

An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality



THE WINE CELLAR

Summer 2011 • Number 25



Economic Justice

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

— Gaspar del Bufalo —

THE WINE CELLAR
An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality

Editor: Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S.
Managing Editor: Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.
Layout/Design: Brian Colombe
Editorial Staff: Lou Carey

*Published by the Kansas City Province
Missionaries of the Precious Blood*

Editorial Address:
PO Box 339, Liberty, MO 64069-0339

©2011. All rights reserved.

Printed by
Trojan Press, Inc.
North Kansas City, MO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Beyond the Bottom Line: Everyone Counts Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S.	<u>4</u>
Contributors	<u>7</u>
Daring Ourselves to Live Economically Just Lifestyles Vicki Bergkamp, A.S.C.	<u>9</u>
Working for Justice in South Central Los Angeles Bill Delaney, C.P.P.S.	<u>16</u>
Precious Blood Spirituality and the Regeneration of Religiosity Barbara Agnew, C.P.P.S.	<u>22</u>
How the Culture Impacts Economic Justice Carol Boschert, C.P.P.S.	<u>31</u>
Promoting Fair Trade Marcia Kruse, A.S.C.	<u>35</u>
Balancing Mission and Sustainability Alphonse Spilly, C.P.P.S.	<u>38</u>



Beyond the Bottom Line: Everyone Counts

*What is a Christian, a Jewish, or an Islamic response
to a deepening economic crisis like this?*

– Jim Wallis –

At the beginning of his book on the economic crisis, *Rediscovering Values: On Wall Street, Main Street and Your Street*, Jim Wallis asks a series of questions to challenge people of faith about their understanding of the financial crisis. To paraphrase the prophet of *Sojourners*:

- What is a Precious Blood response to the deepening economic crisis?
- What should Precious Blood people be thinking, saying and doing?
- What is the responsibility of Precious Blood institutions—parishes and provincial centers, schools and shelters, convents and colleges, hospitals and hospices—to their own congregations, community, nation and world?
- How might this financial crisis help Precious Blood people to clarify the mission that flows from our spirituality and charism?

Mr. Wallis' questions set the tone and direction for this issue of *The Wine Cellar*. Our response as people of the Blood is rooted in our compassion for the poor, the marginalized, the homeless and “have-nots” of our society. But without a willingness to confront the causes of this ever-widening gap between the rich and poor in our society, our compassion can be construed as commiseration.

Sister Vicki Bergkamp, treasurer of the United States Region of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, begins our reflection on the economy and how Precious Blood people can constructively and creatively engage in addressing the financial crisis by recalling how the U.S. bishops' 1980s

pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, offered “a concrete application of Catholic Social Teaching to the reality of the U.S. economy.” Sister Vicki offers six moral principles to guide our deliberations and underscores how “we are called to stand with all people so that the moral principles of dignity, community, and human rights are protected and nourished.”

Living and working among the poor for many years, Father Bill Delaney shows how living these moral principles in a particular neighborhood in south central Los Angeles can bring about change. As a community organizer and member of the staff at St. Agnes Parish, Fr. Bill reviews how people of faith can impact a community by working “to create good jobs for local residents,” supporting small business, and building “the capacity and power of local residents to have a say in the future of their neighborhoods.”

Precious Blood Sister Barbara Agnew reviews how our concern for the poor is rooted in the gospel and in a long tradition of Catholic Social Teaching that “took a new form with the rise of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century.” From Pope Leo XII’s 1891 landmark encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, to Pope Benedict XVI’s *Caritatis in Veritate* in 2009, Sister Barbara traces how “popes have spoken out repeatedly about the justice due to workers.” She focuses especially on the current pope’s teaching that links charity, truth and justice, and how Precious Blood spirituality informs our response to the “expanding challenges of securing social justice for suffering persons and nations.”

Offering a more personal reflection on how the prevailing culture influences our response to the economic crisis, Precious Blood Sister Carol Boschert believes the “blood of Christ calls us to confront the disparity in the U.S. economy where the wealth is in the hands of a few.” Sister Marcia Kruse, an Adorer of the Blood of Christ, drawing upon her experience in Nicaragua, follows with a practical suggestion for promoting fair trade that “helps not only farmers, but also the environment.”

Precious Blood Father Al Spilly anchors this edition of *The Wine Cellar* with how a specific ministry of the Precious Blood, Calumet College of St. Joseph, has remained true to its mission “in the face of ever-changing challenges, especially those of a fiscal nature.” As the college celebrates its 60th anniversary, Fr. Al traces the history of Calumet as it continues to create an environment where “at-risk and underprepared undergraduates” can find success.

The mission of Calumet College and so many of the ministries in which the Precious Blood family are involved share a commitment to social justice. How the spirituality informs and impacts our response to the economic crisis is captured in a story Christina Baldwin tells about being

five years old and the family had gathered for the harvest. Her mother and one of her aunts were setting the table for the men and older boy cousins who would come in for lunch from harvesting. All the women and the older girls were either in the kitchen or working the final harvest in the garden. It was going to be a crowded table.

Her mother and aunt went round and round the dining room table trying to squeeze in one more place setting. Thinking perhaps little Christina could just sit on her lap, her mother said, "We need fourteen places if Chrissie doesn't count." Just then, Christina walked into the room and said, "But I do count!" And she proceeded to show her Mom and aunt how well she counted, "One, two, three, four..."

Recalling the incident, Baldwin says it was a "prophetic moment," for she decided from then on that she would count and be counted. "I

*And always remember:
all are welcome at God's
table. For it is here
where the poor find a
place at the feast, the
stranger finds hospitality,
the hungry are fed, and
everyone counts.*

would represent myself, and remember myself," she writes, "even if I had to squeeze in between bigger people."

In the spirituality of the Precious Blood and the mission and ministries that flow from its deep and wide pool, everyone counts. In the spirituality of the blood, we are all connected. In the breaking of the bread and the pouring of the cup around the tables of our lives, there is always room for one more. "What we are learning in


the midst of this current crisis," Jim Wallis writes, "is that relationships really do matter. When the gaps between the rich and poor become too big, relationships are stretched thin and the old social covenants can't hold."

So pull up a chair at the table. Squeeze in between the "big shots" if you have to. And always remember: all are welcome at God's table. For it is here where the poor find a place at the feast, the stranger finds hospitality, the hungry are fed, and everyone counts.

And that is the only bottom line that matters.



*What is a Precious Blood response
to a deepening economic crisis like this?*





Contributors


✚ Precious Blood Sister **Barbara Agnew** retired from Villanova University's Department of Theology and Religious Studies in 1999. While at Villanova, she also taught at the Vincentian Seminaries in Northampton, PA, and Adelaide, Australia, 1984-6. Since retirement, she has taught theology in Villanova's college program at Graterford Prison, Graterford, PA, and served as counselor and board member for THRESHOLDS, a six-step program designed to help inmates make better decisions, in Delaware County, PA.

