

An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality



THE **WINE**
CELLAR

October 1995 • Number 4



Missionary

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

St. Gaspar del Bufalo

THE
WINE
CELLAR

An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality

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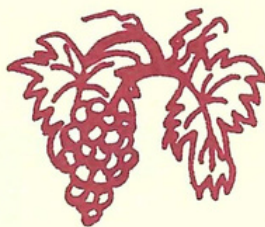
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Table of Contents

From the Wine Cellar: Checking Our Pulse Joseph Nassal, C.PP.S.	<u>4</u>
Contributors	<u>6</u>
The Missionary Heart Regina Siegfried, ASC	<u>7</u>
Servant Leadership Anton Loipfinger, C.PP.S.	<u>12</u>
A Missionary Discovering Mission Dorothy Schmitmeyer, C.PP.S.	<u>19</u>
La Paz: March 22, 1995 Marcia Kruse, ASC	<u>26</u>
The Magdalene of Ruben's <u>Coup-De-Lance</u> Terry Newkirk	<u>28</u>
Shaping the Heart of The Missionary Tom Hemm, C.PP.S.	<u>29</u>
Genesis Prayer Linda Anne Ranard, ASC	<u>41</u>
Mission Musings, Mary Schoenecker, ASC	<u>42</u>
Echos Of A Living God Mary Kevin Rooney, ASC	<u>43</u>



Checking our Pulse

Once there was a superior of a religious congregation who every Saturday evening after vespers would sneak out of the motherhouse. Since the members of the community considered their provincial to be a very holy woman, they suspected that she would go to the hermitage at the edge of the property to spend the night in prayer. Some even believed God appeared to her in the hermitage, since at the Eucharist on Sunday morning her faced reflected a radiance reserved for those who have experienced dangerous liaisons with the Divine One.

But since the sisters weren't sure about this, one Saturday night they encouraged one of their members to follow their mother superior and so solve once and for all her mysterious disappearing act.

This is what the nun saw: the mother superior did indeed go to the hermitage. But after an hour or so of prayer, she emerged from the silent cell dressed in very simple clothes. The nun followed her to a small, shabby house a few blocks away. Looking through the window, the nun watched as the mother superior scrubbed the floor, dusted the furniture, cooked and then served a meal to a young man in a wheelchair. The young man's body was weak and fragile making him look older than his years. As the man ate the simple meal the mother superior had prepared for him, she sat and talked with him.

Having seen enough, the nun who was spying on the porch started walking back to the convent. As she walked down the street, she met a neighbor of the man in the wheelchair. "Excuse me," she said. "Do you know who lives there?"

"Yes, I do," the man watering his lawn said sternly. "It's a scandal if you ask me."

“What’s a scandal?” the nun asked.

“You know, moving into our neighborhood after his family disowned him when they found out he had AIDS. We did our best to keep him out. Signed a petition and everything. But it was no use. That landlord will rent to anybody. But I guess it won’t be for long. Maybe he’ll die soon. The sooner the better if you ask me.”

When the spy sister returned to the motherhouse, a number of the members of the community were waiting for her. “Well, where does the provincial go every Saturday night? Does she meet with God?”

“Yes,” the nun replied. “She meets with God.”

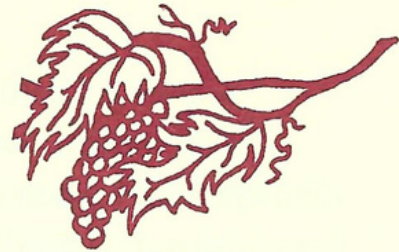
This issue of THE WINE CELLAR explores how Precious Blood people find their pulse by engaging in ministries that are on the margins of church and society. Our contributors insist that a missionary heart reflects the paschal mystery of Jesus, especially in the shedding of his blood. Our missionary activity, whether it is around the world or around the corner, flows from very large hearts where those on the fringe -- the sick, the dying, the destitute, the criminal -- find a home. Our hearts burn with a desire to proclaim eloquently and effectively the message of Jesus as we seek to light the fire of transformation in those who have grown cold and complacent toward the suffering ones.

Certainly these two characteristics reflect Gaspar’s vision and missionary mandate. His commitment to the outcasts of his day and his ministry of preaching the need for conversion to the converted remains central to our identity. As our contributors point out, in practical terms, this means we work with those who have been pushed away from the table, silenced by society, and left alone to die. It means members, companions, and associates of congregations named for the blood of Christ cannot find solace inside the cozy and comfortable walls of the institutions. Instead, we flex our missionary muscles of love until the walls come tumbling down.

We are grateful to all the contributors in this issue of THE WINE CELLAR who with their words and witness help us to check the pulse of our missionary activity. May our missionary hearts continue to circulate hope in the body of Christ as we go forth each day to meet God.



C ONTRIBUTORS



TOM HEMM is a member of the Cincinnati Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Studying in Chile and ordained a priest there in 1978, he served twenty-six years in parish and small neighborhood communities; he has returned to the states to face the challenge of being missionary in his home culture which has become foreign to him.

ANTON LOIPFINGER has spent much of his Precious Blood ministry in the service of leadership, from directing formation candidates to being provincial director. Fr. Anton says he is anxious to work wherever the German province needs him now that he has completed two terms as moderator general for the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood.

MARY KEVIN ROONEY is director of formation for the Wichita Adorers of the Blood of Christ. She writes, "Called from the cold north (Nebraska) to the tornadic south (Kansas) to be an Adorer (on my heart's knees) and an Apostle of the Blood for God's People. A teacher by profession, a teaser by preference, a 'teller' by Providence."

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REGINA SIEGFRIED, an Adorer of the Ruma Province, is associate editor of REVIEW FOR RELIGIOUS and very actively involved in St. Vincent's parish in St. Louis. Regina has a Doctorate in Theology in American Studies and will teach historical theology at St. Louis University in the spring semester. She serves on the editorial board for THE WINE CELLAR.

The Missionary Heart

By Regina Siegfried, ASC

Permit me to begin with a personal observation. The seed for this article was planted in late October, 1992 when our five sisters were killed in Liberia. Reflections on the missionary heart were born from months of intense grief and pain. What does it mean to be a Precious Blood missionary? What does it mean to have a missionary heart for those of us not destined for missionary work outside our native country? What impels us to mission? What, ultimately, do *mission*, *missionary*, and *missionary heart* mean?

The Missions

When late twentieth-century religious men and women speak of *our missionaries* we usually mean those who evangelize beyond the borders of our native countries in places we commonly call our *missions*. We also refer to parish missions, mission and preaching teams, and to the missions of our congregations. For Precious Blood congregations, these terms have historical and theological roots that spring from the foundational charism of Gaspar del Bufalo who expressed it this way at one time during his life:

Monsignor Cristaldi urges me to set up our Institute under the

name of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus, and made this very relevant point: Those who work for the spreading of the Gospel are at work so that the Blood of Jesus may be applied to [all] for the salvation of their souls and hence these workers must offer it unceasingly, begging God to pardon sinners.... This Institute of ours should be committed to the spreading of that devotion which includes all the others, namely the devotion which proclaims the price of our Redemption. By his Blood we are saved.... Our work, then, is entrusted to the merits of the Blood of Jesus.

[The Charism of St. Gaspar, 13-14]

Our communities and others founded in the nineteenth century are generally referred to by historians as teaching and missionary congregations. These congregations were usually founded to address specific social needs and the needs of the poor and neglected members of society. The charisms for these communities were often related to devotions popular at the time. These congregations stressed community for the mission, for apostolic service.

