steeped in biblical knowledge, but Catholics were not. In fact, many consider reading the Bible a Protestant devotion. Circumstances are quite different today. Even those whose only experience of religious practice is Sunday or feast day Mass have come to know quite a bit about the Bible. The liturgy is replete with biblical themes; we sing songs based on biblical passages, and most homilies explain the readings of the day. The Bible certainly does play a major role in our lives today.

The Past

How did this change come about? In the middle 1960s, a new-found interest in Bible study swept across the church. It originated in missionary work and was located within a phenomenon known as the “base Christian community.” Small groups of ordinary Christians met to discuss how the message of the Bible might make a difference in their lives. Although they often had a study leader, the members themselves were seldom trained in any form of biblical interpretation. However, this did not deter them. They studied and they prayed. Various forms of liberation theology grew out of these groups. Today similar groups can be found in parishes around the world.

As these groups grew in strength and popularity, people gradually came to realize the importance of more critical biblical study. Graduate programs sprang up across the country and around the world. These programs were usually open to women and men who were not planning to be ordained. At the same time, seminaries began to revise their courses of study. No longer was the Bible taught as a way of reinforcing a particular doctrinal teaching. It was now studied from an entirely different point of view.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) spearheaded a marvelous revitalizing of the Bible in the church. Both during and between sessions, many council participants attended private lectures given by prominent biblical scholars. This prepared them to consider the biblical foundation with new seriousness and it challenged their deliberations. As a further consideration of the conciliar “turn to the Bible” at the beginning of many general sessions, the Book of the Gospels was solemnly enthroned.

The Bible itself ceased to be only a family heirloom showcased on the coffee table, if a family even possessed one, and it became a well-worn, dog-eared, and frequently-consulted best-seller.

In 1965, *The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)* opened the door to both historical and literary critical approaches to biblical analysis. Interest now focused on the meaning intended by the original author(s) or community(ies). It was almost as if the Bible had been reborn, and those engaged in any form of Bible study were reborn with it. The study of the Bible became exciting, and this excitement uncovered a profound hunger for the word of God among the people of God.

The Council insisted that “access to Sacred Scripture ought to be widely available to the Christian faithful” (*DV* #22). As a result, catechetical programs grounded in Bible study were established in parishes, liturgical preaching became biblically based, and several translations of the Bible appeared with contemporary study helps. The Bible itself ceased to be only a family heirloom showcased on the coffee table, if a family even possessed one, and it became a well-worn, dog-eared, and frequently-consulted best-seller.

The development of critical Catholic biblical scholarship began long before the Second Vatican Council. Its official progress can be traced through several papal documents. Although Leo XIII’s *Providentissimus Deus* (1893) was quite critical of the scholarship that was practiced in Protestant circles, it did acknowledge some of the advances achieved in linguistic and exegetical studies. The church’s position on biblical interpretation is found in other papal pronouncements, but Pius XII’s *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943)

was the first document devoted entirely to the subject. Considered the Magna Carta of the biblical movement, it completely reversed the official position reflected in earlier statements and it inaugurated a new era in Catholic scholarship.

The Pontifical Biblical Commission, established by Leo XIII (1902), has gradually advanced Catholic biblical scholarship through directives it has established. In more recent years, this group of biblical scholars issued responses to specific questions as well as more general statements, including “Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels” (1964), which made significant distinctions between historical fact and truth in Scripture; “Interpretation of the Bible in the Church” (1993), which offered directives for how we as a church should interpret Scripture; and “The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible” (2001), which provided insights as to how ancient writings sacred to the Jews should be regarded as Christian texts as well. Though these statements were written with the biblically informed in mind, the pastoral implications that flow from them are relevant to all Catholics.

...in our reading of the Bible we must be sensitive to issues of gender, race, ethnic origin, class, and other political factors that make up the real world of people.

The Present

Any claim that there is a chasm between the scholar in her or his “ivory tower” and the “simple faithful” has been put to rest. The popular media has demonstrated its interest in matters once considered the exclusive domain of biblical scholarship. The “Jesus Seminar,” which examines some of the historical claims of the gospel stories, caught the imagination of the American public when explanation and critique of some of its more radical points appeared in national news magazines such as *Newsweek* (April 4, 1994) and *Time* (April 8, 1996). Bill Moyers’ six-part public television series entitled “Genesis: A Living Conversation” (1986) brought Christians, Jews, and Muslims together to reflect on the influence that Genesis narratives had on contemporary life. The “Frontline” production “From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians” (1998) included interviews of New Testament scholars and archaeologists. These are but a few examples that show that today, “simple faith” is well grounded in critical scholarship.

Where in the past, reading of the Bible often divided Catholics and Protestants, the study of the Bible enjoys considerable cooperation among the various Christian churches today. Differences in understanding, with very few exceptions, are more the result of the choice of method used in reading the Bible than of denominational affiliation. There are Catholics

and Protestants alike who choose critical methods to discover the meaning of the Bible, just as there are Catholics and Protestants alike who read it literally. This ecumenical cooperation is evident in the composition of biblical translation committees and various commentary series that are popular among both scholars and ordinary church-goers. Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox Christians, and sometimes Jews are found on these committees. Clearly, biblical studies have been embraced by the believing community generally.

In its most recent document, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," (1994), the Pontifical Biblical Commission insists that as important as it is to know what the Bible originally meant, we must also be concerned about what it might mean today in the world within which we live, a world embroiled in economic injustice, war, and various forms of discrimination. This means that in our reading of the Bible we must be sensitive to issues of gender, race, ethnic origin, class, and other political factors that make up the real world of people. These factors influence the way women and men perceive reality and fashion their inner and outer worlds. Such sensitivity is particularly difficult to develop when we read stories that are clearly biased in favor of one group over another. For example, the Israelites are always chosen over the Egyptians, men are preferred to women, physical disabilities are considered a form of punishment for sin. One of the pressing issues facing us today is the challenge to be faithful to the meaning of the biblical narrative while at the same time being sensitive to the reality of today's world.



We have already come a long way in this kind of sensitivity. The liberation movement that first appeared in Latin America in the early 1970s and then spread to parts of Africa, Asia, and among various groups within the United States has significantly affected the way we read the Bible. The experience of oppression and poverty brought people to a new appreciation of the biblical stories of liberation. This in turn has inspired many people to challenge present governmental structures and policies that they deem to be unjust. The women's movement with its concern for inclusive language has also played an important role in various translations of the Bible and in the writing of prayers that are used during the liturgy. In addition to

this, feminist biblical investigation turned the gender bias experienced by women into a tool for critiquing the gender bias within the biblical world itself. However, this continues to be an important issue facing the church.

The Future

What can we expect from biblical study in the future? It is always much easier to describe the past and explain the present than it is to predict the future, especially when one is suggesting how one aspect of reality will influence another. However, one can certainly point out what might be considered an unfinished agenda. In this vein, two topics come to mind: biblical translations and sensitivity to the integrity of creation.

As mentioned above, the question of inclusive language is a burning issue in the church today. While most people view this as a gender issue, it is really carries far broader significance. It is probably true that sensitivity to gender-specific language spearheaded this concern, but it has been expanded to the point of uncovering other biased biblical expressions. For example, a passage from the *Song of Songs* has traditionally been translated: "I am black, but beautiful" (Cant 1:5). The conjunction "but" suggests an exception, implying that black is normally not beautiful, but it is in this case. The bias can be seen in the fact that the Hebrew conjunction can also be translated "and." This yields a very different meaning. It is clear, then, that the bias is in the translation, not in the original Hebrew. Sensitivity to racial issues is evident in this case, for many contemporary versions have "and" rather than "but."

The matter of gender-neutral language is not as easily resolved, because instances of gender-specific language have to do with something more than translation. They point to a fundamental change in the meaning of the text. This fact is compounded when the referent is God. The biblical tradition characterizes God primarily as male. Changing the gender is a radical modification. There are many sides to this issue, and people with fervent commitment argue for each of them. Although several official decisions on the matter have been published, the struggle has not gone away, and it does not look like it will go away in the very near future. Therefore, this burning biblical question, which presently occupies the church's attention, will most likely continue to do so for some time to come.

The second topic that is part of the unfinished agenda is the biblical understanding of the relationship between humankind and the rest of the natural world. Current threats to ecological balance have forced a new look at the biblical underpinnings of much of our attitude toward the world of which we are a part. The passage that is probably responsible for much of the misunderstanding of this matter is the injunction given by God in

The development of an authentic biblical theology of ecology is now in its infancy. However, many believe that the development of this topic will open up an exciting field of examination and spirituality.

the first creation narrative: "... subdue it. Have dominion..." (*Gen 1:28*). This injunction has led some to believe that the rest of the natural world is under the sovereign control of human beings, who can do with it what they see fit. This attitude has spawned attitudes of disregard and exploitation. Anyone who holds opinions like these has never placed these words, and others like them,

in relationship with passages that sketch a different perspective: "The earth is the LORD's" (*Ps 24:1*).

The current concern for ecology has called for a reexamination of the biblical stories of creation, as well as other passages dealing with natural creation. This sensitivity has become a lens for critique and a focus for reinterpretation. It has shown us that many of our attitudes toward natural creation have been grounded in faulty reading of the biblical accounts. The development of an authentic biblical theology of ecology is now in its infancy. However, many believe that the development of this topic will open up an exciting field of examination and spirituality.

Conclusion

The Council threw the door to biblical study wide open. Women and men, lay and ordained have committed themselves to various forms of biblical ministry and have been enriched in ways far beyond their own imagining. What does the future hold? Stay tuned!



Liturgical Renewal: The First Work of the Council

by Joyce Ann Zimmerman, C.P.P.S.

Liturgical renewal is not something new for the Church. It's been happening since the Last Supper when Jesus asked us to continue celebrating his self-giving with the command, "Do this in remembrance of me" (*Luke 22:19*). From a shared meal in the earliest time, to the variety of structural elements of the Eucharistic liturgy after the Peace of Constantine, to the invariable structure in the Latin Rite after the Council of Trent, to vernacular and other changes after Vatican II; from the Sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, to many sacraments (such as fasting, almsgiving, preaching), to only seven sacraments; from the Christian community gathering each morning and evening for prayer, to the prayer becoming so numerous and complex that the faithful laity were virtually excluded, to a renewed call to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours in the community of faithful: the Church has experienced a rhythm of decline and renewal of liturgy touching all aspects of her life. But always the Church has been faithful to Jesus' command, "Do this in remembrance of me."