✚ Sister **Vicki Bergkamp** is treasurer of the US Region of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. She holds a BS in Math from Newman University in Wichita, KS, a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Kansas, and an Ed.D. in Leadership from St. Thomas University in St. Paul, MN. Before treasurer, she was Professor of Business at Newman University. She enjoys the challenges of both the theoretical approach of teaching and the very pragmatic approach of buying cars and computers.

✚ Sister **Carol Boschert** has been a Sister of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO for 45 years. She taught for 4 years until the leaders of the community saw her working with the aged sisters and realized that she had a gift of caring for the ill and infirm. She became the nurse she always wanted to be. In 1975 she went to Peru as a missionary and served there for more than seven years. On returning to the states she entered the Physician Assistant program at St. Louis University, graduating in 1988. She worked for several years in the St. Louis Veterans' Hospital, almost ten years operating a Rural Health Center on the Texas-Mexico border and then two years in a clinic in Beardstown, IL. In 2004 she was elected to community leadership. Sister Carol wishes to thank Sisters Joan Schnorbus and Josepha Bauer for their helpful suggestions in writing this reflection.

 Precious Blood Father **Bill Delaney** has ministered in south Los Angeles for 21 years. He has worked extensively in community organizing, especially with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). Fr. Bill works regularly with unions and other community groups on justice issues, especially regarding immigrant communities.

 Sister **Marcia Kruse**, an A.S.C. from Illinois, teaches Spanish and Latin at Gibault Catholic High School in Waterloo, IL. She is co-campus minister and moderator of the International Club. She had previously been stationed in La Paz, Bolivia for 15 years where she served in the A.S.C. and the intercommunity formation programs, along with youth and catechetical ministry in the parish.

 Precious Blood Father **Al Spilly**, Ph.D., is Associate Professor at Calumet College of St. Joseph in Whiting, IN, which is also his hometown. He was ordained in 1967 and has taught biblical studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and Mundelein Seminary in Mundelein, IL. He served as Special Assistant to the Archbishop of Chicago for fifteen years and directed the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Center for Theology and Ministry in Chicago before coming to Calumet College of St. Joseph.



Daring Ourselves to Live Economically Just Lifestyles

by Vicki Bergkamp, A.S.C.

*I believe the most important single thing,
beyond discipline and creativity,
is daring to dare.
– Maya Angelou –*

Economic Justice is a great term, a strong phrase that connotes value, stability and hope. There is even a sense that we can all agree with what it means. However, it takes little time to realize how different our concepts of Economic Justice are. Does it mean we take our present economic system and make sure that it is just? Does it mean that we consider what is just on an economic level and then re-arrange our economic system to fit that goal? A discussion of Economic Justice usually starts with both of these ideas and quickly deteriorates from there. While it may be a clear value, it is an extremely complex set of issues. Often we do not have the ability to discuss it, because we do not understand the economic aspects of our financial systems and/or we are not able to articulate values in the particular language of the economic/financial world. It then becomes very easy to give up on any meaningful discussion because we don't understand; we don't have a common language or set of principles.

In the mid 1980s the United States bishops wrote a pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*. It was a controversial process and it remains a document that can trouble anyone who reads it. The document gets into this very messy, uncomfortable discussion and does not come up with ten easy steps to a satisfying conclusion. Instead it raises issue after issue about the economic justice of our financial systems, allowing none of us off the hook, because we are all the consumers who drive the system.

My familiarity with this pastoral letter comes from my years as a Professor of Business at Newman University in Wichita, Kansas. When teaching Business Ethics, this pastoral was one of the books used in the course, and each student wrote a reflection paper on the pastoral. They were free to criticize, disagree and question. They usually started out fired up to contradict it, since they were business minded and the pastoral was theoretical and theological. Invariably, they moved to a new place in their thinking by the time they turned in their papers. They had fewer answers and more questions. In other words, the bishops' pastoral on Economic Justice was a very effective document.

Basic Achievements of the Pastoral

The bishops sent out early drafts of the document for feedback—and they received plenty, including the advice that they should go to church and pray rather than write about something that is not their expertise! This consultative approach created quite a stir and became a significant achievement.

The pastoral was an attempt to integrate Scripture and reason, and Scripture with a complex system of daily life. I use the word “attempt” because I think we each have to decide about whether or not they were successful.

The pastoral was a concrete application of Catholic Social Teaching to the reality of the U.S. economy. It is always easy to talk about a theory, but relating it to reality in a concrete way is something from which we usually shy away because we have to use examples. These examples often will be misunderstood, and those who misunderstand have an uncanny way of making fun of what is said.

Finally, the pastoral challenged and insisted that the Church itself needed to be an example of the principles of justice it proclaimed. The bishops took on a difficult tension as an organization. This was about the time the salaries for religious and lay employees were very different for the same work.

Every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person.

Governing Questions & Moral Principles

The pastoral took on three questions that governed and shaped the document:

*What does the economy do for people?
What does the economy do to people?
How do people participate in the economy?*

Certain moral principles are woven throughout the economic pastoral and provide a solid context for discussion and evaluation of economic systems. First, **every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person.** The dignity of the human person is basic to all Catholic Social Teaching, but I am not sure it is used to judge our economic decisions or institutions.

Second, **human dignity can be realized and protected only in community.** In a society that praises, encourages and nourishes individualism this is a major challenge.

Third, **all people have a right to participate in the economic life of society.** There are many ways to exclude people and it is done all the time intentionally. We have a system for medical care that basically depends on a person having a job, although employers are not required to give workers medical benefits.

Fourth, **all members of society have a special obligation to the poor and vulnerable.** This principle is not obvious to all and, indeed, can raise some hackles, i.e. "Why don't they take care of themselves?" Discussions about who are the poor and vulnerable can be very enlightening.

Fifth, **human rights are the minimum conditions for life in community.** Is health care a human right? Is water a human right?

Sixth, **society as a whole, acting through public and private institutions, has the moral responsibility to enhance human dignity and protect human rights.** This is a strong comprehensive statement. We have a job to do and we need each other to do it.

We are called to stand with all people so that the moral principles of dignity, community, and human rights are protected and nourished.

The issues discussed in relation to these principles in the mid 1980s bear an amazing resemblance to the issues of today: poverty, homeless women and children, homeless persons with mental illnesses, the role of unions, employment issues of wages and workers rights, the farm crisis and international trade issues. The new issue to add to the list for our decade is the

broken immigration system. It is easy to say the systems are broken; it is very difficult to begin to find a way to think of economic justice in a way that makes it a reality.

Through this pastoral on Economic Justice, the Bishops of the United States dared to begin a discussion about economics, about money. It is a very touchy subject in any circle, which is why we tend to avoid the subject. Yet, as this pastoral indicates, we are called to stand with all people so that the moral principles of dignity, community and human rights are protected and nourished.