Precious Blood congregations draw our life and charisms from the founding of the Precious Blood Missionaries in 1815 and from Gaspar del Bufalo's original inspiration springing from the then popular devotion to the Precious Blood. The Precious Blood charism is rooted in historical times that were violent, rife with political and social unrest; injustice for the poor of society was so common that it was not given much consideration except for the countercultural founders who were on fire with the gospel message of God's reign, expressed by Gaspar in language typical of his age:

In short, we must become all things to all people in order to save all for Christ.... Charity does not lie down inactively; it is a flame that never lies still.... That is what constitutes sanctity and the perfection of the soul, that is to say, to be totally intent on serving God.

[from Letter no. 49 to Countess Lucrezia
Ginnasi, February-April, 1813]

The Missionary

Fire and passion for the mission, the urgency to be with the marginalized of society that impelled our nineteenth-century founders and their pioneer members to take risks that appeared foolish to the complacent are the same qualities that can motivate our congregations who are inheritors of that charism. Their vision demanded conversion for them; it calls for the same for us. We need conversion of heart to respond to the fire in the charism. It is not an easy change to be willing to stay with the needy ones of our society, to be their friends, and to reach the point where we realize we are all one. It is not *we* and *they* because the Body of Christ pulsing with the Blood of Christ is one. If we are to become our charisms in our society, we must respond to the call of conversion that the charism voices in our hearts. Hearts can then become missionary hearts wherever they are.

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Missionary Hearts

Although most of us will stay within the boundaries of our own countries, as did Gaspar, Maria de Mattias, and Teresa Weber, our missionary hearts can search for God's presence in our own reality as much as can the hearts of community members who minister outside their country. To seek a different face of God, to find God on the fringes of what we consider a developed culture is at the heart of any missionary endeavor. The days of thinking we bring God to those who do not know God are gone, because God's spirit and presence travels before us. When we get there, we will find God in unexpected ways that convert us. The *there* is right outside the doors of our houses and

hearts, if we risk our own comfort, complacency, and security. Precious Blood spirituality, if it does anything, urges us to the margins, the limits, the risks. Joe Nassal, CPPS, writes in a similar vein:

To be a disciple of the Precious Blood today is to stand with those whom Gaspar would stand if he were alive today. It is to stand with those of Matthew 25: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the ill, and the imprisoned. This implies that when we stand with those who are on the margin of our society, we are no longer in the center ourselves. We allow those with whom Jesus identifies to pull us out of our cozy and comfortable cocoons into the real world where pain and suffering is ever present.

[Passionate Pilgrims, p. 27]

When I contemplate the pioneers in my own community, I realize that exile from Germany was the hard forge that fired the missionary impulse that eventually impelled us to missions in China, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Liberia, and Guatemala. Clementine Zerr, an exile who had a missionary heart, pushed the community into the then western regions of Kansas. Other Precious Blood congregations can also look to their pioneers and probably find the seeds of missionary hearts.

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This is the essence of the Precious Blood missionary heart: the *why*, the urgency of the charism of which we are inheritors, impels us to the margins, to be with the disenfranchised; it is not necessarily the *where* of place. We must be missionaries in our hearts if we are true to the Precious Blood charism.

Charisms of communities are wild, fiery, free, hard to control by law and institutionaliza-

tion. If this is true of charisms in general, it is certainly true for the Precious Blood charism which pulses with the life of the paschal mystery, urging contemplation, speech, and action, impelling us to the mission with our missionary hearts.



For Reflection

What events and people in my congregation's history lead me to reflect on the seeds of the missionary heart for us?

In what ways can we as congregations and as individuals let go of the comfortable, complacent, and safe to discover the missionary heart within?

How can our local, living groups become places for the missionary heart? What does it mean for us to be communities of and for the mission? What is the mission?

For Further Reading

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Nassal, Joseph, CPPS. **Passionate Pilgrims: A Sojourn of Precious Blood Spirituality.** Carthagena, Ohio: The Messenger Press, 1993.

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Servant Leadership



Memories of a Moderator General

By Anton Loipfinger, CPPS

I have been privileged to meet many people within and outside of our community, who have taught me what people with a missionary heart can do. The missionary heart is by itself a special heart, because it is a parable of the heart of Jesus, who said: "Learn from me, I am gentle and humble of heart" and whose heart was opened upon his death to be a wellspring of grace for all people of all time.

Defining life is difficult as is defining a missionary heart. The memories and stories of times when I have said, "This man, this woman really has a missionary heart" offer what I consider to be the best definition of what a missionary heart is. Those people have always invited me to wonder, "Do I have a missionary heart?"

In 1972 I visited our mission in Xingu (Brazil). Erich Krautler, the uncle of the present bishop of Altamira (Erwin Krautler) was the residing bishop. One evening we were sitting on the veranda of the mission house that overlooks the water of the Xingu. Bishop Erich said to me: "It would not be so difficult, to give your lifeblood in an heroic act, but to give it day by day, that is difficult. When the mosquitoes bite you, when you have been in the hot sun day after day in the little boat of a fisherman, when you sit at night in the huts of the poor planters on the riverside, when you see so many sick people and you cannot help them: in such moments you feel what it means to be a missionary."

The missionary heart is the heart which proves its value in everyday life. It holds the virtue of steadfastness, found in all sorts of people, men and women, priests, religious, and lay people. These people are the foundation of the Church and the World.

A Place Called Home

In 1965 I was prefect in our minor seminary. I recognized that I could not respond adequately to the needs of those fifty boys and young men who were between the ages of ten and twenty. By the grace of God there were three ASC sisters in the house who cared for the kitchen and laundry. And as important as that was, much more

*A missionary heart
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at home.*

important was their role as mothers for “their boys.” Their hearts were missionary as they helped to form and educate these young people by their love. These sisters gave the students a home. Often when we wondered where the boys were spending their recreation time, we found

them doing work in the kitchen. The important thing for the students was to be accepted, to be loved. A missionary heart makes people feel at home.

No Room for Fear

In my travels to Tanzania I discovered how hardships often accompany the lives of our priest, sister, and brother missionaries. Those who have served there have been willing to share food and shelter with people whose customs and ways of life are so unlike anything to which they have been accustomed. Together with one of our missionaries I had traveled to visit a group of sisters who live about fifty miles from the closest parish. They had no priests there. The only European in the area was a volunteer from Austria. But these sisters saw they had a mission to fulfill, and they did it with courage. When they were robbed, they did not leave, but they built a fence around the house. However, the real fence of security was the people around whom they served in the maternity hospital and school. There was prayer with the people. Fear does not count in a missionary heart.