Like many readers of *The Wine Cellar*, I grew up in the pre-Vatican II Church. But even at that time of highly structured, invariable liturgy, two personal "liturgical renewal" events stand out in my memory. The first renewal event happened Christmas Eve of my third grade. The only gift I remember receiving from Santa Claus that year was a *St. Andrew Daily Missal*. Some of us are old enough to remember those daily missals: Latin on one side, English on the other. I thought for sure that Santa Claus was Catholic because he knew to give such a Catholic gift! I couldn't wait to get to Midnight Mass. For the first time I could follow along the Latin words, read them in English, and enter into Mass with much more understanding and wonder. The second renewal event for me took place around my fifth grade when we began to learn English hymns to sing at Mass. Now the

Mass became even more my own, as I could sing in my own language beautiful hymns, many of which still today I can largely sing from memory.

Next year, on December 4, 2013, we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (hereafter, *CSL*), by Pope John XXIII. This document did not fall

As the history of the Church shows, any renewal takes time and effort. Perhaps what we have not paid enough attention to is the kind of liturgical celebration to which the liturgy constitution calls us.

out of nowhere. Liturgical renewal had been gaining momentum for a long time before the Council, especially after Pope Pius X, at the beginning of the twentieth century, initiated reforms like lowering the age of First Holy Communion to the age of reason and calling for more frequent reception of Holy Communion. No, the work of renewal is not something new in the Church. But none of us has experienced before the kind of renewal

that the liturgy constitution set in motion. Some took to the reforms like ducks to water, while others resisted the reforms like oil refusing to mix with water.

Fifty years ago we thought we could revise the liturgical texts, implement them, and renewal would be accomplished. Oh, how much we had to learn (and still need to learn)! Admittedly, we did some really dumb things early on. For some, liturgy had become way too “me” centered and “down home.” Others lamented that we had lost the awe and mystery that the pre-Vatican II Mass evoked. But we have learned. We know that we need much more liturgical education to really appreciate what it means to “Do this in memory of me.” Our hymns and music in the vernacular are for the most part much better composed than those first fledgling efforts, with the texts having much richer imagery and Scriptural foundations. The newly-implemented translation of last year seeks to capture the richer language (especially images and metaphors) of the Latin text (some of which goes back to the early years of the Church). Our liturgical ministers are much better formed and informed, many of them seeking to live the spirituality that undergirds the actions of their ministries. Yes, we’ve come a long way!

Sometimes the complaints about the renewal of liturgy after Vatican II are misplaced. Rather than objecting to the direction for renewal that *CSL* puts forth, some criticisms of the renewed liturgy are really directed toward the manner that liturgy is celebrated in a given liturgical community. As the history of the Church shows, any renewal takes time and effort. Perhaps what we have not paid enough attention to is the kind of liturgical celebration to which the liturgy constitution calls us. Reading the

Constitution carefully (especially Chapter 1 where most of the foundational principles are laid out) can leave us with a desire to enter more fully into the mystery of Christ that we celebrate. Let us look at some of those principles and see how far we've come in our liturgical renewal, as well as where we might yet need to go.

1. "[T]he Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the paschal mystery" (CSL no. 6).

This simple but important statement not only says what the Church has always done ("come together to celebrate"), but also makes clear the "what" and "why" of our coming together (the paschal mystery). This term might seem very abstract to some, but really it's very concrete. We most often hear the phrase during the Easter Triduum when we celebrate Jesus' death and

We must move from understanding paschal mystery to living a liturgical spirituality, meaning that our very way of living each day flows to and from the liturgy.

resurrection. But there is much more to paschal mystery than this. The paschal mystery embraces the whole mystery of Jesus Christ, from his incarnation to his second coming at the end of time. When we celebrate in liturgy the paschal mystery, we are immersed in the timelessness and immensity of this whole mystery of Jesus' continual self-giving for our salvation. And here is the key: Jesus' continual self-giving. And here is the challenge: grafted onto Christ at our baptism (see *CSL* no. 6 as well as *Rom* 6:3-4), our liturgical celebrations help us model our lives after Christ in such a way that we grow more and more into his self-giving way of living.

We have come a long way in understanding that we make present and celebrate the paschal mystery at liturgy, and enact aspects of this mystery through the cycle of seasons and feasts that make up the liturgical year. Everything about our liturgy—from the lectionary texts to the prayers to the liturgical colors—immerses us in Christ's saving mystery. But growth is still needed. We must move from understanding paschal mystery to living a liturgical spirituality, meaning that our very way of living each day flows to and from the liturgy. Indeed, the Constitution explicitly states that "the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows" (no. 10). Since the paschal mystery is a rhythm of self-giving (dying) and life-gifting (rising), then we must do all we can to capture this rhythm in our daily living.

We might, for example, begin to make it a habit to pause and thank God for the life of the resurrection each morning as we greet the new day and say at least a short morning prayer, and then pause in the evening

to ask God's mercy for whatever failings we've done during the day and thank God for the gifts of grace received and given. As this simple way of capturing the rhythm of rising and dying at the beginning and end of each day becomes more natural to us, we might choose to pray one of the simplified liturgical Morning and Evening Prayers that are so available in print or electronic format. Or we might fast on Fridays as preparation for the feasting on Sundays. We might plan all our work during the week so that we can truly rest on Sunday and make it a day-long basking in the Lord's resurrection spent in quality time for leisure, family, friends, prayer, quiet. We might "fast" from too much Christmas during Advent so that when Christmas comes it can be a joyous festival of Jesus' incarnation, as well as find the rhythm of dying and rising in each liturgical season. In these and many other practices does liturgy become a way of living for us, a liturgical spirituality.

2. "Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations" (CSL no. 7).

The Constitution mentions four liturgical presences of Christ: he is the Head of his Body, made visible in the ordained priest who presides; he is present in his Eucharistic Body and Blood; he is present in the word of Scripture proclaimed, especially in the gospel which is the heart of the Liturgy of the Word; and he is present when the Church gathers as a sacred assembly before the Lord. Without taking anything away from the sacredness of the Eucharistic Body and Blood of Christ which we receive in Holy Communion and reserve for the good of God's people, the Constitution stretches us to be open to Christ's presence in other ways.

We still need to grow in our awareness and everyday practice of appreciating the multiple presences of Christ by coming to greater reverence for others as the Body of Christ.

We are naturally reverent and awed when we receive Holy Communion. We still need to grow in our awareness and everyday practice of appreciating the multiple presences of Christ by coming to greater reverence for others as the Body of Christ. Perhaps instead of staying in our "comfort zone" when we gather for Mass, we might make a concerted effort to meet someone new in the parish each week. Each of us being the presence of the Body of Christ also has enormous implications for how we treat those near and dear to us (our family and friends, colleagues at work and leisure), but also for growing in concern and care for those whom we do not know: the hungry and homeless, the downtrodden and those without hope, the sick and lonely. These are all the face of Christ for us that liturgy calls us to respond in self-giving as Christ would (see *Matt 25*).

We also need to grow in our appreciation for and knowledge of Sacred Scripture. If God's word proclaimed is truly a presence of Christ, then we need to take time and care in preparing the readings for Sunday (many resources are available) and take time prayerfully to read Sacred Scripture on our own. Finally, we need to grow in appreciating the role ordained priests have at liturgy. They are not there simply to lead us through the mechanics of the liturgical rite. They are there as the visible presence of Christ who is Head of his Body, the Church. We need to pray daily for our priests so that they can preach well the gospel, pray well the liturgy, minister well to the people entrusted to their shepherding care.

One challenge is that liturgical ministers...must move from doing their ministry to being liturgical ministers serving the liturgy.

3. "Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy" (CSL no. 14). Since the late 1960s when changes to the Mass began to be introduced, we have become pretty good at engaging ourselves more actively in the liturgy. Instead of a priest and altar servers saying and doing everything for us, we now pray, respond to, and sing the liturgy itself. We have introduced numerous liturgical ministries (for example, hospitality ministers, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, psalmists, song leaders, etc.) to which many people have generously responded. We have certainly become more active participants during our liturgical celebrations. But more is needed.

One challenge is that liturgical ministers (including the ministry of being the liturgical assembly) must move from doing their ministry to being liturgical ministers serving the liturgy. This means that preparing for the

Full, conscious, and active participation also carries the challenge of growing in liturgical spirituality.

various liturgical ministries entails far more than what is directly involved in doing the ministry well, for example, lectors learning to pronounce correctly unfamiliar words in a reading. It means that underlying each liturgical ministry is a spirituality specific to that ministry which must be lived daily

as part of the preparation. For example, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion might make habitual the practice of seeing each person they meet each day as a beloved son or daughter of God, as members of the Body of Christ. Lectors might take more time to savor the word of God, each day choosing a phrase from a reading they are preparing to keep on their minds and lips throughout each day. Lectors might also pay attention

to their own words, never speaking negatively about anyone, always speaking the truth, always using words to build others up.

Another challenge of full, conscious, and active participation is that we form ourselves to celebrate liturgy in a way that is beyond active engagement with the rite. Thus, at some point early in the celebration we might consciously surrender ourselves into God's hands, asking God to transform us into being more perfect members of the Body of Christ. In this way we open ourselves to grow in being more fruitfully the presence of Christ to all we meet each day. With this conscious surrender at liturgy we open ourselves to receive both the gifts and challenges God offers us at every liturgy.

Full, conscious, and active participation also carries the challenge of growing in liturgical spirituality. One of the great liturgical concerns of Pope Benedict XVI is that liturgy does not stay within the church walls, but that it becomes a lived reality in the ordinariness of our everyday living. To this end Pope Benedict chose two new formulas in the new translation of the Mass for the assembly's dismissal: "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord" and "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life." Both of these dismissals send us forth to continue our participation in the liturgy through a Gospel way of living. We glorify the Lord in all we do when our thoughts, words, and actions are consistent with witnessing to the mystery of Christ we celebrate at liturgy.

4. "Popular devotions of the Christian people...are to be highly recommended" (CSL no. 13).

Before the Council, the prayer of ordinary Catholics consisted of popular devotions; these were even prayed during Mass itself. It was not uncommon to hear school children pray the rosary out loud during the Mass

The Constitution clearly suggests that devotional and liturgical prayer are not "either-or"; they are "both-and."

that began each Catholic school day. Parishes were the center for daily rosary, weekly novenas, monthly holy hours, evening litanies of the saints, various processions, May crownings, and many other practices. These were lively prayers that nourished and deepened the faith of the people. Then the Council opened the door to liturgical renewal, and it seemed like devotions were out. So we thought. But that's not what the Constitution intends.