Do we dare to respond, to learn about economic systems, to bring justice issues to the table? What are the implications for us as members of religious congregations claimed by the blood of Christ, as members of parishes, as citizens of our world?

Implications, Directions, Challenges

The first way we dare to work for economic justice is to intensify our efforts to consciously develop the social consciences of everyone we know, especially ourselves. This happens when we develop the habit of examining every choice, every issue, every decision that we make personally, communally, and as a society. This is the habit of learning about our financial systems, which are often driven by the bottom line. The bottom line is not a problem in and of itself. It becomes a problem in our capitalistic system when it is considered the only factor of importance. Too often we accept what we are told, because we assume we cannot understand and that only the experts can know these things. But we can understand and we don't have to agree with the financial model and/or decision. Sometimes just making that statement is a teaching moment.

We have much more power as consumers than we realize.

Another daring way to respond is to gather together, to create forums where groups can meet to reflect and dialogue on the principles and issues of economic justice. The often quoted comment of Margaret Mead is operative: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has." We have much more power as consumers than we realize. Our economic system is made up of businesses, and each one of them is watching us very closely. What are we saying to them?

If we dare to respond to the challenges of this pastoral, we must eventually begin to confront the idolatry of accumulation in our society. We accumulate so much stuff that we need storage rooms in our houses; we talk about those who need storage facilities that have cropped up on our landscape. We accumulate so much entertainment that we no longer have time and/or the psychic energy to enjoy much of anything. Little do

we realize that this accumulation begins to numb us to the needs of others. We no longer have the space in our hearts to tune in to their suffering. To counteract this we develop a kind of split consciousness. We are able to talk about the marginalized and tell stories of their suffering, while assuming it is someone else's job to fix the situation because we are too busy.

Each level of daring leads us to another. In the midst of the terrible language used against immigrants, and budget battles that want to cut social programs while funding wars, do any of us know where we stand personally?

Are we visibly on the side of the poor and powerless? Clearly there will be a lot of difference among us in terms of what we can do, but all of us need to

Are we visibly on the side of the poor and powerless?

push ourselves beyond where we are today. For whom do we pray each day? What boards do we serve on? Do we support those we know who serve the poor and powerless more directly? How often do we declare our support for others in our conversations? What in our lifestyle are we willing to give up if it would help the poor?

Finally, economic justice calls us to move beyond a passive stance to intentional action. All of us can choose lifestyles consistent with a just world order and efforts to slow down our consumption which is more than our share of the world's resources. All of us can stand in opposition to the actions and decisions of our fellow citizens that do not include all of us in the human community. Most of us can begin to transform existing institutions from within. Our behaviors, attitudes and actions do have an impact, though we rarely see it. Hopefully, one of the gifts of our prayers for each other is the courage to do the right things every day, whether or not we will ever see the results in our lifetime.

Some of us can build new value systems in various ways through preaching, teaching, writing and witnessing. We can give to others the words they need to express their beliefs, and support those who have been left behind by our present systems. Some of us can plan how to move from our present systems to new systems; we can be proactive about alternative structures. We cannot assume that we know the answers, but we can move beyond the broken systems of today. Some of us can support the prophetic ideas that others find really strange. The financial systems will not change quickly, but we cannot give up because others will not listen or make light of our ideas.

Concluding reflections

Economic justice is a value we share, but what does it mean in our daily life? We probably need to share and explore this value more than we have in the past. Here are three entry points for making economic justice part of your daily life.

Exercise: The ability to be more critical thinkers, evaluators, and contributors to the economic justice of our financial systems is a very tall order. Most of us quickly feel it is beyond us. The financial intricacies of our systems can be very intimidating. The disconnect we experience is the first problem we have to address. I would submit that the kind of thinking and engagement we need in this arena is like exercising a muscle. We can only do a little at a time as we begin. It will feel clumsy and awkward. It might even hurt a bit. After a while we will begin to be more at ease, and if we continue we will get much more comfortable with it. Compare it to any other activity that you try to learn—tennis, piano, painting, etc. There are almost predictable stages of learning—and that beginning stage can be embarrassing, especially as adults, because we think we should be past the clumsy stage.

Our society needs the commitment of those who are willing to be learners about the financial systems that affect the lives of so many members of our world community. As with other learning situations we usually try to find people who will help us and learn with us. Find those people in your life; don't rely on so-called "experts."

Our society needs the commitment of those who are willing to be learners about the financial systems that affect the lives of so many members of our world community.

Consumer behavior: Our consumer behavior needs considerable reflection, because we are taught every moment of every day to be a consumer, to want things and want them now, to expect services and get them faster than anyone else. We are often lulled into thinking that we are not really consumers because we don't buy the fancy cars in the commercials, we don't take the fantastic cruises we see on TV, and we don't go to jewelry stores for the diamonds they show around Christmas and Valentine's Day. What all those commercials sell to us besides the specific product is that we deserve any and all products that make us feel special and allow us the kind of leisure time we want.

Reflection about how we respond to these commercials and what we tell ourselves and others about what we buy, when we buy, and what we expect will help us immensely in becoming more critical consumers. We don't need as much variety, as much speed, and as much quantity when we understand our true needs without all the input from commercials. Much of our present day consumer behavior is related to someone else providing services and doing it for us very fast. However, no one seems to have more leisure time. You begin to wonder if taking our time to do some of the tasks in our own lives doesn't offer us some of the leisure that we are looking for. Leisure is not about doing nothing; it is about doing meaningful things. Maybe some of the daily tasks of life have lost their meaning because others do them for us.

Community: It is in community—and hopefully we are in many communities—that we will find both the challenges and the affirmation of our work for economic justice. It is very easy to be overwhelmed with issues like these and protect ourselves by deciding that someone else needs to deal with them. In comparison to the problem, our efforts can seem miniscule, so we need each other's good example. Being grateful for the communities who challenge us and affirm us is an important part of the process we need to undergo to move to economic justice. Never underestimate the power of affirmation to move us into new places with new visions, new energy and new life for all.

It is in community that we will find both the challenges of our work for economic justice and the affirmation.



For Reflection

- Corporations spend millions to influence you. Do you understand how advertising affects your feelings, expectations and decisions?
- Whose lifestyle do you admire? Does it lead you to a simpler view of life?
- List the things you need to learn more about our financial structures? Who can help you explore these questions and issues with you?

Working for Justice In South Central Los Angeles

by **Bill Delaney, C.P.P.S.**

St. Agnes Parish is located in south Los Angeles next to the University of Southern California (USC). For several years most of the USC students lived north or west of the campus and commuted to class every day. There were some residence halls on campus and a fraternity/sorority row. In the 1950s and 1960s there was a large African-American presence in the surrounding neighborhoods. When the Archdiocese of Los Angeles asked the Pacific Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood to administer the parish in 1967, it was described as an “African-American Parish with a few Hispanics.” Since the church was newly built and close to a neighborhood with a large population from Korea, it was also the first center for the Korean Catholics in the Archdiocese.