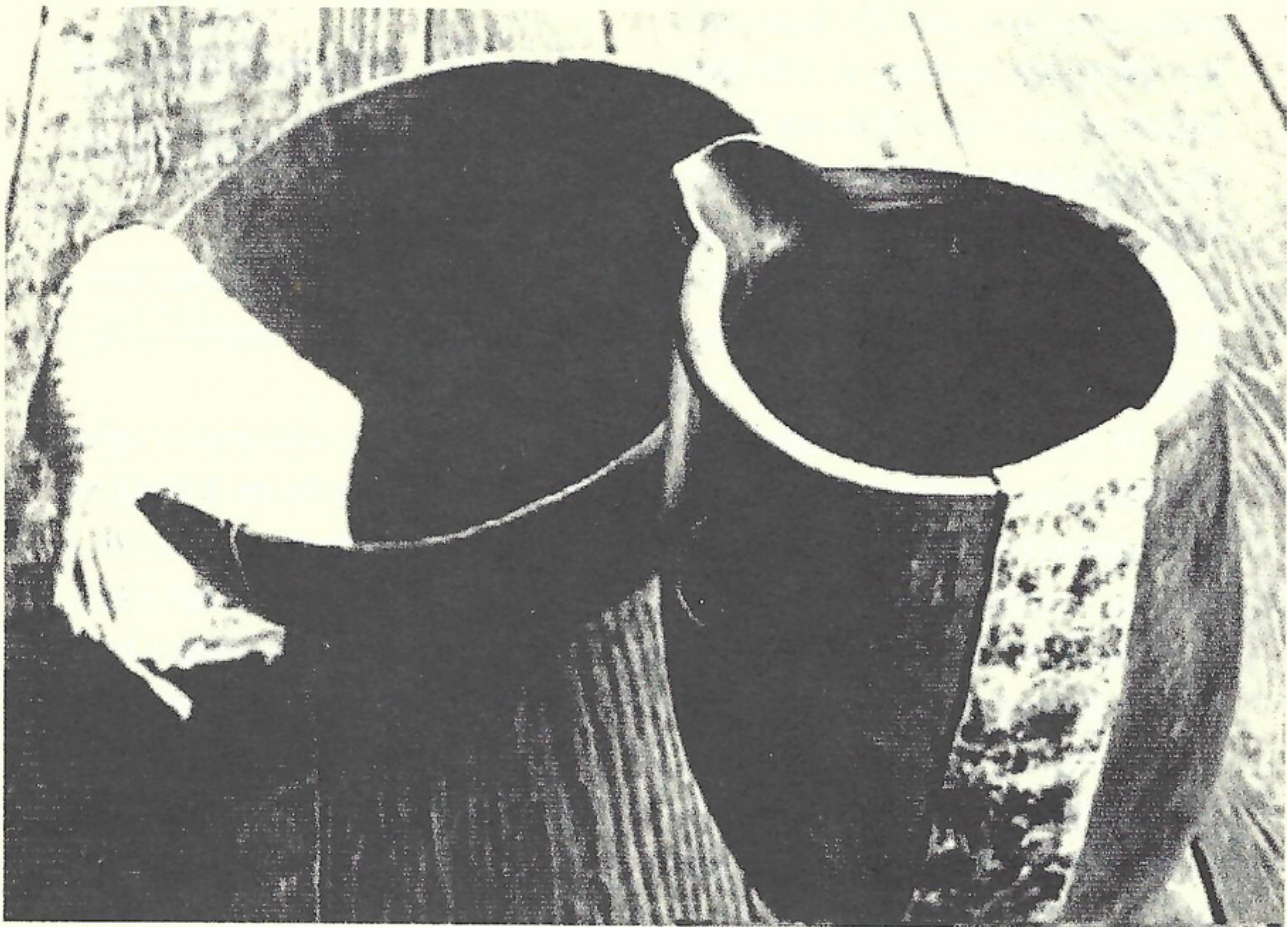
I remember another time in Altamira. One of our missionaries returned after two weeks of visiting the people of the Transamazonian Highway. As usual, the car had been damaged because of the bad roads. Three tires had to be replaced, and sometimes the car had to be left on the highway while the missionary continued on foot through the mud of the jungle to the impoverished settlements. He told us about a serious problem he had faced at one of the farm houses along the way. The daughter of the farmer was expecting a child, and the father of the daughter wanted to kill the father of the child. For an hour the missionary walked the floor with the distraught father. It took great firmness and control to convince the man to give up his plan. A missionary heart sees the danger which threatens other people and is willing to go the "extra mile" with others.

In Bosnia, where there is much darkness, there is also much light. I think of many Sisters Adorers of the Blood of Christ there. I think of a Missionary of the Precious Blood there. I admit that sometimes I cannot watch the news on television or even listen to it on the radio because it makes me feel so helpless, so powerless and sad when I hear what is happening to the people of Bosnia. We have sisters and brothers in this region who are willing to share life with the people, willing to face the danger of the ever-present war, willing to be treated as outcasts as they cross the boundaries of hatred and fear. These brothers and sisters of ours are doing all they can to help the tortured, the refugees, the hopeless. I hear Jesus say, "I have pity on my people!"

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The Heart of the Matter

Once I was invited to supper in one of our houses in the Italian Province in Rome. Our meal began at eight and at eight-thirty one of the missionaries excuses himself saying he has to leave for a meeting with a pastor and the parish council. Where he is going is an hour and a half drive north of Rome. I wondered what could be done at this hour of the night. The next day I saw the missionary and asked him if his meeting had been worthwhile. The meeting had gone on until midnight and it was two in the morning before he got home. Yes, it was important because the mission should reach out to all people of the town, and everything has to be done to get collaborators for that. Gaspar del Bufalo, Giovanni Merlini, and Maria de Mattias come to mind: "For the Kingdom of God everything has to be done immediately, with an heart of abundant love and dedication."



Few parishes in the world are at such an altitude as that of La Oroya (Peru). I have great admiration and gratitude for our missionaries who minister in this miner's town. While visiting there I traveled with one of them through the town, slowly, for at the height of 3800 meters one goes slowly. We came to the ambulance which is operated by the missionaries. They keep it running. They find the funds to keep it in operation. They give hope to people in hopeless situations. At the time of my visit, the *Sendero Luminoso* were threatening anybody who did any good for the people because they thought those acts of goodness would delay the revolution. I can still hear the question, "What can you do when you can do nothing?" One of our missionaries gave an answer that leads us to the center of the missionary heart: "You can stay under the cross like Mary and John and look at Jesus!" There is no situation in which a missionary heart would not be able to do something.

There are many other stories of the missionary heart I could tell. These few give us a taste of others yet to be told. I think God has given each of us a missionary heart. We have only to activate it. Remember, doctors say exercise is good for the heart. We learn to exercise our heart from Jesus. When Jesus invited Peter to come over the water, Peter managed to walk as long as he looked at Jesus. He began to sink when he looked at himself.

People with a missionary heart find the way to make a bridge from the given reality of Jesus, and they do not give up because of fear, danger, or hard work. They trust that the open heart of Jesus is the door to the resurrection.

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For Reflection

Who are those people in your life who have missionary hearts? What values do they hold, what qualities do they live that evoke for you the meaning of a missionary heart?

Recall ways you have helped people to feel at home. How do we make those with whom we live in community “feel at home.”

“Fear does not count in a missionary heart.” Name your fears.

Remember someone who went an extra mile with you. Take them with you in your heart of prayer the next time you go an extra mile with another.



A

Missionary Discovering Mission

By Dorothy Schmitmeyer, CPPS

I do not pray for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their word, that all may be one as you Father, are in me, and I, in you; I pray that they may be (one) in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me that they may be one, as we are one -- I live in them, you living in me -- that their unity may be complete. So shall the world know that you sent me and that you loved them as you loved me.

John 17, 20-23

In 1966 as I began making Chile my home, this prayer of Jesus took on a flesh and blood experience. First with the words of my father as we hugged and said goodbye. "Dorothy," he said, "we are not going to be so far apart each morning at Mass, you in Chile, and Mom and I in Minster (Ohio), can hug each other in the Christ of the Eucharist." So, as I read and prayed this passage of Scripture, there began awakening in me an unconscious awareness of the reality of God and our oneness in God -- consider it this way:

Over and over again we praying people become more realistic as prayer leads us into the mission and ministry of Jesus. Over and over the story of God discovered in the depths of our lives calls us to new vibrancy, new vision, new mission. [Katherine Marie Dyckman, SNJM and Patrick L. Carroll, Inviting the Mystic, Supporting the Prophet, New York: Paulist Press, 1981.]