Various devotional prayers are essential for a healthy prayer life; liturgical prayer cannot satisfy all our needs. The Constitution did make some important correctives to what is healthy and authentic devotional prayer. Our devotional prayer is to "harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord

with the sacred liturgy, are in some way derived from it, and lead the people to it” (no. 13). In other words, whatever devotional prayer we choose to round out our liturgical prayer life, its whole point is to connect us to liturgy in a more fruitful way. Devotional prayer can never get in the way of our celebrating liturgy, can never replace liturgy, and must always deepen our desire to celebrate liturgy better.

Probably one challenge of the Constitution with respect to devotional prayer is to sort out what kind of personal prayer is helpful for our spiritual and liturgical growth. Then we need to find a balance. Devotional prayer can be very satisfying because it allows us to express a whole range of emotions welling up from our everyday situations; we can shape our prayer to express these emotions to our God. Thus, if we or someone close to us has just been diagnosed with cancer, we might yell at God in anger; beg God to take the malignancy away; pray that the treatment works; wonder, why me? The whole prayer can be structured around our struggle to accept whatever God’s will is for us, and ready us to surrender ourselves to God more fully during liturgy. Liturgy, on the other hand, is not about us and our daily joys and sorrows (although well celebrated liturgy does have certain required silences that do give us a few minutes to express our personal intentions; unfortunately, all too often these silences are so shortened as to be ineffectual or even are not observed at all); liturgy is fundamentally about making present the saving mystery of Christ.

The Constitution clearly suggests that devotional and liturgical prayer are not “either-or;” they are “both-and.” As we come to a good balance between them in our own personal lives and in the life of the parish as a whole, they mutually enrich each other, bringing us ever closer to the God whom we love. Of course, the real challenge here is that our prayer life needs to be more than going to Mass once a week! Prayer needs to be an important part of each day.

5. “Even in the liturgy the Church does not wish to impose a rigid uniformity.... Rather does she respect and foster the qualities and talents of the various races and nations” (CSL no. 37).

In three paragraphs (CSL nos. 37-40) the Constitution addresses what has become an incredibly important aspect of liturgical renewal, especially here in North America: the issue of inculturation. Many of us can remember a time when an Irish church graced one street corner, a Hungarian one another, a German one a third corner. And let’s not forget the Polish communities, or French ones, or many others! Formerly, immigrants to this new land tended to stay within their own language and culture groups. But things have changed radically over the years. Instead of immigrants mainly

from western European countries, we now have sizeable numbers of people from every continent on the globe. One size certainly does not fit all!

We have come a long way since December 4, 1963 in recognizing the various cultural groups and diversity that make up most of our parishes. We sing hymns in several languages.

We often have bilingual liturgies.

We have signed liturgies for the hearing impaired and aids for the sight impaired.

We have ways to include the physically and developmentally disabled in all our liturgies.

We have incorporated various devotional prayers endemic to

certain cultures in the calendar of activities of our parishes. All of these are important steps forward in becoming truly inclusive Catholic communities and liturgies.

The challenge of authentic inculturation of our liturgies is not to be satisfied merely with "add on" elements, but we must strive truly to celebrate liturgy in a way that everyone can find a home in the celebration.

The challenge of authentic inculturation of our liturgies is not to be satisfied merely with "add on" elements, but we must strive truly to celebrate liturgy in a way that everyone can find a home in the celebration. This is a new and incredibly important task for us. It will take us years of trial and error to find our way forward. But going forward into greater hospitality and inclusivity is the liturgical thing to do, simply because we are all members of the Body of Christ.

Concluding Remarks

These five principles are by no means the only ones the Constitution puts forth. They certainly are ones that remind us to of what liturgy is and does for us, who and how we are to be at liturgy, and the kind of prayer that brings us more into conformity with Christ and his life and mission. If we think back over the past fifty years, the value of the advances we've made in our liturgical prayer life far exceeds some of the mistakes we've made. Going backward is no solution to anything. *CSL* calls us to hope and courage while on our pilgrim journey. In liturgy we share "in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy" (no. 8) for which we all long. Let us accompany each other well along our way, and anticipate that day when we stand forever at the Messianic Banquet, feasting on the glory of the divine Presence, singing with all the heavenly bodies, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come" (*Rev* 4:8).



The Church as Sacrament: Revisited and Renewed

by Daniel Torson, C.P.P.S.

The fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962 offers an opportunity to review the history and documents produced by the Council and recapture the magnitude of this historic event in the Catholic Church. It also offers the opportunity to restudy, re-appropriate, and reclaim the significant theologies of the Council, as these continue to guide the Church today. This task is significant, since the Council produced and promulgated sixteen documents touching all aspects of theology and Church life. Even after fifty years the wealth and richness of the Council merit our continued scholarship and investigation, keeping in mind that all ecumenical councils of the Church take many years to fully implement. From this perspective, we approach the texts with the question, “Where does the vision of the Second Vatican Council need a more thorough implementation in the Catholic Church and our world today?”

The world has changed dramatically in all aspects during the past fifty years. To mention only two, we see the rapid growth of technology as it applies to our world of instantaneous communication, while at the same time there exist Third World countries where extreme poverty dehumanizes and destroys life each and every day. I connect these thoughts to Vatican II with the question, “Where in our theology of Church do we need to further advance the vision of Vatican II in order to meet the new challenges of the twenty-first century?”

Church as Sacrament

With these three approaches in mind for addressing the work of the Council (recovering the history, further implementation, and further advancement in light of changing times), I am choosing the latter two

approaches to further implement and advance a significant model of the Church: the Church as Sacrament. This theological model of the Church as Sacrament is significant because it intimately merges and integrates two sometimes disjointed theological subdivisions within the discipline of theology, namely, ecclesiology (the theology of what it means to be Church), and sacramental or liturgical theology (the communal prayer and worship within the Church). From my perspective, our understanding of Church begins with the latter, since a true vision of the Church engages the totality of our world of peoples, structures, and inadequacies. This is what is contained in the image of Church as Sacrament. While this image of Church was one among several promoted by the Council, I believe it merits further unfolding for implementation today in order to attain a more unified awareness of mission.

Pope John XXII

Two attitudes of the Council set the stage for the context out of which a comprehensive understanding of Church as Sacrament can be revisited and applied. Here I appeal

to the insights of Pope John XXIII regarding the stance that he detailed in his speech to open the Council, where he stated: “But from the renewed,

The presentation of doctrine with a pastoral character becomes a distinguishing mark of this council.

serene, and tranquil adherence to all the teaching of the Church in its entirety and preciseness...the Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciousness in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine, which, however, should be studied and expounded through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought. The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter that must be taken into great consideration with patience if necessary, everything being measured in the forms and proportions of a Magisterium which is predominantly pastoral in character” (Pope John XXIII, *Opening Speech*, 6.5).

Upon first hearing, the approach presented by Pope John might not seem revolutionary. But in light of the repeated condemnations of Modernism by the previous six popes dating back to 1832, an embrace of modern research methods is a radical change in methodology. Pope John also calls for attention given to the way that doctrine is presented. The presentation of doctrine with a pastoral character becomes a distinguishing mark of this Council, in contrast to the previous twenty councils. A pastoral approach

considers the lived situation of humanity as a context for theological articulation.

Later in the speech, Pope John exclaims that, “the Catholic Church, raising the torch of religious truth by means of this ecumenical council, desires to show herself to be the loving mother of all, benign, patient, full of mercy and goodness toward the brethren who are separated from her” (7.3). This sets the tone of the Council as conciliatory rather than condemnatory, and opens the path for eventual dialogue with other Christian denominations and other religions. As I will later explain, the Sacramental Church is mindful of its mission in the world.

Sacrament as *Mystery*

The word sacrament comes from the Latin word *sacramentum*, which originally had a religious context where people would make a solemn oath before the gods, or in other words, “consecrated themselves before the gods that they were telling the truth” (Kress, 111). Sacrament was to become the preferred Latin translation for the Greek *mysterion* (mystery).

As Paul specifically uses the word “church” in other places in his writings, the church is clearly the gathering of the faithful followers of Jesus Christ who are unfolding his mystery and following in the tradition of the revelation received by the apostles.

First we turn to the Christian usage of *mysterion*. It is used one time in each of the Synoptic Gospels, not found in John’s Gospel, and used just four times in the Book of Revelation. In contrast, Paul frequently incorporates *mysterion* in his letters. One example of Paul’s usage is found in his *Letter to the Ephesians*: “Because of this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—if, as I suppose, you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly earlier. When you read this you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (*Eph* 3:1-6) Thus, “for Paul, the mystery is clearly and emphatically the Christ-event, from its eternal hiddenness in God to its realization in Christ and its proclamation through the apostles” (Kress 113). As Paul specifically uses the word “church” in other places in his writings (e.g., *1 Cor* 1:1), the church is clearly the gathering of the faithful followers of Jesus Christ who

are unfolding his mystery and following in the tradition of the revelation received by the apostles.

Patristic Development

The Patristic fathers (2nd through 6th centuries) provide development and interpretation of mystery/sacrament. Accentuating the theology of the Patristic period was also a revived methodological conviction (called “Ressourcement”) of the Second Vatican Council, which directed a return

We can conclude that the term sacrament became established among Latin Christians as expressive of the mystery of Baptism, and God’s endowment of grace and gifts were empowered through the sacrament for the mission of the Church.

to the earlier sources for application to contemporary theological development. A passage from the *Didiche*, reflects the tradition of an early Christian community in Syria. The anonymous writer proclaims in a prayer over the bread, “We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and

knowledge which You made known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory forever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.” Here the word mystery is not specifically stated, but the “life and knowledge which You made known to us through Jesus” reflects the *mysterion* of St. Paul. The passage from *Didiche* then proceeds to connect this mystery to the mission of the Church: to gather peoples together into a new unity which realizes God’s kingdom on earth.

A second Patristic reference of significance is from Tertullian’s treatise, *On Baptism* (c. AD 200), which incorporates the term “sacrament” in reference to Baptism. He teaches that God’s grace and gifts are made present through Baptism. Tertullian writes: “Therefore, blessed ones, whom the grace of God awaits, when you ascend from that most sacred font of your new birth, and spread your hands for the first time in the house of your mother, together with your brethren...ask from the Lord, that His own specialties of grace and distributions of gifts may be supplied to you.” The phrase, “distributions of gifts,” is a clear reference to Paul’s *First Letter to the Corinthians*, Chapter 12, where he exhorts that the reception of individual gifts is intended for the purpose of building up the body, the Church—which is a call to mission.