In the 1970s and 1980s many Hispanics moved into the area from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Almost all of the immigrant residents rented places to live. A few got jobs at USC as janitors, gardeners, housekeepers and food service personnel. Most were employed elsewhere in the larger Los Angeles County. Because of gang activity, USC students were discouraged from living in the neighborhoods.

By the mid 1990s, many Hispanics began to receive their citizenship due to the efforts of St. Agnes and its affiliation with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). Over 2,000 people connected to St. Agnes received their citizenship in this decade. As a result, they got better jobs and some began to purchase homes in the neighborhood. The area became more stable and safer.

At the end of the 1990s, under the energetic and enlightened leadership of President Stephen Sample, USC decided to increase undergraduate enrollment by 5,000 students and work to become a

residential campus. As a result, developers and families of USC students began to purchase family homes in the neighborhood, made a few adjustments, raised rents and targeted students as the occupants. Many of the families living in the neighborhood could not afford the rent increase, so they moved. In the decade from 2000-2010, St. Agnes lost close to 1,000 families from the neighborhood.

Because of gang activity, USC students were discouraged from living in the neighborhoods.

In the meantime, St. Agnes Parish is still an active member of One LA-IAF and is working also with other local community groups such as United Neighbors in Defense Against Displacement (UNIDAD) and TRUST SOUTH LA. In working with these newer groups committed to justice for the marginalized, we have been able to come into contact with non-church related people who are still very committed to justice for all.

Activists Reflect Diversity

The mission statement for UNIDAD reads: “We are dedicated to holding the city, developers and property owners accountable to the existing community, ensuring a fully transparent urban-planning process with meaningful involvement of the community. We target residents, grass-roots organizations and workers to preserve existing low-income housing, create abundant new affordable housing for local families, students and workers. We want to create good jobs for local residents and support small businesses.”



Carolina Garcia speaking at health care action meeting.

Some of the members of UNIDAD we have come into contact with are Gabriela, a young Hispanic organizer who visits people in the neighborhood challenging them to work to provide and maintain family housing; Benny, a retired Afro-American teacher who is deeply interested in empowering the local community; and Nancy, a Jewish woman who is the leader of Esperanza Community Housing. Esperanza serves the local

community through a core program in such areas as housing, developing new family apartments and rehabilitating existing properties to serve low income families, health, economic development, education and the arts and sciences.

The others who are actively involved in UNIDAD include Jonathan, an Asian USC student who is part of a group called “Campus

We want to create good jobs for local residents and support small businesses.

and Community United.” He has accessed invaluable information about the inner workings of USC to share with the community. Grant is a young Korean adult who heads a group called Coalition for Responsible Community

Development. Lauren is a recent graduate of USC who is a member of the local Lutheran Church and is deeply committed to social justice. She lived in the community as an undergraduate and continues to do so now that she has graduated. Susan is an ordained minister of the United University Church located on the USC campus, which specifically targets working for peace. Paulina is the lead organizer for Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE). This group has been working for the past 20 years taking slumlords to court, establishing land trusts and working to find positive solutions to conflicts between institutions and low income city residents by negotiating agreements that benefit all participants. In partnerships with other groups from churches to labor unions, SAJE works to make sure the fate of neighborhoods is decided by those who live there. These are just a few examples of the wealth of talent located in the area around St. Agnes Parish and who are involved with UNIDAD in the struggle to maintain low income family housing.

Stabilizing the Neighborhood

TRUST SOUTH L.A. is a land trust that is a community based effort to stabilize the neighborhoods south of downtown Los Angeles where increased property values and rents have pushed out many long-term residents. Their mission is to build community control over land, to preserve and build opportunities for working class people to remain in the community, and to build the capacity and power of local residents to have a say in the future of their neighborhoods.

St. Agnes Parish was invited by UNIDAD in the summer of 2005 to be part of a coalition to preserve a public library, the Mary McLeod Bethune Library, a quarter mile south of St. Agnes Church. The library department and the local councilman wanted to close the library and build

a newer, regional library in another site. The local residents were opposed to this closure and gathered several hundred signatures at the Masses at St. Agnes to show their support of the public library. Despite these efforts as the months progressed, it became evident that the library would be closed. UNIDAD and TRUST SOUTH LA then proposed using the land on which the library was located to build housing for low income families.

This group has been working for the past 20 years taking slumlords to court.

TRUST SOUTH LA officially submitted this proposal to the City of Los Angeles in the summer of 2010. This proposal was opposed by the local councilman who wanted to use the land for commercial buildings which would sell at market rates to increase the tax rates from the area. No other developer submitted any proposal and things were at an impasse for over nine months. Suddenly in mid-April 2011 the Councilman and the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) of the City of Los Angeles changed their minds. Word was received that they had accepted the proposal of TRUST SOUTH LA, and that fifty-five units of affordable housing would be constructed on the site of the former library, along with a 15,000 square foot retail space, most likely a small market. This was a big victory for the local community.

All of this occurred because in early February 2011, UNIDAD and TRUST SOUTH LA and other community-based organizations had successfully negotiated a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with a



Fr. Bill Delaney and other St. Agnes leaders at recent health care action meeting.

high powered developer for his Lorenzo project in south Los Angeles. This Lorenzo project proposed to the City of Los Angeles the construction of 919 luxury apartments in a six story building with monthly rents from \$1,500 to \$2,400. At a number of public hearings with the Los Angeles Planning Department, UNIDAD and TRUST

SOUTH LA had over 200 local residents present opposing this project. During this same time frame, attorneys for both sides had been meeting to discuss a resolution to the situation. Finally in early February 2011 the

Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) was signed. It provided that in this upscale apartment complex the developer will provide 7,500 square feet of space for a public clinic to serve the community. The clinic will be rent free for twenty years and will serve more than 20,000 patient visits per year for low income people of the neighborhood. Additionally the developer has agreed to provide a space and funding for community health promotion, affordable housing on adjacent blocks, as well as job training and local small business support.

The clinic will be rent free for twenty years and will serve more than 20,000 patient visits per year for low income people of the neighborhood.

He will pay living wages and implement a local hiring program for the project's permanent workers. This agreement is unique in that it concerns a development funded entirely with private funds.

Working with USC

Currently St. Agnes Parish is one of many groups working with UNIDAD to negotiate a Community Benefits Agreement with USC. The University has developed a long range plan for the next 30 years, which has been submitted to the City of Los Angeles for approval. UNIDAD is in ongoing negotiations with USC to secure the following:

1. Obtain permanent jobs for local residents with living wages and benefits;
2. Secure public health by having safer streets, more parks and recreation areas, and insuring food security in local markets;
3. Make low income family housing available by assuring the construction of more student housing on university property; and
4. Support small businesses by having workshops for local merchants on how to better market their products. In the process of negotiations, we also talk about other topics which are of mutual interest for life in the 21st century.