Yes, I guess, this is what happened to me as a missionary of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Santiago, Chile. As I hugged my loved ones in the States each morning in Eucharist, I also began to hug the

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people of Chile. I began to feel embraced and loved by my brothers and sisters in this country called Chile with its warm and open-hearted people. As it became home, an echo in my subconscious kept repeating this phrase: "I pray that they may be (one) in us, that the world may believe that you sent me....I living in them, you living in me that their unity may be complete."

Thus facing the challenges of everyday life in a new cultural environment, I entered into a new blood relationship. Precious Blood spirituality moved from being a phrase in our documents to a life-giving, energy source flowing through loved ones in the States and my new found family in Chile.

The Faces of the Poor

The Church of Latin America began a new birth just as I arrived in the mid 60's. The documents of Mendellin were a grand awakening of a Church which took its theological bases from the European mentality. The Latin American Church, with Mendellin, searched for a pastoral program that would touch the reality of its people by deeply being in tune with the pain of its poor. It became the catalyst in raising peoples' consciousness regarding the Christ suffering and dying among us. Several years later the bishops of Latin America, in Puebla, looked into the suffering face of Christ, and they saw:

- the faces of children tortured by poverty even before they were born.
- the faces of youth frustrated because of the lack of opportunity to be a part of the working world.
- the faces of the indigent being the most marginalized, the poorest of the poor.
- the faces of the farm workers without the rights to own the land, making them slaves to the commercialized world.
- the faces of the workers in thousands of factories, underpaid so that the rich can be richer.
- the faces of the underemployed and the unemployed, the economically expendable ones.
- the faces of the elderly, the handicapped, the homeless, invisible to those who have too much.

Daily the Spirit was moving me to be conscious of our body as Christ's Body. I began to feel how in many parts of this body of Christ the life-giving blood was blocked, while other parts of the body were bleeding to death. Mission for me began to mean touching the face of Christ, not as someone out there, but as part of my very self.

Every day Rodrigo swept in front of our house and would come to our door for a cup of coffee and a sandwich. One Sunday, with too much wine under his belt, he knocked, but I sent him away without

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coffee or bread. At the time of the kiss of peace in our 10:30 Sunday liturgy, I heard the shuffling of his feet. I turned, and he said, "Paz, Madre." Rodrigo needed that cup of coffee and sandwich so his life blood could flow through him one more day. Who was I to judge? Who was I not to feel the need of the Christ who from five years of age had no where to lay his head except in doorways or under a bridge?

Mission was Senora Margarita, an elderly woman who had been the wife of a farm hand. When her husband died, she could no longer live in their home of forty years because she had no sons to continue to work the land of the rich owner. The Christ revealed himself to me when I found her with all her possessions in one room of a poor adobe house where a common out house served her and twelve other families. Undergoing treatment for cancer, she smiled with the face of Christ as she washed clothes for a bed-ridden neighbor and for an expectant mother. As her life washed out of her, she spent her last months of life in one of our homes. She had been a unifying force of a senior citizen group; she was a life-giving compassionate presence among us.

Mission meant waking others to the dream prayer of Jesus: that we all might be one. As I ministered to thousands of boys and their families in St. Gaspar School, my mission became different than merely running a school; it meant creating a world where these boys from middle and upper class families could experience in Christ those members of their society crying for the precious life blood of Jesus. We matched our school boys up with three hundred abandoned boys of the streets of a neighborhood homeless shelter. These abandoned street kids became precious and special not only for our students, but also for the families of our students. The boys of St. Gaspar school became a life-giving

source of affection and tender loving care for the homeless; the face of the suffering Christ revealed itself to the rich.

Mission also became a lived experience in the broken Christ. In 1973 when the military take over was happening, sons of military fathers and sons of imprisoned or missing fathers sat in the same classroom. A broken spirit occupied our classrooms. We kept a broken loaf of bread on the altar in the school called St. Gaspar. There came a time when families of the disappeared occupied several churches sitting in an indefinite hunger strike. Feeling the deep frustration and sorrow of these people, many of the Christian base communities spent nights in prayer and being present. Our community called the States to ask prayer of our CPPS community. It was like giving strength to those carrying a cross upon which many of their loved ones had already died.

Christian Base Communities

Mission became a sharing of faith as we created, formed, and were part of Christian base communities. Through a weekly breaking open the Word, we touched and were touched by the risen, healing, and forgiving Christ. Lucy, a woman filled with deep faith, was very active with her husband in forming base communities. They worked with marriage encounter and were leaders in family catechesis for First Communion. After a simple gall bladder operation, Lucy became very ill. We informed her local base community of her serious illness and invited them to come and pray with us that night at nine. Expecting about fifteen people, imagine our surprise when eighty showed up. We gathered every night for over a week to continue our prayer; we grew from eighty to one hundred and forty. The doctors gave up hope. The evening of that devastating news we had a Mass and at its conclusion we embraced each other in a sign of peace asking everyone to imagine hugging Lucy in Christ and asking His healing life blood to flow through us into her weak body. We learned later that at that precise moment she took a turn for the better.

We experienced the healing Christ, but He asked more of us. Lucy

needed a special antibiotic to rid her body of the infection. Once again we called our community in the States to be joined in the missionary work of healing. From a faraway place of need the love of Christ crossed the miles in an embrace of hope.

Mission has come full circle from my dad's world-wide hug to wrap me in stories told and shared among brothers and sisters, priests and religious from all parts of the world. I have been participating in the annual Conferences of Religious since 1976. As members have shared how members of their Communities have been martyred in Rwanda, Croatia, Peru, Sri Lanka, Liberia, and many other places, I held all those as I saw the pictures of the Martyrs of Charity, Barbara Ann, Agnes, Shirley, Mary Joel, and Kathleen.

Mission means standing in silent prayer at the foot of the Cross where you look up into the face of Christ, radiant with a loving and a giving, reflecting how Death becomes Life. Precious Blood spirituality has become real to me as I have experienced pain and suffering, brokenness and healing, death and resurrection with people with names and faces. Precious Blood spirituality creates within me the desire to be in life-giving relationships as a new global vision is in the making. Mission means to penetrate so deeply in union with all life to know that "Precious shall their Blood be in God's sight."



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For Reflection

When has a time of pain and suffering revealed the life-giving blood of Christ to you?

There are many individuals who bear the name of the blood of Christ who are standing in solidarity with the poor and displaced. Reflect on some specific ways our Precious Blood communities can strengthen this sense of solidarity and make it a corporate Gospel response.



Reflect on those memories and moments in your life when you have been invited to stand with another at the foot of his or her cross.

Write a letter to one of your friends you “hug across the miles” in your prayers.

La Paz: March 22, 1995*

By Marcia Kruse, ASC

Heavy black clouds
 Hang over La Paz
Bright snow-capped mountains
 hide
 in mid-day darkness.

Teachers march
 in
 on
 the city.

Police, tear gas, ready.

Thunder cracks
 Lightening rips through
 the black sky.

Threatening.

Wait.

Khaki uniforms
 night sticks
 helmets
 bullet-proof vests
 guns and grenades.

** This poem recounts the events of March 22, 1995, the fifteenth anniversary of the martyrdom of Luis Espinal, SJ, who was killed in La Paz for speaking out against injustice and oppression. The struggle continues.*

Graphic by Alan Hartway, CPPS





Marching throng chants
Hail hits tin roof
 one, two, six, ten
 like shots in the dark
Dynamite caps, molotov cocktails

Black sky breaks open
 Hail pounds
 Hard
 Angry, to silence every voice.

Choked on tear gas, teachers run
Rubber bullets, hail, sting
Anger mounts
 stones and sticks
 bounce off metal shields.

Hail turns to heavy rain
Wash the sins away
 Wash blood and bullets
 down the drain
Wash it down. Forget it.

Happens every year.
You get used to it
Just a spring storm.