We can conclude that the term sacrament became established among Latin Christians as expressive of the mystery of Baptism, and God’s endowment

of grace and gifts were empowered through the sacrament for the mission of the Church.

A final Patristic reference, from St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (c. AD 250), uses the term sacrament in reference to the Church. In his discourse *On the Unity of the Church*, he refers to the Church as the undivided tunic/garment of Christ for which lots were cast. Cyprian writes, “This sacrament of unity, [referring to the Church] this bond of concord inseparably connected is shown, when in the Gospel the tunic of the Lord Jesus Christ is not at all divided and is not torn, but by those who cast lots for the garment of Christ, who rather might have put on Christ, a sound garment is received and an undamaged and undivided tunic is possessed.... He cannot possess the garment of Christ who tears and divides the Church of Christ” (Dollen 27). Thus, for St. Cyprian, the Church is the sacrament of unity. As we move to Vatican II’s usage and understanding of the Church as Sacrament, the application of Cyprian’s “unity” of the Church for itself and the world becomes a significant aspect of the Church’s mission.

Lumen Gentium

I now turn to the Vatican II documents themselves. Four of the sixteen documents effectively teach the theology of the Church (ecclesiology) in

An initial analysis of both of these references from Lumen Gentium indicates that the theological concept serves as a model or image of the Church expressive of its inner-nature and also its outer-nature or mission in the world.

its various aspects. *Lumen Gentium* (*Constitution on the Church*) reveals the theology of the Church itself; *Gaudium et Spes* (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*), *Ad Gentes* (*Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity*), and *Sacrosanctum Concilium*

(*Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy*) all reflect a theology of the Church as Sacrament. Within these four documents are contained five specific references to the Church as Sacrament and six contributing or partial references to this theology.

Lumen Gentium contains the greatest number, and together these references form a considerable theological basis for the document as a whole. The concept of the Church as Sacrament enjoyed a central place in the theology of *Lumen Gentium*. This centrality is realized in the opening paragraph: “Since the Church, in Christ, is in the nature of sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is of communion with God and of unity of the whole human race—she here purposes, for the benefit of the faithful and of the whole world, to set forth, as clearly as possible, and in the tradition laid down by earlier councils, her own nature and universal mission.”

The phrase, “in the nature of” is a somewhat tempered reference to the Church as Sacrament. It still serves the function of connecting Church to Sacrament. Later in the document the reference becomes explicit. “Christ, lifted up from the earth, has drawn all people to himself. Rising from the dead, he sent his life-giving Spirit upon his disciples and through him set up his Body which is the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation” (LG 48). An initial analysis of both of these references from *Lumen Gentium* indicates that the theological concept serves as a model or image of the Church expressive of its inner-nature and also its outer-nature or mission in the world.

St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas

At this point, a basic understanding of the theological term “sacrament” as understood in the Catholic Church is needed to shed light on the interpretation of *Lumen Gentium*. Here we begin with the meaning of sacrament in reference to the seven official sacramental rituals of the Church. St. Augustine (writing in about the year AD 400) provides to this day the most basic and significant understanding of a sacrament. In his treatise, *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed*, Augustine states that the sacraments are visible signs of the invisible reality of God (Ch 26, #50), and that the species of the sacrament (e.g., water, oil, bread, wine, etc) ought not be regarded in its common use after it has been blessed. Thus, God who is invisible becomes visible in the sacrament.

St. Thomas Aquinas builds upon this tradition, stating, “Signs are given to men [people], to whom it is proper to discover the unknown by means of the known. Consequently a sacrament properly so called is that which is the sign of some sacred thing pertaining to man [people]; so that properly speaking a sacrament, as considered by us now, is defined as being the sign of a holy thing so far as it makes men [people] holy” (*Summa Theologica III*, 60, a. 2). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, building upon the teaching of St. Thomas, states that “sacraments communicate the grace that each sacrament signifies” (1127). Most importantly, all of the sacraments are revelatory of Christ in his words, deeds, public ministry, and Paschal Mystery (*Catechism* 1115).



Edward Schillebeeckx and Karl Rahner

Since Vatican II sought to reinterpret and newly apply existing theologies to the circumstances of the twentieth century, I now turn to the work of the twentieth century Dutch theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx (1914-2009), whose theological scholarship prior to the Council directly influenced

the inclusion of Church as Sacrament in *Lumen Gentium* and the other documents. He provides a definition and explanation of the Church as Sacrament in his book, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, originally published in German in 1960. He was an active participant as a theologian at the Second Vatican Council.

Schillebeeckx begins his treatment of sacrament with Jesus Christ, from which all of the sacraments flow and reveal. He writes: "Because the saving

As social beings who attain deeper realities in life through new and on-going experiences, the Church becomes the real and active offer of Christ's redeeming love in the "now."

acts of the man, Jesus, are performed by a divine person, they have a divine power to save, but because this divine power to save appears to us in visible form, the saving activity of Jesus is sacramental. For a sacrament is a divine bestowal of salvation in an outwardly perceptible form

which make the bestowal manifest...in historical visibility. [Thus,] the man Jesus, as the personal visible realization of the divine grace of redemption, is the sacrament, the primordial sacrament, because this man, the Son of God himself, is intended by the Father to be in his humanity the only way to the actuality of redemption" (Schillebeeckx 15).

Schillebeeckx' significant contribution thus far, is the naming of Jesus as the Primordial Sacrament because Jesus was the visible presence of God's redemption. But Christ did not complete his mission with his ascension into heaven. The redeeming presence of Jesus Christ is still visible in the world through the Holy Spirit. So, Schillebeeckx concludes, "The Church therefore is not merely a means of salvation. It is Christ's salvation itself, this salvation as visibly realized in this world" (Schillebeeckx 48). If Christ's salvation is visibly present, then Christ really is present and active in the present.

A second theologian of note concerning the theology of Church as Sacrament is Karl Rahner (1904-1984), a German who was also a theological advisor at Vatican II and played a significant role in the theological development of the Council. Rahner's theology in this area is in harmony with Schillebeeckx, but he offers a distinctive emphasis: the invitation and call of God. For Rahner, the human person is "a being oriented towards God. His orientation towards the absolute mystery always continues to be offered to him by this mystery as the ground and content of his being" (Rahner, *Foundations* 44).

Thus, in defining the Church, Rahner articulates that the Church is the continuation of God's self-offer in Jesus Christ in whom he [Christ] has the final, victorious and salvific word in the dialogue between God and the world" (Rahner, *Foundations* 412). "By the very fact of being in that way the enduring presence of Christ in the world, the Church is truly the fundamental sacrament" (Rahner, *Church* 18). The presence of Christ in the world "can no longer perish" and is offered to each individual through the Church "in a tangible way" (Rahner, *Foundations* 412). This tangible nature of the Church as the visible offer of God's salvation is essential to human persons. As

Because we believe that God truly exists in the Church, the primary purpose of the Church is to live and be who God is: merciful, healing, and filled with hope.

social beings who attain deeper realities in life through new and on-going experiences, the Church becomes the real and active offer of Christ's redeeming love in the "now." This offer is assured to us by Christ himself.

Renewed Understanding of Church and Mission

Based upon this foundational understanding of the Church as Sacrament, I now seek to apply this theology to the twenty-first century. The newly revived image of the Church as Sacrament offers a distinct contrast to the dominating pre-Vatican II image of the Church as a static and immovable structure composed of buildings and hierarchy. These images are not denied or denounced in promoting the Church as Sacrament, but a decisive shift from structure to focus and purpose is: its supernatural character and world-wide mission (Auer 60).

The word "sacrament" designates the supernatural character of the Church. As has been previously expressed, the word "sacrament" means the visible offering, promise, surety, and redeeming presence of God through Jesus Christ. This attribute of the Church becomes the visible guarantee that God powerfully exists in our largely secularized world and that God still invites all people to experience the fullness of what it means to be human in the freedom of which only God can give. Because we believe that God truly exists in the Church, the primary purpose of the Church is to live and be who God is: merciful, healing, and filled with hope. With all of the brokenness and meaninglessness of our world today, these divine qualities of God are as essential today as they were two thousand years ago when Jesus walked the earth. Thus, the Church must be the place that envelops these characteristics to the fullest in all of its actions and invites all peoples to share in God's active presence.

But the Sacramental Church is not solely concerned with its inner nature. Its sacramental spirituality flows directly to its world-wide mission. Recall Cyprian's designation for the Church as the Sacrament of Unity—a unity for itself and for the world. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has made enormous strides in dialoguing with Christian denominations and other religions of the world. In the last fifty years, the Catholic Church went from a closed society that wasn't even a part of the World Council of Churches to accomplishing significant declarations detailing areas of common faith with Anglicans and Lutherans. The Catholic Church has been active locally, nationally, and internationally in engaging the other religions of the world through dialogue and common prayer. But once again, these efforts are needed in our world today with increased fervor, as religion in general has become a contentious point of division—even to the point of war. We are well aware of the current strained relationship between Christianity and Islam, complicated by differences in culture and economic status. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has clearly proceeded in all religious interaction with the intent of understanding and conciliation rather than the fundamentalist posture of conversion. Today we celebrate these fifty years of great progress in building religious unity and call for a revitalization of this sacred sign of God, as our world is becoming more divided.

Lastly, the mission of the Church as Sacrament is always to walk and stand with those peoples in need: refugees, undocumented immigrants, those suffering from economic inadequacies, and those who are politically or racially oppressed. The economic structures of the world continue to promote division among people rather than a unity for the common good. The Catholic Church has provided a multiplicity of endeavors over the past fifty years. But the circumstances of our world demand that these efforts proceed with an even greater dynamism.

The fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council is a time to celebrate the monumental achievements of the Council, a time to promote the movement of these achievements into building our future, and a time to be renewed in our own faith through Jesus Christ. It is my appeal that the Church of Christ on earth will more fully realize its mission, serving as a powerful voice of hope for a people in search of true meaning.



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Renewal and Adaptation of Religious Life: The C.P.P.S. Experience

by Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S.