All of the above is a huge project which might take years to complete. However, with the talents of a multi-cultural community dedicated to justice for all, we are confident that many positive results will occur.



For Reflection

- What place does social justice have in your life?
- Is your parish involved in justice issues? If so, what are they? If not, are you willing to challenge parish leadership to engage the parish in issues affecting the neighborhood, community and world?
- What keeps parishes and groups from being involved in issues of justice and peace?
- How does Precious Blood spirituality challenge you to be more justice-oriented?
- How does the spirituality of the Blood of Christ inform your personal decisions about economic issues?



UNIDAD members and allies at Planning Commission meeting.

Precious Blood Spirituality and the Regeneration of Religiosity

by Barbara Agnew, C.P.P.S.

In the book, *Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, and the Signs of the Times*, Pope Benedict XVI replies to a question about church, faith and society saying, “People today no longer have an immediate intuitive grasp of the fact that Christ’s blood on the Cross is expiation for their sins. Formulas like these...stand in need of new translation and comprehension. We have to recover the understanding that it is really necessary to come to terms with evil. It has to be worked through and transformed from within” (pp. 135-36).

Benedict’s strong words suggest how a deepening grasp of Precious Blood spirituality and the Church’s teaching on social justice will aid in what the Pope calls the challenge of people of faith to “regenerate religiosity.” The spirituality of the Precious Blood, arising after the long history of Precious Blood devotion, can already be seen at work in the reconciliation ministries of the missionaries, companions, adorers and associates of the Precious Blood, and in increasing numbers of others who are responding to the growing needs of migrants and the undocumented.

The church’s long concern for justice in society took a new form with the rise of Industrial Revolution in the 19th century with its demand that workers labor from dawn to dusk as was the norm on the farm. This shift from primarily an agricultural to industrial economy challenged the institutional leadership of the church to address the rights of workers. Beginning with Pope Leo XII’s 1891 landmark encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, popes have spoken out repeatedly about the justice due to workers.

Responding to the Suffering Christ

Today the emerging ministries of reconciliation are evidence of a deepening of a spirituality of the Precious Blood that has become, in the words of Father Ernest Ranly, “a permanent process of transformation of life.” This transformation enables one to realize that rapidly developing economic and environmental ills have brutalized, disfigured and even criminalized whole populations. Thus one can see in them the brutalized, disfigured, criminalized image of Jesus on the cross, shedding his blood to seal God’s covenant of love, and can respond with compassion and creativity to victims around us and throughout the world.

Rapidly developing economic and environmental ills have brutalized, disfigured, and even criminalized whole populations.

Even beyond such theological considerations, however, two recent art exhibits are evidence of a shift in public and artistic response to images of the wounded Christ. “Passion in Venice” at New York’s Museum of Biblical Art (Feb. 9 – June 12, 2011) featured images of Jesus as the Man of Sorrows. Seen from the waist up, bleeding from his wounds, eyes closed, he is dead, but upright. This image migrated from Byzantium to Venice in the 13th century. A fourteen panel altarpiece, with the Man of Sorrows in the top center spot, was installed in the Basilica of St. Mark and became a *de facto* symbol of the city and its empire. The exhibition includes a vividly colored miniature of the Man of Sorrows on a page of an Italian bank’s statute book—an overtly political use of an image of Christ’s death.

In striking contrast, “Good Friday: the Suffering of Christ in Contemporary Art” at St. Louis University’s Museum of Contemporary Religious Art in the spring of 2010 was organized in a way that promoted prayer and reflection on the suffering Christ. Artists, from Roualt and Dali to those of Christian, Jewish and no particular faith, clearly had been moved in some way by the suffering of Christ’s humanity. One picture linked the suffering Christ to the AIDS epidemic; another presented the image of a Guatemalan wearing a crown of thorns, who seemed to be looking at the viewer, suggesting Jesus’ belief in the dignity of the poor. Terence Dempsey, S.J., director of the museum, who has lectured recently on “The Wounded Body of Christ and Modern Social Consciousness,” notes that even twenty years ago artists did not approach the suffering Christ so directly.

A History of Concern for Justice

Concern for justice arose, of course, in the early Church, along with the commitment to charity. Augustine's fifth century *City of God* begins the systematic analysis of the secular-sacred relationship between

Aquinas gives more space to a consideration of "justice" than to faith, hope and charity.

state and the church. Aquinas followed Aristotle in his recognition that persons exist in multiple relationships, living and working with others in communities. He also saw that our social nature involves the relationship of the individual to society and society to the individual. Aquinas, in fact, gives more space to a consideration of

"justice" than to faith, hope and charity, and the other cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance and fortitude.

Following the Council of Trent, however, moral theology became more concerned with the internal life of the church, concentrating on preparing handbooks for confessors, emphasizing the character of sinful acts and the degree of their sinfulness—topics far removed from the development of Catholic social ethics. Not until Leo XIII's concern for justice to workers gave rise to *Rerum Novarum*, did emphasis on social justice and the common good find explicit expression in Church teaching. The explicit concern for justice culminated in the publication of the *Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church* in 2005.

Despite the fact that the many papal documents on social justice that have appeared in the past 120 years always affirm the truth of previous statements, some challenges have emerged. First was in connection with Pope John XXIII's 1961 address to all peoples of goodwill, *Pacem in Terris*. Pope John, speaking of the common good, saw there was a gap in the world order: there was no institution like the nation-state that could be held responsible for the domestic common good. The moral order, he said, demands such a public authority.



It is recognized that *Gaudium et Spes*, which speaks of the Church in the modern world, contains an irresolvable tension in the Church's

call to “all people of good will” to be concerned for justice. The argument made to believers is based on the Gospel command for justice and charity, but the appeal to “people of good will” is based on the natural law.

Nevertheless, there have been moves beyond simple appeal to natural law arguments. Pope Paul VI, in his 1971 letter, *Octagesimo adveniens*, points out that Christians today find themselves in a diversity of regions, sociopolitical systems and cultures, saying, “It is up to these Christian communities with the help of the Holy Spirit, in communion with the bishops...and in dialogue with other Christian brethren and all people of good will, to discern the options and commitments which are called for in order to bring about the social, political, and economic changes seen...to be urgently needed.”

While this is not a rejection of the argument from natural law, it is a recognition and response to aspirations to equality and participation which arise in new situations. These important moral values have not been deduced from human nature, or from Church doctrine, but have been realized in the course of human development.

Church Responds to Historical Developments

Another example of the Church’s response to historical development is Vatican II’s *Declaration on Religious Freedom*. For the first time, the Church accepted religious freedom for all, based on the right of citizens to be free from external coercion. A few years later, Paul VI’s *Populorum Progresso* used “development” as a new name for peace, and linked personal and social development to a transcendent humanism. While papal statements always reaffirm the teachings of earlier documents, it is clear that the social teaching is being reshaped by recognition of the fact of a developing world.