Marcia Kruse is an Adorer of the Blood of Christ (Ruma). For the past eleven years, she has been working in La Paz, Bolivia, in pastoral ministry. She is also the ASC formation director in LaPaz. Before Bolivia, Marcia served five years as a school administrator in Puerto Rico.

The Magdalene of Ruben's Coup-de-Lance

By Terrye Newkirk

Rough and damp and cool, the adze-hewn wood
Presses splinters to her cheek. The veil
Of sunlit hair (that once reclaimed the good,
Long-needed tears from loved feet) a grail
For gleaming drops of (ah, how precious!) blood
Becomes. And can she bear the fearsome weight
Of unborne sin? Stand fast within the flood
Of guilt forgiven? Does she perhaps equate
Her culpability with such appalling
Death? A mute and futile plea her hands
Describe, the lance-blow not forestalling:
All peace, all mercy spill upon the sands.
We know--she cannot know--all will be well;
Just now, more souls than one descend to hell.

3 a.m., Feast of Cyril of Jerusalem, 1983

Terrye Newkirk is a writer and editor from Oklahoma. Her pamphlet on the sixteen Carmelite martyrs of Compiègne will be published this year by ICS Publications. This poem reflects her longstanding devotion to the Precious Blood.

Shaping the Heart of the Missionary

By Thomas Hemm, CPPS

...Jesus also suffered outside the gate, to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us go to him outside the camp, bearing the insult which he bore. For here we have no lasting city; we are seeking one which is to come.

Hebrews 13, 12-14

Regarding my own initiation into Precious Blood spirituality, I am as indebted to Adolfo Millas and his friends in jail as I am to anyone. He is a key witness to the creation of my missionary heart. When we first met, he was probably about fifty years old and knew the inside of seven or eight jails from north to south along Chile's lengthy geography. At that time he was about a quarter of the way into a thirty year sentence.

Our first encounters were not very pleasant. A small group of inmates would gather together with a few of us who came in from Precious Blood parish. We would meet every Saturday afternoon at one

end of the visitors' hall for some song, prayer, and reflection of the week's gospel. Invariably Adolfo and several of his friends would come around to harass us. He especially seemed to enjoy distracting Juan Moreno, the soft-spoken inmate who was beginning to take some leadership in the little group.

But what Adolfo had been seeing and hearing in that group finally got to him. He began participating and before long he was asking to be baptized and confirmed. He and a couple of others formed a tiny group in jail which became affiliated with a catechumenate process being organized in several *comunidades de base* of Precious Blood parish. Juan Moreno would be his sponsor.

Reasons of the Heart

One time a couple of us were sharing a cigarette and chatting over a cup of tea in Adolfo's cell. He tried to explain what he felt was happening to him. "You know we're always on the defensive," he said. "We go before the judge or the court clerk and answer questions: What did you do? What did you do it with? Who was with you? Where did you do it? When did it happen? Yet never does the judge ever ask us: 'Why did you do it?'"

He went on to say: "Padre, there is no one here in prison who doesn't have a reason for what they did. What's happening to me, though, is that you people from *Preciosa Sangre* come here and listen to me. You hear me out. I can be myself and discover wrong reasons in me, and right ones, and begin to make up my own mind about things. I don't need to put on a front any more and carry on my own defense."

As I got to know the honest heart of this former thief, I began to go deeper into the crowd of reasons contending in my own heart. Perhaps we put supposed evildoers away in jail and out of sight so they don't upset us. They are not around in our face challenging us to look steadily into our own hearts.

I suspect most of us carry those heavy memories of the wrong we've done, and of the good we've tried to do. Sometimes it worked; sometimes things went quite wrong. We struggle to comprehend the

reasons of our hearts. The prophet Jeremiah had touched on that truth: “More tortuous than all else is the human heart, beyond remedy; who can understand it? (Jer 17,9).” Jesus was even more specific: “From the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, unchastity, theft, false witness, blasphemy. These are what defile a person (Mt 15,19-20a).”

But then something happens and we’re able to look straight into the devious corners of our own hearts and there discover God’s favor--even in the darkest parts. It’s then that we can also find the infinite source of good in ourselves. This profound truth is echoed in Psalm 51: “Shut your eyes to my sin, make my guilt disappear. Creator, reshape my heart, God, steady my spirit.... Then I will teach your way and sinners will turn to you (Ps 51,11-12, 15).”

It is here that we witness the creation of the missionary heart.

In the Social Dimension: Overwhelming Remorse

At the same time, getting to know Adolfo and many others in prison brought to light another truth. There are serious social, cultural, and political consequences of proclaiming the Precious Blood as the price of our redemption. We get used to some common justifications for all the existence of the penal system. These seem to make sense until you watch up close just how the system works. Soon another, deeper purpose comes to the fore.

One common justification is that prison protects citizens from dangerous offenders. In some cases this purpose was served, but for the

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most part these people in jail were really not more dangerous than you or me. As a matter of fact, prison was seriously endangering the precious lives of those putting in time there, most of them poor and young. Jail certainly didn't serve another stated purpose, that of correction and rehabilitation. Most people were worse off during and after serving their sentences than before.

No, there is another, deeper purpose, one more destructive because it most often goes unseen. Ours is a hypocritical society which desperately needs judges and jail keepers, social workers and debt collectors to keep these common, ordinary sinners far away from us and out of sight. These offenders, the accused and the imprisoned, are like the scapegoat of ancient times which supposedly carried the sins of the people off into the desert.

Nor could we merely single out judges and social workers and their kind. There is also the constant danger that we church volunteers were also contributing to the same cause. Perhaps this was the reason why almost every time I heard confessions in jail I got the plea of not guilty! As a priest I, too, was viewed as a judge ready to condemn. Before me, the prisoner had to keep on guard, careful to withhold any incriminating evidence.

By focusing our attention on the common, ordinary criminal we are less likely to see the "respectable" crimes that occur daily to keep the city going, or to remember those ancestral crimes that are part of the very foundation of our prosperous economies. These crimes have long been sanctioned by law and are often given even religious justification.

Jesus saw through this pretense when he remarked: "They devour the savings of the widows and, as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers (Mk 12,40)." In this hypocritical society we need people in prison so that we have someone to whom we can look back over our shoulders and pray: "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers (Lk 18,9)."

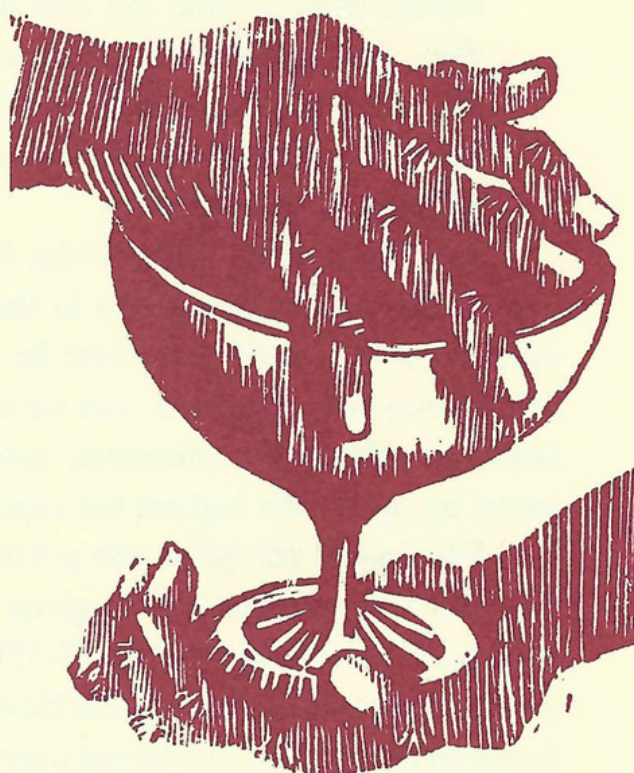
In his encyclical letter Dives in Misericordia, Pope John Paul II brings insight into the hypocrisy as he points to the source of an overwhelming sense of remorse that underlies contemporary society. In the same human family, individuals and groups exist side by side, some of them squandering wealth, while beside them, others go hungry (#11).