On October 28, 1965, the Second Vatican Council promulgated the Decree *Perfectae Caritatis*, with the subtitle: “On the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life.” The subtitle captures the twofold charge this Decree gives religious institutes: “The up-to-date renewal of the religious life comprises both a constant return to the sources of the whole of Christian life and to the primitive inspiration of the institutes, and their adaptation to the changed conditions of the time” (*PC 2*).

Thus, the Council was calling for religious institutes to return to the sources of their origins in the Gospel and the charism of their founders, and then strive to adapt those insights to the current conditions in which the institute was living.

This twofold charge set off ferment in religious institutes of both men and of women that lasted the better part of a decade. Indeed, this effort has become an almost constant feature of religious life ever since. One thinks of the keen interest in “re-founding” that marked the last half of the 1980s and well into the 1990s. All in all, it seemed to be a reopening to the energies that had marked the founding of these institutes in the first place.

Religious life in the Church has always reflected a Spirit-driven dimension of Christian faith, from its beginnings in the Egyptian and Syrian deserts in the fourth century, through the monastic movements and their many reforms, to the mendicant orders such as the Franciscans and Dominicans in the Middle Ages, to the apostolic communities of the Post-Reformation era in the Church. New religious institutes continue to be founded today.

The charisms that come forward to spur the founding of new institutes are a constant reminder of how the Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church.

Thus, the Council was calling for religious institutes to return to the sources of their origins in the Gospel and the charism of their founders, and then strive to adapt those insights to the current conditions in which the institute was living. This article looks at the renewal of religious life since the Council. It will focus particularly on the impact of the Council on men's religious institutes, and use the Missionaries of the Precious Blood as a specific example.

The renewal of women's institutes would merit a distinct consideration. The Council's call to renew and adapt coincided in the North Atlantic region with the second wave of emancipation movements for women (the first had been for women's suffrage in the early twentieth century). This emancipation was part of the environment to which religious institutes had to adapt, even as they rediscovered the original practices of their charism (which were often marked by conflict with the episcopal structure of the Church). Since most women's institutes were headquartered in the North Atlantic region, this doubled the ferment of renewal for them.

On the other hand, religious institutes of men, especially clerical institutes (consisting of priests or a mix of priests and brothers), had their renewal framed more by canon law than was the case for women. This necessarily shapes their story of renewal somewhat differently. I will recount the story of the renewal of men's institutes by some general observations about the impact of renewal and adaptation of these institutes, and then intertwine the story with the experience of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood as an example. This article concludes with some reflections on where the future may lie in this continuing pattern of renewal and adaptation.

The Council had declared that there was a "universal call to holiness." This fundamental call was rooted in Baptism, rather than in priestly ordination or religious profession. While this was widely welcomed, it blurred what had been a clear defining boundary between religious life and the life of the laity.

The First Decades of Renewal

For nearly all institutes, the first ten years after the Council were a time of intense reflection and debate. The intense reflection was upon the origins of the institute, the charism imparted to the institute by its founding figure(s), and how that charism might be interpreted today. Just how closely should the living out of the charism mirror how the first generation of an institute

had understood it and lived it out? In those years immediately after the Council, “inculturation” had not yet entered the Church’s vocabulary. The Council was insistent in many of its documents that the Church needed to adapt to its current circumstances (without, however, compromising the Gospel in any way). How to do that was not specified. And so debate took place on how to situate the charism was a lively and many times divisive one.

The other part of the charge, adapting to the times, spurred equally intense debates. How far should the adaptation go? Where did adaptation end and prophecy begin?

All of this debate had two important side effects. The first was the exodus of many men from religious life. The upheaval taking place led some priests and brothers to question their calling. Many left in order to marry. Others left for a range of personal reasons. The second effect was seen in the formation programs, as it became increasingly unclear to what and how candidates should be formed.

The religious institutes were struggling with yet another feature. The Council had declared that there was a “universal call to holiness.” This fundamental call was rooted in Baptism, rather than in priestly ordination or religious profession. While this was widely welcomed, it blurred what had been a clear defining boundary between religious life and the life of the laity. Especially in apostolic communities (communities where ministry had precedence over community life), it became more challenging to define just what religious life was to be.

The struggles to reposition religious life in light of all these challenges—of returning to the original inspiration, of adapting to the current situation, and of defining just what religious life was—kept most religious institutes in ferment for about fifteen years or more.

The situation of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood mirrored this more general picture in a number of ways. A Chapter of Renewal met in Rome for six weeks in 1969 to rewrite the *Constitution* and *Customary* (to be renamed *Normative Texts* and *Statutes*). It was preceded by an international commission that met for two years to develop preparatory documents. The changes going on in the larger Church were evident in that Chapter. It was the first such general meeting of the Missionaries that was not conducted in Latin; English and Italian were used, with any official texts being promulgated in English. There were three student observers allowed to participate in the discussions (I happened to be one of them). And there was intense debate about the directions we should go.

A number of very positive things emerged that reflected genuine renewal. First of all, the Missionaries were able to regain their status as an institute without vows. In 1946 a Constitution had been put in place that made

... the move to vernacular languages instead of Latin helped create an understanding of the Missionaries as a truly international and culturally diverse reality.

the Missionaries look like a vowed religious institute. This had come about as a result of an Apostolic Visitation that had taken place in the 1930s, but was not completed because of the outbreak of World War II. For example, from 1951 to 1970, the Missionaries were required

to have a canonical novitiate of one year. The renewal the Council called for allowed the Missionaries to reclaim their status as had been envisioned in the founding years. Later, the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* called such institutes “Societies of Apostolic Life” and gave them a much freer hand in how they were organized and governed. The Missionaries are one of about thirty male institutes with this designation.

Second, the renewal allowed for a new equality of brother members with priests. As in most religious institutes up to that time, brothers had a very second-class status, serving the priests or some institutional aspect of the institute. With the renewal, they attained a near-equal status, with a right to vote and hold office, and to have their ministries recognized as ministries rather than service positions. The only difference maintained was that brothers are not allowed to be major superiors (provincials, moderator generals) because of canon law. They do serve in councilor positions with the right to participate in decision making.

Third, the move to vernacular languages instead of Latin helped create an understanding of the Missionaries as a truly international and culturally diverse reality. This has evolved more gradually, but it plays an important role in understanding what it means to adapt to situations. That situation is no longer “the modern world” but a host of cultures and localities that must be taken into consideration. The growth of importance of Latin America and the use of Spanish in international meetings reflects some of this greater internationality and diversity.

The Missionaries experienced some of the other challenges as well, including the departure of members, and continuing struggles on how to interpret renewal and adaptation.

The Years of Re-Founding

From the early 1980s into the 1990s, religious institutes worked to consolidate the outcomes of the intense efforts at renewal and adaptation.

Gerald Arbuckle, a Marist priest and anthropologist from New Zealand, proposed what he called “re-founding” as a way of doing this consolidation. It proposed allowing visionary members of an institute to take a lead in a common effort to renew and adapt. Many religious communities took up his call and used it as a next step in renewal and adaptation. It took root in three ways especially.

One was a calmer attempt to create a common story about the founding of the institute, and what were the enduring features of those founding

Renewal now meant discovering a spirituality that could be rooted biblically and attuned closely to the charism of the religious community.

years that continued to shape and guide the institute today. This provided a more secure platform to read the current situations in the world and adapt accordingly. All of this was the positive outgrowth of the tumultuous years immediately

after the Council. It also represented a more nuanced picture of just what “adaptation” meant than was possible in those earlier years.

A second was a look at the spiritual resources of the institute. Many of the institutes that had been founded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries lived out a generic ecclesial spirituality and were connected to a specific spirituality proper to their institute by devotional practices. Renewal now meant discovering a spirituality that could be rooted biblically and attuned closely to the charism of the religious community. This did not require a rejection of the devotional practices, but rather a re-positioning and connecting them to a larger vision of discipleship in Christ and living out a Gospel-centered life. Consequently, a great deal of effort was put into rediscovering (and also constructing for the first time) a spirituality that was connected to the charism and attuned to the challenges of contemporary life and ministry.

A third was defining the relation of the religious institute to the wider laity in the Church, and how they might participate in the spirituality and work of the institute. This was of course not a new idea. Benedictines had long had lay associates called “oblates” and the mendicant orders had “Third Orders.” Apostolic

...attempts to create and situate a spirituality within the contemporary context in the United States and Latin America, created new ways of thinking about and living the Gospel life.

communities, from the Jesuits onward, had all kind of sodalities, auxiliaries, and other kinds of groups. What was different about the new impulse was its being rooted in the Council’s universal call to holiness.

In the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, these three efforts at re-founding were evident as well. A rediscovery of the life of Saint Gaspar, and attempts to imagine what he would have done in the various settings in the worldwide community began to take shape. The some 1800 surviving letters of Saint Gaspar (out of an

estimated 3000) were translated into English, and members for the first time had wide access to Gaspar's words and thoughts on many subjects. In the United States, that involved reclaiming the name of "Missionaries

of the Precious Blood." That had been abandoned for the more neutral "Society of the Precious Blood" in the nineteenth century because of the prevailing anti-Catholic sentiment in the U.S. Mission houses, a central structure of Gaspar's early community, were begun in several places.

Pathways to return to the originating insights of the founding figures and first generations, as well ongoing study and development of the spirituality, are now routine structures in most institutes.

A spirituality of the Precious Blood began to develop out of what had been primarily devotional practices. Historical research in Italy, and attempts to create and situate a spirituality within the contemporary context in the United States and Latin America, created new ways of thinking about and living the Gospel life.

A confraternity of laity around devotion to the Precious Blood actually preceded the founding of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in the early 1800s. New associations of the laity with the Missionaries came about with the founding of the Companions in the United States, and a similar association in Poland during this period. In both instances, there are now more members of the Companions and in the Polish association than there are members of the Missionaries in those places.

Renewal and Adaptation Today and Tomorrow

Where is renewal and adaptation today, fifty years after the opening of the Council? One thing now apparent is that ongoing renewal and adaptation are now an organic part of religious institutes' understanding of themselves. It does not have the turbulent pattern of forty years ago, but is still there nevertheless. But it is now seen as a necessary and continuing process.

Pathways to return to the originating insights of the founding figures and first generations, as well ongoing study and development of the spirituality, are now routine structures in most institutes. Reading the current situation in different parts of the world and the institute, as well as the challenges that are being raised, remains an ongoing work.