For the first time, the Church accepted religious freedom for all based on the right of citizens to be free from external coercion.

Some scholars have pointed out that the hopeful adoption in the 1960s and 1970s of a commitment to an attainable future was the result of the enthusiasm for civil rights and a postwar recognition of renewed communication among cultures which suggested a whole world on the road to democracy. The 1971 Synod of Bishops document, *Justice in the World*, proclaimed, “Actions on behalf of justice, and participation in the transformation of the world appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel.”

But, as Pope John XXIII had recognized in *Pacem in Terris*, achievement of the common good depended on the existence of the authority of the nation-state to create and enforce structures which would guarantee rights to all. Today, there is increasing recognition that with the rapidly expanding force of globalization, there is no overarching authority, let alone international structures, to replace those of the nation-state.

In fact, the outsourcing of manufacturing processes, the internationalization of banking, the rise of corporations worth more than the gross national product of some nations, trade arrangements which encourage production of raw material in underdeveloped countries with no accountability for the disruption of local economies—all present the specter of a vastly diminished hopes for attaining a common good.

Pope Benedict XVI: Charity, Truth, and Justice

In his third encyclical issued in 2009, *Caritatis in Veritate*, Benedict XVI provides a way beyond the allegedly irresolvable tension of appealing for justice and the common good to both believers and those of good will. In the very first sentence, he declares,

“Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness...is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and all humanity. Love—*caritas*—is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace.... To defend the truth...to bear witness to it in life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity” (1).

In the very next section, Pope Benedict adds, “Charity is at the heart of the Church’s social doctrine” (2). Charity, he continues, is an “authentic expression of humanity...an element of fundamental importance in human relations, including those of a public nature” (3). Further, he writes, “Truth, by enabling men and women to let go of their subjective opinions...allows them to move beyond cultural and historical limitations...” (4).

Charity is at the heart of the Church’s social doctrine.

Admittedly, the pope adds, charity can be misconstrued and emptied of meaning. In the “social, juridical, cultural, political and economic fields...it is easily dismissed as irrelevant for giving direction to

moral responsibility.” For this reason, “truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the ‘economy’ of charity, but charity...needs to be understood, confirmed and practiced in the light of truth” (2).

Closely linked to truth, “charity can be recognized as an authentic expression of humanity” and “an element of fundamental importance in human relations, including those of a public nature.... Without truth, charity develops into sentimentality.... In a culture without truth, this is the fatal risk facing love...” (3).

The pope is very clear, “*Caritas in veritate* is the principle around which the Church’s social doctrine turns...and takes practical form in the criteria that govern moral action”—in particular *justice and the common good* (6). Pope Benedict writes that justice is not an addition to charity, nor an alternative or parallel path, but “it is inseparable from charity and intrinsic to it. Charity demands justice: recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples... charity transcends justice and completes it in the logic of giving and forgiving.... Charity always manifests God’s love in human relationships...it gives theological and salvific value to all commitment for justice in the world” (6).

*Without truth,
charity develops into
sentimentality...in a
culture without truth,
this is the fatal risk
facing love.*

In writing about the common good, Benedict says, “Besides the good of the individual, there is a good that is linked to living in society: the common good...the good of ‘all of us’... individuals, families, and intermediate groups who constitute society.... To desire the common good and strive toward it is a requirement of justice and charity.... Every Christian is called to practice this charity according to the degree of influence he has in civic matters...this is the institutional path...the political path—of charity.”

And Benedict adds, “In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to attain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family...the community of peoples and nations...in such a way as to shape the *earthly city* in unity and peace” (7).

At the conclusion of this long introduction, Benedict admits that “Love in truth...is a great challenge for the church in a world that is becoming progressively and pervasively globalized” and that the “risk for our time is that the *de facto* interdependence of people and nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development.”

He recognizes that the Church “does not have technical solutions to offer” but does have “a mission of truth to accomplish...for a society that is attuned to man, to his dignity, to his vocation. This mission of truth is something that the Church can never renounce. Her social doctrine is a particular dimension of this proclamation; it is a service to the truth which sets us free” (9).

Benedict admits that “an evaluation is needed of the different terms in which the problem of development is presented today,” as compared with the situation of forty years ago.” Then, in *Populorum Progresso*, Paul VI understood development to indicate “the goal of rescuing peoples, first and foremost, from hunger, deprivation, endemic diseases and illiteracy” and Benedict asks “to what extent Paul VI’s expectations have been fulfilled by the model of development” then adopted (21).

This mission of truth is something that the Church can never renounce.

But he finds that the world of Paul VI, of which he spoke in global terms, was quite different from today’s world; economic activity, political process and productivity took place within the same geographical areas; financial investments were somewhat limited in circulation outside a country (24).

Today, there are overlapping layers of development; the world’s wealth is growing but inequalities are on the increase; in rich countries, some sectors of society are succumbing to poverty and new forms of poverty are developing; in poor areas some groups enjoy a wasteful and consumerist kind of development in contrast with dehumanizing deprivation. Large multinational companies and local producers fail to respect worker rights; international aid is diverted through actions within chain of donors and beneficiaries. Rich countries try excessively to protect knowledge through assertion of right to intellectual property, especially health care (22).

But the principal new feature since Paul VI is the explosion of worldwide interdependence, commonly called globalization. It was foreseen, but the “ferocious pace at which it has evolved could not have been anticipated” and “without the guidance of charity in truth this global force could cause unprecedented damage and create new divisions within the human family.” Benedict again invokes “charity and truth” as a way of “broadening the scope of reason and making it capable of knowing and directing these powerful new forces” (33).

In the remaining sections of the encyclical, Benedict speaks of the failures in today’s economic and social scenes, noting in particular that

business management should consider not only the shareholders, but all the other “stakeholders” who contribute to the life of the business—workers, suppliers, local community—citing John Paul II’s teaching that investment has moral as well as economic significance (40).

The Call of the Blood Today

Reflecting on Benedict’s insistence that charity is the heart of the social teaching of the Church can nourish a constantly deepening spirituality of the Precious Blood. It can transform one’s grasp of the link between the Blood poured out for the sake of the many, and the expanding challenges of securing social justice for suffering persons and nations. The traumas experienced by so many today can be reminders of the cruel death of Christ and of the Gospel command to love one another “as I have loved you.” Centuries of devotion to the Blood of Christ, deepened into a rich spirituality can prompt responses of many kinds to the crises of globalization.

Centuries of devotion to the Blood of Christ, deepened into a rich spirituality, can prompt responses of many kinds to the crises of globalization.