In other areas of his social teaching the pope has described this situation as a “social mortgage.” The goods of creation are destined for the use of all. Our use of them to create a booming economy at the expense of the poor creates a massive debt which is pending over all private property (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, #42).

We try to cover over the guilt stemming from the fact that our cities and nations have been built on lands confiscated from their original inhabitants through broken treaties. We try to forget that our economy owes its original accumulation to the sin of slavery, and that it continues to grow at the expense of the lives of the same poor which it despises: the unemployed, the immigrants, or the underpaid labor force of some foreign country. These crimes of genocide and slavery are intricately tied into racism which is called America’s “original sin.”

What is the point of bringing to mind this “overwhelming remorse” or to remind ourselves of this pending “social mortgage?” Is it to push ourselves even deeper into the mire of remorse and denial? No, to the contrary we bring these painful realities to mind in the light of Jesus shedding his most precious blood. Jesus paid our debt with his blood. We recall this liberating truth at every Eucharist as we look into the chalice and proclaim that the blood has been shed for forgiveness. We pray daily “Father, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” With gratitude, we acknowledge the forgiveness of our debts, and we commit ourselves again to work to break the cycle of revenge and the vicious circle of unforgiven debt.

We take up Jesus’ prophetic mission: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad



tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord (Lk 4,18-19).” In the light of this mission, we should take especially to heart a daring suggestion made by John Paul in his invitation to begin to prepare to celebrate the coming of the third millennium:

In the spirit of the Book of Leviticus (25,8-27), Christians must become the voice for all of the poor of the world. We should propose that the year of the Jubilee is the opportune time, among other things, to consider a significant reduction, if not complete forgiveness of the international debt which looms heavily over the future of many nations. (Tertio Millenio Aveniente #51)

Just think of the possibilities for us in the United States. We are one of the wealthiest nations in the world, and for that very reason, carrying a debt we'll never ever be able to pay off. We could stand to forgive not only the debts that we claim poor nations owe us, but also begin to release the prisoners, predominantly poor and black, who make up one of the highest per capita prison populations in the world.

We should recognize the portrait of our own nation in the story Jesus tells of one who was forgiven a huge debt which he couldn't pay even with his own life (Mt 21,18-35). We must take seriously the social consequences of the price of the blood which has canceled our debts and bring an end to the scandalous oppression of our “fellow servants who owe a mere fraction.”

Beyond the penal and economical there is yet a broader sense in which we identify groups and retain the forgiveness of their debts. We set them at a distance from ourselves, outside our city, as it were, to shore up our own sense of self-righteousness. We classify them as mentally ill. They have AIDS and have brought judgment on themselves, we say. We cast them aside because of their sexual orientation, because they've divorced and remarried, or because of their race or a political or religious affiliation, or simply because they're poor.

In the face of such exclusion we hear the urgent call of our Precious Blood spirituality: “Let us go to him outside the camp, bearing the insult he bore (Hebrews 13:13).”

Jesus' Novitiate: Initiation into God's Reign

Enduring the catechumenate process in jail is a real lesson in what "spirituality" means. Often that word misleads us. Jesus guides us into a spirituality that does not take us away to ethereal mysteries in some outer space. It is not concerned primarily with sacred rites held in sacred times and places. Nor does it evolve around special prayers and formulas.

Jesus, rather, leads us to find the holy in all of those spots in society where human life is diminished to pay the debt, and well-being is sacrificed daily for the survival of "respectable society." As a matter of fact, this is just how Jesus got himself into so much trouble.

While it is true that Jesus never landed in jail as did John the Baptizer, he did experience arrest, false accusations, torture, and finally legal death by capital punishment. Still in those agonizing final hours of his life he identified forever with all who are judged and condemned. In those final hours he died in the manner that he lived, suffering "outside the gate, to sanctify the people by his own blood (Heb 13:12)."

He had initiated his missionary career in a symbolic baptism in water which signaled to him the real baptism that was to come. For Jesus, initiation into the mysteries of the reign of God meant letting go of the deceptive securities of the city and its laws and customs. It meant making that journey down to the river to get into the line-up of repentant sinners.

It is in the river, in that humiliating posture of the repentant sinner that he hears the confirmation, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I

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am well pleased (Mt 3:17).” Throughout his ministry Jesus would struggle with the slowness of his disciples to understand this fuller meaning of his baptism: that he would be a rejected messiah who would allow himself to be immersed in that relentless river of the world’s judgment.

An important part of the catechumenal process is discerning our commitment to community building. When we say that “here we have no lasting city” we don’t mean that we are waiting passively for pie in the sky. Rather it means that the reign of God is not to be confused with the present city often built on deceit and on the backs of the poor.

Our initiation into the mysteries of God’s reign involves an option for the poor, the commitment to work together with them -- the stone rejected -- meant to become the cornerstone of a new society. “God chose the world’s low born and despised, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who were something (1 Cor 1,26-28).”

We are being initiated into a new way of seeing the institutions and reality around us. This journey of faith means leaving securities and going “to him outside the camp, bearing the insult he bore (Heb 13,13).”

Continuing Initiation: Eucharist

Of course Baptism and Confirmation only mark the beginning. It is initiation into a life in which the eucharistic breaking of Word and Bread and sharing the Cup brings us time and again to commit our-selves once more to this covenant with God’s poor.

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A Precious Blood spirituality stubbornly insists on seeing the world from the point of view of the outcasts and the condemned. We live every Eucharist as provisionally as Jesus did the last supper -- ready to be carried off to our baptism. We are reminded of Archbishop Oscar Romero whose last Mass ended abruptly in the shedding of his own blood, for having clearly identified this building up of the "new city" among the poor of El Salvador.

For this reason also we share the bread and cup in fear and trembling. When we remain unconcerned about the plight of the poor, and go even further to hold them without mercy to their debts, what we believe to be Eucharist is only a charade. What kind of validity can Mass have if we are indifferent to the hungry in the world?

What Saint Paul describes locally is just as true on the global scale: "When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's Supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk (1 Cor 11:20-21)."

Prophetic Initiation Today

In some ways you don't choose your initiation into the prophetic, missionary heart. There is a variety of rites today for initiation as associates or members of religious community or even the sacraments of Christian initiation. However, a basic respect for human rights would keep us from prescribing God's idea of a novitiate process for any one of these.

Think of the kind of "novitiate" prepared for Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela, for Paul of Tarsus, Dorothy Day, or Gaspar del Bufalo. In each of their cases, it meant prison. Somehow their initiation into spirituality drew them first into that sacred space of the condemned. Each suffered a particular "baptism" which initiated a prophetic mission among the poor and the oppressed. Through such initiation a missionary heart was born.

We would do well often to bring to mind these flesh and blood profiles to understand the missionary heart. Today when we think of a

profile, we tend to think of an abstract list of positive characteristics. Such documents suggest a state of perfection marked only by positive qualities. We need to look also at the darker sides of those very human hearts of our founding mothers and fathers. Often we're left with sanitized versions of the lives of our saints, so different from the accounts of sacred scripture.