For international communities, the shifting demographics or populations within the institute itself has been a prime concern in the past fifteen years. Membership in the northern hemisphere is diminishing and aging, while it grows and is young and vibrant in the southern hemisphere. Thus the human resources are in the Global South, while the financial resources (and the ways of doing things) remain in the Global North. How to bring these all harmoniously together is a major internal challenge.

A second challenge is the circulation of members of these international institutes among the regions of the entire community, as well as finding common bonds across cultural diversity. Many communities (including the Missionaries) now bring their young members together periodically to build bonds of friendship and common understanding.

A third is finding a deeper commonality through a shared spirituality. In many sectors of the Missionaries today, that is being found in seeing reconciliation as a key point in Precious Blood spirituality. This has a strong basis in the Bible, and is strengthened by sharing experiences of work toward reconciliation in various places. The Missionaries tried to do this in the late 1990s and again in 2010 around questions of the environment.

Conclusion

The Council had a profound impact on religious life, and certainly on the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Its message has been a special gift, providing a renewed vision and a continuing effort to adapt to current needs for the sake of preaching and living the Gospel. Its effects will continue to be felt for many years to come.



Dedicated Wholeheartedly to the Gospel

by Regina Siegfried, A.S.C.

Let them dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to [the Church's] mission." That sentence, deeply buried within *Perfectae Caritatis*, might cause more than a little pain to many women religious today. *Perfectae Caritatis*, along with *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, were the clarion calls to women religious fifty years ago to change our lives for the sake of the Gospel and the Church. Obedient to the mandate to renew our lives, women religious were ready to cross the many thresholds that Vatican II indicated. In creative but not subservient obedience, women religious have faithfully forged new ways of living that have been true to the spirit of Vatican II, and in the process developed new ecclesiologies and theologies of religious life.

For United States congregations of women religious, the exciting and disconcerting years of Vatican II (1962-1965) were part of a larger social

In creative but not subservient obedience, women religious have faithfully forged new ways of living that have been true to the spirit of Vatican II, and in the process developed new ecclesiologies and theologies of religious life.

upheaval that had roots in the late 1950s. In 1956, the popular incumbent president Dwight D. Eisenhower defeated Adlai Stevenson; Pius XII was Pope, and little seemed to disturb the calm soil of country, church and state. Sputnik, the Cuban missile crisis, the dawning of computer technology and a fear of

communism that evolved into a fear of terrorism were global issues of the 1950s and 1960s. Currents of change, however, stirred closer to the surface than many suspected, and the seemingly placid and contented atmosphere of United States culture and the church of the 1950s was about to break

through to a paradigm shift that reverberated through the church and congregations well into the twenty-first century.

With enthusiasm for many and reluctance for some, United States Adorers, Dayton Precious Blood Sisters, and O'Fallon Precious Blood Sisters embraced Vatican II with its clear encouragement for a new way of being Church, for a more contemporary way to live as women religious, and for closer involvement with God's people and all of society. There were three issues that captivated our attention: revision of Constitutions, theological education, and new forms of ministry.

Revision of the Constitutions

A significant development in deepening the Sisters' growth in renewal was the revision of constitutions that relied heavily on canon law, a characteristic of most congregational constitutions of the era. The 1959 general chapter of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, almost anticipating the renewal of Vatican II, had suggested a revision of the constitution and directed the formation of an international committee to revise the constitution. The committee, with membership from the three former United States provinces, decided to start with principles reflecting Scripture and the theology of Vatican II to create "an entirely new document, born of Sacred Scripture, the congregation's heritage from Maria De Mattias, the foundress, and new understandings of the Church reflected in the documents coming out of Vatican II."

...our congregations took care and time to revise constitutions. The process involved insights and input from members as we worked together to formulate theologically sound constitutions that captured both the spirit of Vatican II, our charism, and new ways of living communal life.

The Dayton Precious Blood Sisters followed a similar path with their 1967 document "One in Love" that guided their renewal. True to the spirit of foundress Maria Anna Brunner, contemporary Dayton C.P.P.S. Sisters figured out how to live religious life in the twentieth century in a way as new as Maria Anna Brunner's was in the nineteenth century.

The O'Fallon Precious Blood Sisters followed a similar process. In 1962, the general chapter began initial preparation for the revision of the constitution; a final draft was completed in 1968. In 1985 the Sisters received a formal decree of approval.

It is obvious that our congregations took care and time to revise constitutions. The process involved insights and input from members as

we worked together to formulate theologically sound constitutions that captured both the spirit of Vatican II, our charism, and new ways of living communal life.

Sister Formation Conference and Theological Education

We are different communities than we were fifty years ago, but our foundresses would recognize us because they taught us to go where the needs of the people beckon us.

The Sister Formation Conference and its emphasis on the education of Sisters were two of the many seeds for growth that helped congregations of women religious to develop a new way of looking at themselves and the people with whom they ministered.

Historians of the Sister Formation Conference and the history of women religious credit Sister Madeleva Wolff, C.S.C.'s now classic "Education of Sister Lucy" address to the 1949 National Catholic Education Association as the seed that gradually grew into the Sister Formation Conference. In 1954, six years after that groundbreaking address, the Sister Formation Conference organized itself under the auspices of the NCEA. Under the charismatic and energetic leadership of Mary Emil Penet, I.H.M.; Ritamary Bradley, C.H.M./S.F.C.C.; and Annette Walters, C.S.J., the Sister Formation Conference sponsored workshops at Notre Dame University, Marquette University, and other sites across the nation to educate Sisters responsible for the formation of new members for their congregations, an effort parallel to its work to see that new members had a college degree before they began their ministry. Like many communities of the early 20th century, Sisters in the Precious Blood communities began teaching with minimal college preparation and by completing their bachelors' degrees through the course of many summers.

The O'Fallon Precious Blood Sisters, the Dayton Precious Blood Sisters, and the Adorers of the Blood of Christ all availed themselves of the opportunities for ongoing education that the Sister Formation Conference provided. Sisters responsible for the formation and education of new members attended Sister Formation Conference workshops and seminars so that they kept abreast of current trends in theology, formation work, and Church trends. Many Sisters acquired degrees in fields of study ranging from theology to chemistry to literature and social work, thus making us some of the most highly educated women in the country.



New Ministries

The traveling exhibit *Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* expertly and movingly portrayed United States women religious deeply and compassionately involved in the development and growth of the Church in this country. Teaching and health care, hallmarks of our ministry throughout the nineteenth and half of the twentieth century, expanded into new works. Impelled by the spirit of *Gaudium et Spes*, we embraced the joys and sorrows of those with whom we minister, and we expanded our works to serve the needs of the times. Work in inner cities with African-Americans, involvement in the civil rights movement, praying in solidarity at street corners in Dayton where people had been killed, new missions in Central and South America and Africa, work with immigrants and gays and lesbians—all these burgeoning ministries stretched us into the spirit of Vatican II's insistence that "the joys and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ" are also ours. We have been changed by the work of the Spirit and by the life found in new ministries. Integration, transformation, conversion seeped deep into the ground of our personal and community life. We are different communities than we were fifty years ago, but our foundresses would recognize us because they taught us to go where the needs of the people beckon us.

The Visitation and LCWR Doctrinal Investigation

While most of us would readily agree that we could have done some of our renewal in better ways, the 2010 visitation and current LCWR [Leadership Conference of Women Religious] doctrinal investigation

God's household and kingdom is bigger than the established Church, larger than misguided, scared prelates, and more nurturing than laws, regulations, and rules. Women religious know this from fifty years of seeing Church in a new and broader perspective.

may have indeed blindsided some members of the hierarchy who may have expected us to respond differently. We have learned from the depth of the solidarity of the sisterhood and the care and thoughtfulness of responses both to the visitation and the investigation. We have "dedicated ourselves wholeheartedly to the Church's mission" and to the Gospel message of justice and equality. We believe that the Church is more than the hierarchy; we are the Church, and so are they. We are willing to work our way through this impasse with the skills we have developed through fifty years of prayer, dialogue and collaboration. We benefited from Vatican II's insistence that we change; some members of the hierarchy see things differently.

Mark Miller, C.P.P.S. offered some thoughts to ponder in his commentary, "Is Bullying Only a Child's Problem," in the July, 2012 issue of *The New*

Wine Press. He questions, “when the Vatican simply ‘takes over’ the leadership and direction of an organization [Leadership Conference of Women Religious] within the Catholic Church without any dialogue or consultation, could this be classified as ‘ecclesiastical bullying?’” And he poses another question: “Is the use of power or domination every really acceptable when it is directed specifically against another human being?” These questions are worth consideration as the impasse between the Vatican and the LCWR plays itself out over the next few years. We’ve witnessed a tremendous national outpouring of support for the Sisters both from within the Church and from others astounded that the Sisters could be chastised harshly and unfairly.

The Sisters are prophets. One of the hallmarks of a prophet is the ability to think in new and surprising ways, to help the rest of us see another way of doing the usual. Some people dismiss and discount women who think and act creatively, urged by the Spirit who set them on their feet to discover a new way to develop theology, social services, and liturgical rituals. God’s household and kingdom is bigger than the established church, larger than misguided, scared prelates, and more nurturing than laws, regulations, and rules. Women religious know this from fifty years of seeing Church in a new and broader perspective. These are some of the insights we have gained and are opportunities for moving into an uncertain future.

While the future may look uncertain from some perspectives, the support and love from the laity is clear and sure. I participated in the vigils in St. Louis on the cathedral basilica steps on Tuesday, August 7 and on the St. Louis Arch grounds on Thursday, August 9. St. Louis’ Catholic Action Network did a masterful job in organizing these events. Hundreds of people gathered in both places, despite the relentless St. Louis heat. I was humbled and inspired, even surprised, when people I didn’t know thanked me. The Church in its best self truly embraced us at those vigils as passing cars honked on Lindell Boulevard and busy Highway 70. LCWR’s statement as well as that of Bishop Sartain indicate that dialogue will continue. The Sisters have once again led the way into a new way of being Church.



Hope for the Future

by Geraldine M. (Gerry) Downs, D. Min.

To intensify the apostolic activity of the people of God, the most Holy Synod earnestly addresses itself to the laity, whose proper and indispensable role in the mission of the Church has already been dealt with in other documents” (*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, Vatican II).