Benedict’s response, a summons to realize that the human vocation is a transcendent one, is a challenge we have already contemplated when we have responded to our deepened grasp of the meaning of Jesus’ redemptive death and the shedding of his blood. This response is evident in a parish which fosters ministries of care, collaborative associations of believers addressing problems of housing, nutrition and education. They are demonstrations of truth and charity which can create local structures within the social fabric.

Activities like these can be seen as responses to Benedict’s words, and offer a new “translation and comprehension” of the Church’s commitment to justice and the common good. They are ways to “regenerate religiosity” by building structures of charity and truth at the local level, making it possible to begin to “come to terms with evil.”



For Reflection

- ❑ Name situations in your neighborhood or workplace that cause you to ask, “Why doesn’t someone (the city, the county, the store owner) do something about that?” Consider what steps you might take, both as an individual and with others, to learn what you might do to bring about some change.
- ❑ What are the human sufferings or needs—unemployment, neglect of the sick and elderly, prison conditions—that are most distressing to you? What steps might you take to be more informed about how problems are being addressed? How might you join or even initiate an action? The St. Vincent de Paul Society would be a good place to start.
- ❑ What activities of your diocesan Catholic Charities office encourage your participation? Are there churches of other denominations in your area whose outreach or social action you admire and might join?
- ❑ How has your understanding of Precious Blood spirituality deepened or expanded your thinking about social issues and the economic challenges of today?

Resources

BENEDICT XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009.

_____, *Light of the World*. Tr. M. J. Miller and A. J. Walker. San Francisco: St. Ignatius Press, 2010.

John Colman and William F. Ryan, eds. *Globalization and Catholic Social Thought*. Maryknoll, N.Y. Orbis Books, 2005.

Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present*. Washington, D.C. Georgetown University Press, 2002.

_____, *The Social Mission of the Church*. Washington, D.C. Georgetown University Press, 2011.

Kenneth Himes, “Globalization with a Human Face: Catholic Social Teaching and Globalization,” *Theological Studies*, 69, 2008, 269-89.

Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S., “Precious Blood Devotion and Spirituality from St. Gaspar to the Present Day,” *C.P.P.S. Heritage II*, ed. Jerome Stack, C.P.P.S. General Curia, 2006, 273-307.

How the Culture Impacts Economic Justice

by Carol Boschert, C.P.P.S.

I grew up in a four-family flat. Mom, Dad, and the four of us daughters lived in a three-room apartment—living room, kitchen and bedroom. Both my Dad and Mom worked outside the home—my Mom only after the four of us were in school. My Dad had no credit cards or bank accounts and paid all of our bills on time in cash. He did have an account at St. Cecilia's Credit Union and opened an account for each of his daughters.

Since I was the youngest of four girls, I wore a lot of hand-me-downs. Along with our friends on the block, we had a wonderful time playing outdoors, roller skating, playing ball, exploring the neighborhood, going ash-pit hunting and searching for treasures we could use in our play house. Sundays were always a special day for my family. After Mass and dinner we would load into the old car and drive off to visit relatives in other cities. Those were always special times.

I did not consider myself poor in those days because I didn't even know enough to ask the question, "What does it mean to be poor?" But I often wonder if we are better off today than we were when I was growing up fifty years ago?

With the advance in technology, we are moving forward at an alarming rate. With computers, blue rays, I-phones, and the assortment of gadgets that we have today, it seems we are losing our ability to communicate with each other face to face. It seems to me that for true communication to take place we need physical presence, with body language and facial expressions to help to express our spirits. Some believe that advances in technological communication have contributed to the separation of families and, as a result, individuals in the family look for

something to fill the emptiness caused by lack of meaningful relationships. We want more and look for things to fill in the void in our lives.

The message we receive from our culture seems to be that the more we have, the more we need, and the more material things we have, the more satisfied we will be. As people of faith, have we fallen into the same trap?

The Bottom Line

When we entered the community and vowed poverty, chastity and obedience, poverty meant having two habits at the most and asking for anything we needed (even a new toothbrush). Now, as religious life has evolved, we have our own personal budgets and as long as it isn't too exorbitant, no one questions us. We were all given a wonderful education. And thanks to that education and the hard work and foresight of the sisters who went before us, some of us can work and bring in a salary to support our aging sisters and ourselves into the future.

The bottom line is, "Where does my neighbor's poverty touch me?" Granted, technology may help me learn about poverty and disasters on the other side of the globe, but where does that touch me? It may touch some of us during Lent when we take up collections to help the needy. But how deep do I dig?

*The bottom-line is,
"Where does my
neighbor's poverty
touch me?"*

What a culture shock it was to me in the 1980s when I returned to the United States after more than seven years as a missionary in Peru. I was fortunate there were other missionaries returning at the same time and experiencing the same thing. We often gathered to support one another. We formed a group called SAMS (South American Missionary Sisters). For me it was very encouraging to know that I was not alone in what I was feeling. As I look back now, I see how much I have adapted to this first-world culture.

As we approach the 25th anniversary of the United States bishops' pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, we realize their foresight in writing that document. The bishops state, "Our faith calls us to measure the economy not only by what it produces, but also by how it undermines the dignity of the human person." They also write, "Economic life is one of the chief areas where we live out our faith, love our neighbor, confront temptation, fulfill God's creative design, and achieve our holiness."

How many decisions do I make where I am aware of how that decision affects the human dignity of other people? Or do I make the decision that is easiest for me without considering the consequences of my

decisions? How aware are our congregations of the impact our decisions have on the welfare of the poor and dispossessed of society? My C.P.P.S. community does make many generous donations in support of the poor and the needy, including allowing our sisters to work with and for the poor in Peru and Bolivia, with immigrants, and in food pantries.

Aspects of Economic Justice

Our faith and actions must touch all aspects of economic justice. Consider, for example, the devastation caused by natural disasters—the earthquakes in Haiti, Chile, New Zealand and Japan, and Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana and the Gulf Coast. Such disasters prompted many acts of self-sacrifice on behalf of the victims.

As people of faith and people of the blood of Christ, we are called to respond with hospitality when refugees flee for their lives from injustice and oppression in their homeland. How do we respond to the issues of immigration where so many people are seeking better lives for their families as they escape the devastating poverty in their homeland?

The blood of Christ calls us to confront the disparity in the U.S. economy where the wealth is in the hands of a few. How do we seek to be people of reconciliation when our national politics and policies between the two major political parties are so divided? How do we respond as individuals, congregations and corporations, and hold each other accountable so that we see how the decisions we make affect lives of the people who suffer loss of life, of health, and of human dignity because of economic policies?

Looking at the magnitude of the problems can be overwhelming, until we see the faces of those affected by the problems, especially the children. It is in realizing that these are real people who are affected by the decisions made in our name that we see the need to confront unjust economic proposals and policies.