How boldly the Bible portrays the dramatic transformation of David's adulterous and murderous heart into the favored partner in

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God's covenant. Or that God would entrust the sacred command "Thou shalt not kill" to Moses, one who had struggled with the reasons in his own heart for the passionate murder of the Egyptian slave manager.

We need to take courage from the words Jesus dropped into Simon Peter's complex missionary heart, so full of fear and denial: "Simon, Simon! Remember

that Satan has asked for you, to sift you all like wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith may never fail. You in turn must strengthen your brothers (Lk 22, 31-32)."

Every word and gesture of the risen Lord as captured in the fourth gospel reconfirms the truth that forgiveness is forever linked intimately with mission (Jn 20, 19-23). Certainly under normal circumstances the apostles would have expected incrimination from the Lord for having abandoned and even denied him. Fear reigned in their hearts. Can we imagine another likely scene? A former friend, hurt and betrayed, holding wounded hands in his face crying: "You'll pay for this!" The cycle of debt and injury would continue.

But what happens? The gesture is the same, but in place of the accusing words they may have expected, they receive words of reconciliation: "Peace be with you!" Then he renews the mission in a most forceful way: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." He breathes on them and continues, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins

of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

Whatever Happened to Adolfo Millas?

One day toward the end of 1993, Adolfo called me from jail to tell me the good news. He had reached the halfway mark of his sentence. Due to his good conduct he was to be released on parole. Soon he returned to his family to begin again with his wife and children, quite a transition after years of prison life. With the help of friends and some seed-capital from the “Padre Lorenzo Eiting Solidarity Fund”, he set up a small shoe repair shop in back of his house.

His *padrino*, Juan Moreno, had received the same benefit about a year before him. Moreover the entire pastoral team was suddenly up for parole and soon would be in liberty. Some of them weathered well the transition back to freedom. For others it continues to be traumatic.

This caught us by surprise and a well-organized, flourishing ministry there in jail suddenly came to a halt. It was time to begin again. We found in this a sign of the provisional nature of the work for the reign of God. When it works, it disappears.

Though he wears no special insignia, nor follows any special program, I believe Adolfo is as much a Precious Blood missionary as any of us. I should hope to be as faithful to the rejected Messiah as he is. I pray for him a lot, and I’m assured of his prayer for me, and I take heart from his personal witness.



For Reflection

Do I dare to sort through the contending reasons in my heart and discover there God's love and forgiveness? Is this a source of strength for my mission?

In my own life experience, where do I personally feel the call to "go to him outside the camp, bearing the insult he bore"?

Which flesh and blood "profiles", living or dead, lend strength to me in my own personal struggle?

Where am I called -- personally, as community, as part of my nation -- to forgive others' debts?

Above and beyond the formal novitiate or initiation processes I've endured, in what ways have I experienced initiation into Jesus' Baptism?

Genesis Prayer

By Linda Anne Ranard, ASC

Blessed are you, O God of the Universe,
Whose winter pink mornings
Cascade the earth with laughing light.

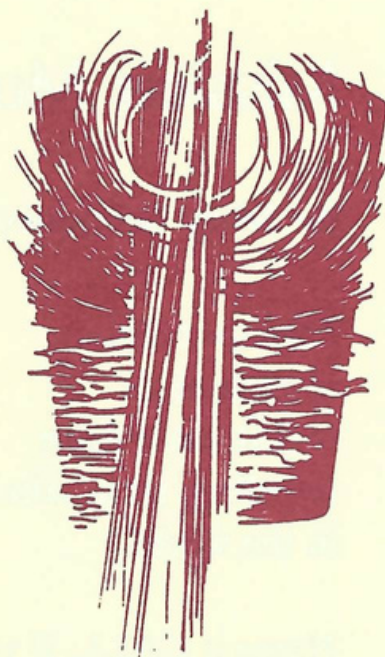
Blessed are you, O Father of Life
Whose creative seed
Juxtaposes history and divinity.

Blessed are you, O Mother of Pregnant Earth,
Whose belly swells with nurturance
Bursting the womb of her sustenance.

Blessed are you, O Sisters and Brothers of Truth
Whose sin and purity
Disturbs the comfortable, while comforting the devastated.

Blessed are, O wholeness, O nature
Whose crying heavens and lush gardens
Refresh the soul of person, of earth
Echoing the sigh of the Almighty:
“It is good.”

Linda Anne Ranard entered the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (Columbia) in 1972 after three years as a Catholic and inspired by Dominican missionaries in Appalachia. She has a background in teaching, liturgy, administration, and nursing. She is presently the province liturgist and resides at the provincial house.



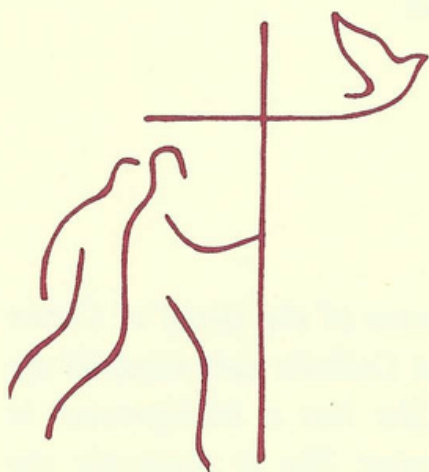
Mission Musings

By Mary Schoenecker, ASC

Perhaps mission
in each of us
is that inner drive
impelling us to take a stance
in the world.

Name it CALL, if you will,
to accomplish my part
of the larger plan
to free a world for love.

Perhaps the more I live
in awareness,
my attitudes speak out
in actions
and harmony ensues.



At home with saint and sinner,
I, too, can be
a message of peace,
blessing the earth
by my presence
as did Jesus.

Whether the setting be
at home
or half a globe away,
I sense that mission is a stance
of at-one-ment with the world
in its process of evolving
into wholeness in God.

And could it be
that a missionary heart
is one that assumes
that position
with a passion?

Mary Schoenecker is a Wichita Adorer of the Blood of Christ who has served for many years in Korea. She currently lives in Pusan.

Echoes of a Living God

By Mary Kevin Rooney, ASC

Last summer my Congregation called me to Rome to study our ASC Associate reality among our eleven provinces. I was looking forward to the overseas flight for some treasured time alone, time to pray, to be, to read. The time had almost come to close the doors of the plane, and my heart was getting happier and happier with hope. The seat next to me was unoccupied, and time was running out! I looked up, and there was a young man coming down the aisle, and I KNEW he was headed for the seat next to me. With a sigh I greeted my companion for the journey.

Before long we were in the air, the seat belt sign off, and the questions began. I knew from the tone and focus of his questions that I could save a lot of time by announcing up front who I was, so I said, "I'm a Sister." It simply brought the response: "What's that?"

I thought that a fair question, so I tried again. "I'm a nun."

"What's that?"

"That's someone who has consecrated her life to Jesus."

"Who is that?"

I nearly fell out the window! I had never actually met anyone who didn't know who Jesus was.

In my first life I taught little children and had learned from them

that clarity and simplicity were of the utmost importance if I wanted to be understood, so I went for the jugular vein: "I'm someone who made a vow never to marry."

"WHAT?????" (It was his turn to bail out.) "Who the heck was this Jesus fellow that someone would want to do that? How unnatural! How strange! How impossible!"

I discovered my seat mate was from Saudi Arabia, twenty-three years old and had been taught many things about "Christians" that didn't match my understanding. "THEY teach us that all of YOU are going to hell and all of US Muslims are going to heaven." And then the clincher, "Do you believe that?" What an opener!

In due time we arrive in New York, and Magron stood in the aisle waiting his turn to exit the plane. I thanked him for the plane conversation, commenting on how short the trip had seemed. His response, "Me, too. I knew there was something about you when I first saw you."