Almost 15 years ago, I was asked to write an article for this publication titled, “Priestly People.” I began with the same quote from the introduction to the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*. And I can still use the first line of that article here today. “Trying to put my ideas and feelings in perspective while writing this piece has been a bit difficult.” It is not just “a bit difficult” today, it is very difficult. That is not because things have become so much better for the laity who still remain in our Church, but because things have become cloudy and many of the freedoms and openness which came with Vatican II have been walked back so far that they hardly exist at all. In the earlier article, I wrote that I was looking forward to the challenge to live my Catholic faith in ways not imagined in days gone by. And here we are at the 50th anniversary of “The Call to Holiness,” and it seems as though that “open window” of Vatican II has been closed within an inch of the sill, and the unimagined, but present challenge is to believe that the call to holiness, let alone the aims and visions of the whole Council, is still operative, especially for the laity, but also for many of the clergy.

Education and Formation

I, like many others, took the challenge of the call to holiness very much to heart. My faith had always been something real and tangible, nurtured by my parents, and learned from my forebears in faith. Now, it truly became my own. By that call I was given the responsibility to actively live my faith in practical ways. One of the opportunities opened to me was education and

the chance to learn more about liturgy and music at the Renssalear Summer Program for Music and Liturgy at St. Joseph's College in Indiana, a Precious Blood institution. The liturgy studies were just what I was looking for to increase my knowledge and bolster my faith, and the enthusiasm of my fellow students helped to inspire me. I successfully finished the three-summer course and received a Diploma in Pastoral Liturgy. Those summers were my first real contact with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

I became the Director of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and Director of Liturgy at a local parish. Encouraged by my success at Renssalear, I studied at the Franciscan School of Theology and received a Master of Theological Studies. On the strength of that completion, I was accepted into a doctoral program at the Graduate Theological Foundation in Indiana. I am now the proud possessor of a Doctor of Ministry degree.

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The wonder of all this for

me is that I do not have an undergraduate degree, but by the grace of God and the permissions of folks in the right places, I was able to complete the education that I felt I needed to be effective in ministry in my Church. I moved to a larger parish and was installed as part of a Pastoral Team—my title being associate pastor—with a priest and a sister with similar titles as the other members of the team. I spent five happy and rewarding years there.

The Call to Preach

Canon 766: Lay persons can be admitted to preach in a church or oratory if it is necessary in certain circumstances or if it is useful in particular cases according to the prescriptions of the conference of bishops with due regard for canon 767.

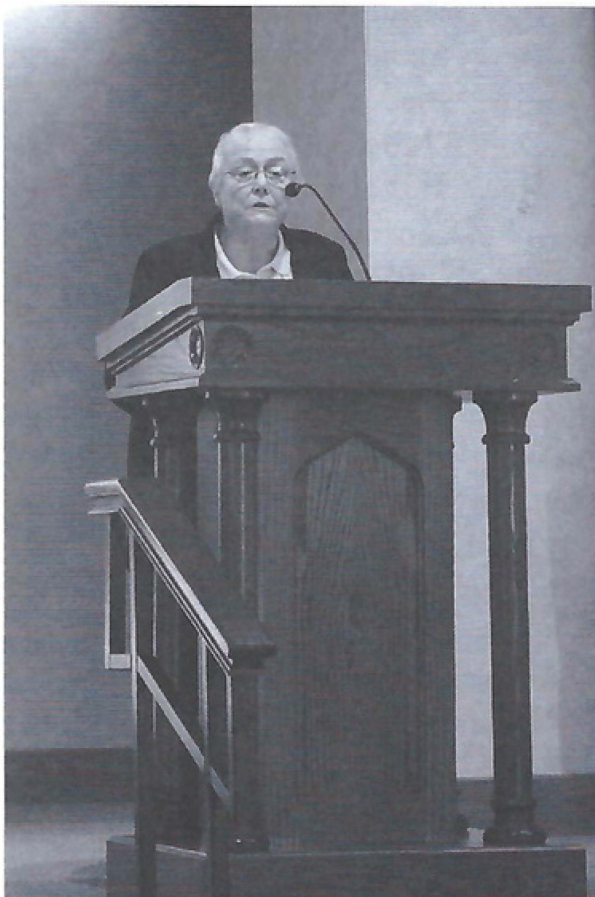
Comment: The canon permits the admission of lay persons to preach in churches or oratories (and a fortiori, in other places where preaching takes place) in either of two circumstances. 1) when in certain circumstances necessity requires it, e.g., when a parish or mission is entrusted to a lay catechist or pastoral associate, or 2) in particular cases when utility urges it, e.g., when it appears pastorally useful in this instance. There is no hint of any distinction between lay women and lay men in the canon.

Canon 770: At certain times according to the prescriptions of the diocesan bishop, pastors are to arrange for those types of preaching which are called spiritual exercises or sacred missions or for other types of preaching adapted to their needs.

When a new priest was appointed to the parish, the team concept was done away with and many of the things I had been permitted to do were no longer open to me. I had been a regular in the preaching rotation, with the permission of the bishop. But after eight years of preaching experience—and including my studies at Rensselaer, at the Franciscan School and The Foundation, and also in the parish—I was no longer permitted to preach on Sunday, or to preside at Communion services.

A new opportunity opened for me. I became a preacher with a Catholic group presenting parish missions across the country. I had been looking for a new position, and a Precious Blood priest friend, who had been working with the group, invited me to apply. I preached my first parish mission in January 1994, and spent the next 11 years with this group. During some of that time I was also coordinator for the ministry. At the same time, I was active in my local parish as the coordinator of Liturgical Ministries, and as Extraordinary Minister of Eucharist, Lector, and Altar Server. I still participate in these liturgical ministries. I am also a member of the preaching team for Precious Blood Missions, and continue to enjoy the

travel and sharing my faith with the wonderful people I meet along the way.



However, things have changed on that front as well. No longer am I permitted to preach after the Gospel at Sunday Mass, using the scripture reading as an invitation to the Mission. The lay preacher may offer an invitation after Communion, and then only a short one. That is true in the majority of parishes, whose pastors are no longer comfortable giving permission to preach to the lay person, even though permitted by the canon. There are a few pastors who

recognize credibility and ability and who introduce and invite me to speak after the Gospel.

I still am engaged in my parish as a volunteer, but things there and in my local diocese have changed drastically. The new pastor is from another country and does not speak English very well. I am continually dealing with parishioners who want me to talk to the pastor and tell him to speak more slowly, and to stop some of the unfamiliar additions he has made to the liturgy. At least 1/3 of the parishioners have left, and the pastor seems not to notice. He is not inculturated here in the U.S., and doesn't seem to be either willing or able to try to become so. And at this point, the new bishop is ready to issue a loyalty oath for liturgical ministers in all parishes of the diocese to sign. If I do not sign this statement reflecting the bishop's conscience, I will no longer be able to participate in liturgical ministry, and if you read the document closely between the lines, I could no longer be a member of my particular political party.

The Invitation to Share the Apostolate

“Our own times require of the laity no less zeal: in fact, modern conditions demand that their apostolate be broadened and intensified. With a constantly increasing population, continual progress in science and technology, and closer interpersonal relationships, the areas for the lay apostolate have been immensely widened particularly in the fields that have

Until the laity are seen by the clergy as co-equals, contributing to the growth and ministry of the church, many will feel stifled and inhibited, misunderstood and ignored.

been for the most part open to the clergy alone. These factors have also occasioned new problems which demand their expert attention and study. This apostolate becomes more imperative in view of the fact that many areas of human life have become increasingly autonomous.

This is as it should be, but it sometimes involves a degree of departure from the ethical and religious order and a serious danger to Christian life. Besides, in many places where priests are very few or, in some instances, deprived of due freedom for priestly work, the Church could scarcely exist and function without the activity of the laity” (*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, Vatican II).

The invitation to share the apostolate of 50 years ago, “to intensify the apostolic activity of the people of God,” came from an energized Church. A Church which recognized that an educated and informed laity, “whose proper and indispensable role in the mission of the Church,” came at the invitation of the Holy Spirit. That invitation called us all, lay and ordained, to be part of the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It seems as though

that invitation has been retracted, not by the Spirit, but by the hierarchy, and that for the laity to be educated in the Church of the 2000s, especially in theology, Church history, liturgy and canon law, is not to be desired, and often ignored. If the “suits” are the higher-ups of Wall Street, it seems to me that the “hats” are the hierarchy in the Catholic Church. They appear to be dismissive of the laity, particularly women, and the laity’s education and ministerial activity.

I could cite several examples here, but I think only one is sufficient. That glaring example is the recent Vatican investigation of women religious in the United States, whose

dedication and love of the Church and devotion to the people of God, has been questioned and found wanting. What I, and many a faithful Catholic know, is that it is the sisters who taught us our faith, an authentic

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faith in Jesus Christ. By their example, we have been shown how to live that faith with our brothers and sisters. It was and is that same example of the sisters that keeps many of us in the Church today. It appears to many that the attacks by the “hats” on the sisters are meant to redirect focus from the pedophilia scandal and their failed attempts to cover it up. The impact of that scandal affects the trust and credibility, not only other priests and members of the Church, but of the general public around the world as well. This scandal has reduced the respect that Catholics have for the priesthood, for those who belong to it. However, my lay membership and spirituality as a Companion of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood give me hope and stability in the midst of what seems to be upheaval in my Church. I am grateful for and depend upon the trust I have in many of my brothers in the priesthood who have remained faithful.

The Role of the Laity Today

I am surprised that this statement in my former article is still true today. “Until the laity are seen by the clergy (read “hats”) as co-equals, contributing to the growth and ministry of the church, many will feel stifled and inhibited, misunderstood and ignored.” And here we are, 50 years after the “Call to Holiness” has challenged us, and I think little has changed for the “hats,” and therefore for us. Where there was once hope for much more cooperation and shared ministry, for me and for many others, there is sadness, disappointment and, as one friend put it, “feeling demoralized by the state of my church.”

No statement of a bishop's conscience requires my approval or affirmation, nor does my faith and conscience require any bishop to approve or affirm mine. That judgment is for God to make. It is also a matter for me to discuss with my confessor or spiritual director. I have spent a good part of my life gaining the education and information necessary to form my conscience. My belief in Jesus Christ and the power of His Precious Blood has not wavered, but rather has intensified. My belief in the Catholic Church is still strong, but I do sometimes wonder and worry. My desire to be faithful and to minister to the people of God has not diminished. My spirituality, based on the Precious Blood of Jesus and its power to unite and to reconcile, is the mainstay of my life of faith and action. My brothers and sisters in community and in my parish give me courage and contribute to the stability of my life and belief and I thank God for those gifts. My hope is for a future in a truly energized Church, where both lay and ordained are called to authentic holiness by the Holy Spirit. I have confidence that one day the Spirit will truly renew the face of the earth and of the Church.

“Lord Jesus, you foretold that we would share in the persecutions that brought you to a violent death. The Church, formed at the cost of your Precious Blood, is even now conformed to your Passion; may it be transformed, now and eternally, by the power of your resurrection” (*Liturgy of the Hours, Week 4, Thursday Morning*).



A Time of Great Heart

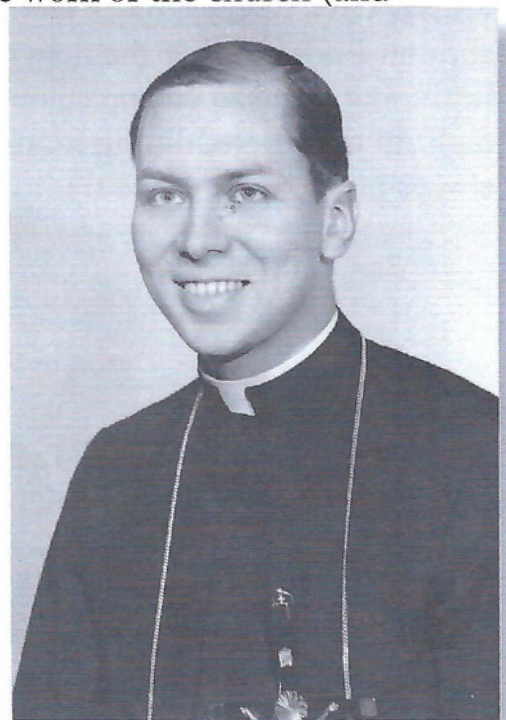
by James Sloan, C.P.P.S.

So how has it been to be a priest for these past 50 years?" Well, I'll tell you. The first forty years have been different from the past 10. Now, however, is a time for looking back with gratitude and appreciation. Three golden jubilees come together here on the West Coast: the opening of the Second Vatican Council, the birth of the Diocese of Oakland, California where I have ministered for the past 31 years, and the ordination to the priesthood of the class of 1962.

I experienced the first several decades following Vatican II as a time of excitement, growth and learning—a time of discovery along with a sense of freedom and hopefulness. It was a time of welcoming lay men and women as people we could join together with in the work of the church (and frankly, a time of being welcomed by them as their priest). We began hearing that a priest is to be "a man for others," not someone set apart from others. It was clear that we were to build up the community of faith with our human gifts as well as the leadership and teaching skills that we had learned.

Change On the Horizon

Of course our seminary training had not fully prepared us for the vast changes that Vatican II would suddenly bring. Yet in some ways they did. On the eve of our ordination—June 9, 1962—Father John Byrne, C.P.P.S.,



provincial director of the then American Province of the Society of the Precious Blood, addressed the 15 of us who would be ordained the next day. His words of advice spoke both of the culture of that pre-Vatican II time and the values we would need in our future ministry as Precious Blood priests:

- Rarely but rarely appear without clerical garb. In your relationships to lay people—keep it on a strictly professional level.
- Find your social life only among fellow priests. Get to know and chum with diocesan priests. Get along well with the bishop and always speak well of him.
- Go out of your way to be hospitable to community members. Your home is their home—always.
- A man must be in love. Love God, love his work, love his Kingdom—or you will love forbidden fruit (drink, women, etc.)
- Preaching is one of your most important tasks; prepare well for each sermon.
- Fr. Byrne's words were preceded a few days earlier by Fr. Roman Schwieterman, C.P.P.S., a saint if ever there was one, who told us in our pre-ordination retreat: A priest cannot be happy unless he is a great lover—of Jesus Christ. Every man must be in love in order to be happy.
- You as a priest are at the service of everyone.

Certainly our relationship to lay people would change, as well as our being seen out of clerical clothing only rarely. Two episodes come to mind. The first one seems almost humorous looking back at it. In 1966, while living at Precious Blood Seminary and taking courses at the University of Missouri Kansas City, I wore a black clerical suit to class every day. During that hot autumn I noticed that the now familiar short sleeved clergy shirts were beginning to make an appearance. I bought one and wore it to supper that night in the priests' dining room. All the priests came to meals—as they always had—wearing the traditional cassock, cross and chain. Appearing in



my skimpy looking clergy shirt I was “banished” from the dining room, told to take off the shirt and put on the cassock, cross and chain. I did, but the next night the treasurer of the seminary came to supper in a short-sleeved light blue summer shirt. After that nearly everyone came in casual clothes. Things were changing that quickly.

The second episode occurred 15 years later when I was assigned to St. Barnabas Church in Alameda, California. I found that, although the parish did have six lay Eucharistic ministers they were all men and they all wore albs at Mass, setting them apart from everyone else. Some people thought they were deacons. Not everyone was happy when the ministry was opened to women as well as men and everyone was asked to simply wear their Sunday best.

The Gift of Learning

Among the gifts I became aware of in the days and years following the Second Vatican Council was a desire to learn, which I must admit was not so evident during my seminary days. Now I look back on the excitement of 50 years of reading, graduate studies, continuing education, and discussion of books and articles with others. Father Harry Morrison of the Oakland Diocese would always ask, when he was with a group of priests: “What are you reading these days?” He wanted to know so that he could learn from it, and so that the group could share insights from what they had been reading. Along with the always present humor in priests’ gatherings, there was a seriousness about what was been happening in the church and in the world. There was so much to learn from great teachers and writers (many present at the council), so much to learn from all disciplines—scripture, theology, ecclesiology, psychology, spirituality, history, literature, film, architecture, to name some—and certainly from science.

Many of us benefited from sabbatical programs for priests and religious, clergy days of study and renewal, speakers at annual Precious Blood assemblies. All over the church, all over the world, there seemed such a positive move forward, led by the Holy Spirit. I think of it as a time of “great heart.”

The Present Hunger

When I attend Sunday parish liturgies, as I sometimes do in these later years of my life, I find myself hungering for what others hunger for when they go to church: good liturgy, good preaching, good music, good participation, all working together to help the people of God in their worship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I especially value hearing the scriptures broken open and faith shared in ways that touch people’s hearts. I am grateful that there are parishes where that happens and where a spirit of quiet joy prevails.

It is good to be in the pews and experience what the people do, but I must admit that after 50 years in the pulpit and presiding at the liturgy, I miss that terribly, along with joyful interaction with parishioners. Not all elderly priests are retired though. I like the way Father Gerald Ryan, now 92 and

still pastor in the Bronx, put it in an interview with *The New York Times*. “I think I have come a long, long way from when I was ordained. It isn’t about serving the church in the way you have envisioned, from the altar, and from the position of authority and power. But it is learning what human nature is, and what the struggles of people are. And where Jesus really is.” Where Jesus really is. Is that a longing and an insight that comes more readily with advancing years?

Loss and Hurt

While the decades following Vatican II have been a time of great satisfaction in ministry, for the last 10 years that joy in ministry has been mixed with pain and anxiety

as I have watched many in church leadership turn away from the reforms of Vatican II, regarding them with suspicion or outright hostility. Their attitude has left many in the church bewildered. The hurt has been felt by Catholic priests, sisters, and laity alike, as though what they (we) have

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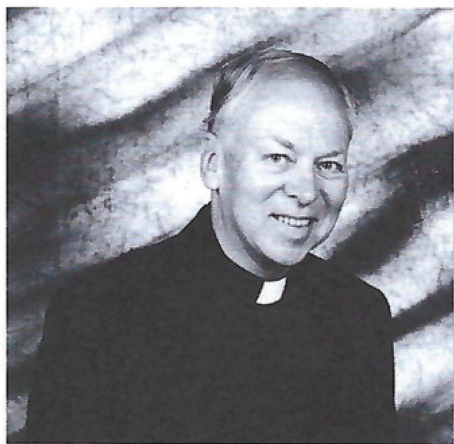
accomplished, and are accomplishing together, has been devalued. Added to that are the shocking revelations regarding clergy sex abuse, coupled with the failures of bishops, chancery officials, and religious superiors to deal with both perpetrators and victims in ways that are both just and Christian. The effect on everyone, our non-Catholic and non-Christian friends included, has been devastating.

The division within the church echoes the division between political parties in the United States. People have chosen sides. (When really, for us in the Church, the only side is Jesus: his message, his example, what he tells us about God and God’s love for all his people and all his creation).

It seems to me that we have suffered a great loss in recent years. In so many places, worldwide and nationwide, the people are not being well served, have not been well served. The anger I see in many finds a place in my own heart. Joy and hopefulness are at times replaced by anxiety. It cannot be what Jesus wants for his followers. It makes me and others more consciously and deliberately than ever flee to Jesus, the Jesus of the Gospels, to learn from him—to be in his company and care for the kinds of people he cared for and tell them how the Father loves them.

Gratitude and Hope

Among the blessings I am grateful for as I celebrate my golden jubilee are



the Precious Blood Companions, whose presence has added immeasurably to the life and ministry of us all, likewise our present close association with the Adorers of the Blood of Christ and the Precious Blood Sisters. A blessing that seems clearly part of our charism is “Precious Blood hospitality.” Throughout my priesthood I have heard people speak with warm appreciation of the hospitality they have experienced from Precious Blood priests and brothers. We are

a family, we are inclusive, and we know how to invite others in.

A blessing we did not think about very much, if at all, during my seminary years is the international character of our community. Very much part of our outlook now, our worldview, is the work and lives of our fellow members in 17 different countries. So many members of different nationalities minister to (and side by side with) so many different kinds of peoples. It is all part of who we are. We are far richer than we have ever known, truly brought near by the Blood of Christ.

In the end, I am hopeful. Something “new” is being born in the midst of all the turmoil in the church. A going back to the Gospels. I heard a clearly upset elderly priest say at daily Mass in Santa Fe this past April, referring to all the turmoil in his parish and in the church: “It’s not about the Church. It is about Jesus.” His whole homily rang so true I felt like clapping. There are good priest leaders all over the United States, all over the world. Some think that such priests are a vanishing breed. I do not. The Spirit is always at work.

Fr Roman Schwieterman had it right when he told us 50 years ago: “A priest cannot be happy unless he is a great lover—of Jesus Christ.” That’s the essential part of this ministry of priesthood: love for Jesus Christ and love for his people.



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

— Gaspar del Bufalo —