In the heart of this missionary there was that echo that told me I had just touched the LIVING God. I knew Magron's closing comment really meant: "I knew there was SOMEONE about you when I first saw you." How honored I was to be reminded of this truth by a young man from Saudi Arabia as we simply shared the wine of our lives. I had been missionary to him in obvious ways; he, in turn, had been missioned to me.

What Does One Have?

To be missionary is to be aware of being sent simply to speak the truth one knows from experience and to experience that Truth even more deeply in the process; it's to listen and respond to the providential moment and to discover a new face of God; it's to bring whatever one has.

What *does* one have? A shriveled hand (Mk 3, 1-6)? Put it out there. It can be the source of much thanksgiving in proclaiming the power of Goodness! What *does* one have? A shriveled body (Mt 8, 1-4)? Bring it! It can be the event revealing God's deepest desires for us. What *does* one have? A shriveled heart (Jn 8, 1-11)? Stand there with it in the

midst of all of us. It can be the opportunity to receive the freedom given by God.

Whatever poverty we have to bring identifies us with those to whom we are sent. Forever we are one with them, a realization that comes to the missionary even as she is being sent. We bring each other to Jesus by our daily life-weaving. "He brought him to Jesus," and the brother or sister then must decide for themselves. It's only out of "I received from the Lord what I pass on to you," that we can share. We must be driven by the Spirit into the desert, to that place in us that is naked, unprotective of self, of time, of things, of whatever we hold as idols. In that place God looks us in the heart, and the Spirit of the Lord is upon us. We are moved by the Spirit, filled with the Spirit. It is this Spirit who completes Jesus' mission, not we. This is cause for relaxing, for learning from God's pregnant waiting for each of us how to wait for another who can't walk, or see, or care. Where are we going anyway that we can't wait for each other? God's timing or mine? God's agenda or mine? God's potent failure or my deadening success?

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Words that Echo from Deep in the Soul

I remember a story Precious Blood Father Richard Cody used to tell at the Christian Charity workshops. A member of his community drank too much one evening, and Dick was so ashamed he left the bar to wait for him outside. Later the bartender helped the man to the car and said to Dick: "Is this your brother? If he were my brother, I would never have left him." I have always been deeply moved by that story. Who indeed was the missionary? Who knew the meaning of Jesus' words in this moment when actions speak louder than any eloquent preaching? Jesus teaches us that it's out of the heart that the mouth speaks. What a call to one sent to live mission! What do those

depths house in me?

Our old cellar at home had its own wisdom to teach. I used to hate to go down there because it was dark, with cobwebs attacking me when I least expected it. But once I made it past all those “scary” aspects, I found wonderful homegrown potatoes that became fluffy white feasts. There were quarts and quarts of homecanned beans, peas, tomatoes,

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corn, all of which I helped harvest and prepare, and, from our grapes, huge jars of dark, sweet, grape juice. Because of the nature of those dirt cellars there would always be bugs to contend with. But it was worth it to get to all those luscious goodies!

The heart of the missionary holds the same combination. To pretend otherwise is to live a lie. One must go deep enough to find the real treasures in our cellars and to bring them up for all to share, to fill whatever hunger the family of God might have. God is the great menu-planner who knows what is needed today and

tomorrow to provide for God’s People. It’s not up to me to decide; rather, as one sent, I am simply to be in the moment, open, loving, aware. God does the rest, even, and often, when I’m **not** aware! The mission is God’s, the Balaams chosen are missionaries -- and we all know the length to which God will go in order to reach the Balaams (Nm 22).

Ever since 1983 on my return from Rome I have used an Italian missal for the daily readings and prayer. More insights seem to come through another language that speaks the Gospel to me in a fresh way. On Palm Sunday the word was “invio,” sent. And the task for the two disciples, these famous, first missionaries? To get a donkey “because the Lord has need of it.” Oh, the humor of God! How well the missionary’s

heart is formed by the Lord, by the needs of the moment. How true Balaam's poem: "The oracle of the one with far-seeing eyes, of one who hears the word of God. He sees what Shaddai makes him see, receives the divine answer, and his eyes are opened!" Balaam's question, "Am I not obliged to say what Yahweh puts into my mouth?" is so right for the missionary.

Maria's Missionary Heart

In my office is a large picture of our foundress, Maria de Mattias. For me it's a symbol of our corporate mission as Adorers: "To lead others to the knowledge and love of Jesus Crucified." When you ask what makes the heart of a missionary, an Adorer, you need only to study this art piece to understand. Here we see Maria standing in contemplation of the poor Christ hanging on the cross. She is deeply caught up in this mystery of such Self-giving. She keeps her eyes focused there. With one hand she reaches up to Him in solidarity; with the other she invites the entire world to approach this Mystery to receive love, to learn love, to give love away. The young, the old, the little ones, the sick, the "anawim" whom we all are, come together before this Mystery. The artist has even captured the energy of love flowing from the cross to the entire cosmos. All creation is to share in "that beautiful order of things which the great Son of God came to establish in his blood." It is Christ's own adoring, redeeming love which gives meaning to everything. God's Paschal Mystery is hidden in all of reality, and the only way for the missionary to enter is by the door of faith. "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled."

A final story of how an Adorer's heart is formed for mission: I was driving home from downtown Wichita this spring. It was one of those "horrific" windy days that have been portrayed in the many versions of Dorothy and the Wizard. As my car climbed to the highest portion of the overpass, I saw one of those huge, white, plastic buckets sailing across the road ahead. There was no way it could miss the car. The racket inside the car was frightening as the bucket jammed under the front axle and became a permanent feature of my Nissan.

What to do? I slowed in the shoulder lane as other cars sped by. As carefully as I could, I eased off on to Seneca Street, was passed by a police car, and finally arrived at a gas station. There was no way not to be noticed since my arrival sounded as if every child in the neighborhood had joined a pot and pan rhythm band. I tried to dislodge the intruder, with no success. Then I heard a voice with a tell-tale drawl: "I'll get that for you, Ma'am."

Out of nowhere came a young man whose behavior, style, and dress told me he was probably gay. He went down on his knees, under the car, and out again with the culprit in hand. Spontaneously I said, "Oh, you are so good! What do I owe you?"

"Nothin', Ma'am. You just have a good day now."

As I drove away, I turned back to see him wave as he rejoined his two male friends. Instantly I recognized what had happened. "It was

How is an Adorer's heart formed in mission? By letting that heart be "wholly consecrated to the adoring and redeeming love of Jesus Christ who shed his blood to free us from sin and reconcile us in love."

You, wasn't it, Lord?" was on my lips, and the tears flowed freely. Here is a person whom we criticize, cast out, sometimes even condemn. And yet is was this Good Samaritan who was missioned to me, who revealed the Risen Lord's presence. As the Lord and I talked further about this, I remember saying, "Jesus, if he ever needs anyone to stand by him on Judgment Day, I will."

How is an Adorer's heart formed in mission? By letting that heart be "wholly consecrated to the adoring and redeeming love of Jesus Christ who shed his blood to free us from sin and reconcile us in love." It cannot but happen then, that one becomes "a living image of that divine charity with which this blood was shed, and of which it was and is sign, expression, measure, and pledge." We

Adorers invite you, with us, to make this kind of love your way of life.
Oh come, let us adore! Then let us go and proclaim!



For Reflection

Recall a time when the Lord caught you off guard. How did you know it was the Lord? Could this have been an experience of being “missioned”?

How are you molded/motivated/sent by the spirit of the founder/foundress in your missionary life?

What has contributed to the formation of a missionary heart in you?

Prayerfully listen to Jesus in John’s Gospel (17,17,ff). Allow Him to mission you anew.