How do we reconcile our differences? Am I involved in helping to make laws that are just and do not put more burdens on the poor? Am I actively engaged in the political process? Do I advocate for the poor, the homeless, the outcast and those who do not have access to the resources needed to live in reasonable comfort, with hope for their future? Do I support policies that protect the natural resources of the earth?

How many decisions do I make that I am aware of how that decision affects the human dignity of other people?

Response Rooted in Scripture

As people of faith, we turn to the Scriptures and prayer for guidance. Here are a few passages to ponder and pray, and a prayer from the liturgy for the Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time to conclude these reflections:

- “Do not turn away your face from anyone who is poor” (Job 4: 7).
- “Give your bread to those who are hungry and your clothes to those who are naked” (Job 4: 16).
- “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19: 18).
- “Do not say, ‘I am self sufficient.’ Do not be carried away by greed and violence” (Sirach 5: 1-2).
- “You have been told what is good and what God requires of you: to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6: 8).
- “If you give something to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Matthew 6: 3).
- “Set your heart on the kingdom and the justice of God and all these things will be given to you” (Matthew 6: 33).
- “One should regard us as...stewards of the mysteries of God” (I Corinthians 4: 1).

The blood of Christ calls us to confront the disparity in the U.S. economy where the wealth is in the hands of a few.

*God in heaven,
the perfection of justice is found in your love
and all humankind is in need of your law.
Help us to find this love in each other
that justice may be attained.*



For Reflection

- How can I make a difference in the economic system in the U.S.?
- How do the works of mercy (sharing our bread with the hungry, clothing the naked, etc.) call us to economic justice?
- Imagine what the world would look like if there were an equal distribution of the goods of the earth?

Promoting Fair Trade

by Marcia Kruse, A.S.C.

The night was cool, but it would soon be steamy hot and humid in this Central American capitol. I lit the little gas burner to heat the tea kettle, shook a few crystals of Nestle's instant coffee into a thick ceramic mug, buttered a hard roll, and reached for a tree-ripened banana. The pot whistled and I poured hot water over the brown coffee crystals, stirred in powdered cream, sat down for breakfast at the wooden kitchen table in the tiny two-room house the Sandinistas had built after the revolution. I was eager to read *La Prensa*, the Nicaraguan daily newspaper. It was Tuesday, July 12, 2001, in a poor barrio of Managua, Nicaragua, where I had been staying with a C.S.J. friend of mine.

The headlines jumped out at me: "Huyen del Hambre" — "Hungry Families Take Refuge in Town Park." By Wednesday, 160 families had moved into the small northern coffee town of Matagalpa. On Thursday, 90 more came. They were camping in the park, tired, hungry, malnourished, dehydrated and sick. Lean, gaunt, desperate mothers held their little children suffering from malnutrition and diarrhea. They had come from the coffee farms. The workers had not been paid for four months due to the crash of the coffee market. Women were asking for work in Matagalpa, even if they could only be paid in foodstuffs. Men looked exasperated, thin and angry. The pictures were shocking.

That experience in Nicaragua in 2001 shook me to the bone. I saw the poverty that made Nicaragua the second poorest country in the hemisphere. My coffee crystals turned to bitter grounds. I set my cup down as my heart wrenched. Then I did some investigation.

Farmers have always been on a precarious footing because of the volatile world market. Prices fluctuate with the rise and fall of market demand. Sun grown coffee plantations in Vietnam flooded the market with cheap coffee. Central American farmers could not compete and

prices plummeted. They were receiving 15 to 16 cents per pound, not a living wage.

Fair Trade importers are committed to paying a living wage to the farmers—\$1.26 per pound—regardless of the world market price. Fair Trade provides the farmers with credit at low rates, technical assistance, training in organic farming and improvement of processing methods, as it works with democratic farmer cooperatives.

Fair Trade importers are committed to paying a living wage to the farmers.

Through Fair Trade co-ops, farmers are able to feed and clothe their families, send their children to school and build community projects such as schools and health care clinics. Farmers deal through the cooperative, directly with the distributor, thus eliminating the middle man. The company's inspectors insure that quality gourmet coffee is traded. Fair Trade is not charity; it is good business. It pays a just wage for a good product.

Fair Trade helps not only farmers but also the environment, since the coffee is grown organically, without pesticides and harmful chemicals. It is grown under the shade of the forest canopy. This results in better soil conservation and reduced pollution of streams and groundwater, while preserving the songbird habitat of the trees above the coffee plants. Not only coffee, but tea—green and black—hot chocolate mix, baking cocoa and chocolate bars gleaned from all over the world are distributed by companies with the Fair Trade logo.

I presented this information, along with samples of the gourmet coffee, to the faculty and students at Gibault High School in Waterloo, IL where I teach. The International Club members and my Spanish students were eager to help the small farmers of Central America. I have the students research the plight of the small farmer in the Americas. They learn to distinguish between Free Trade treaties, such as NAFTA and CAFTA, and Fair Trade. Every year we set up a Fair Trade booth at Open House and other occasions, offering samples of brewed coffee along with various home-made international cookies and cakes, in front of a display explaining the plight of farmers and the benefits of purchasing products with the Fair Trade label. Students bring the food, set up and staff the booth, explain the project and sell the products. For us, it is a justice issue.

Many churches and faith organizations are promoting Fair Trade by serving fairly traded products at their meetings and selling them for fundraisers. Equal Exchange's Interfaith Program works in partnership with communities of faith and faith-based organizations around the country to make a difference in the lives of small farmers.

The Precious Blood Family can help improve the lives of those who are struggling. We can help build their economy so they don't have to leave their homes and migrate to the North. We can do this by buying and promoting Fair Trade products.



For Reflection

- How can religious communities and families on a limited budget find a way to buy Fair Trade products?
- Fair Trade co-ops help people earn a living and improve their lives without leaving home. What can we do locally to broaden their markets? What else would help them not to have to migrate to a foreign land?
- NAFTA AND CAFTA have not brought relief or success to the small farmer. Still, our lawmakers are considering Free Trade Agreements with other Latin American countries. Who benefits? What do they know that we don't? What do we know that they don't? How can we be informed? How can we inform them?

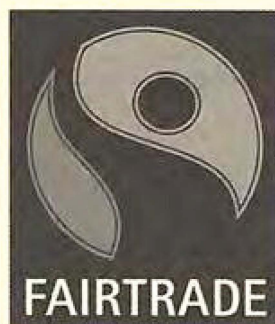
Fair Trade helps not only farmers, but also the environment since the coffee is grown organically, without pesticides and harmful chemicals.

For Further Information

www.globalexchange.org

www.equalexchange.com

www.equalexchange.com/interfaith



This article is adapted from an article Sister Marcia wrote originally for the Adorers of the Blood of Christ that appeared in their publication, *Call to Justice* (July 2006).

Balancing Mission and Sustainability

by Alphonse Spilly, C.P.P.S.

Calumet College of St. Joseph celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, an opportunity to look back at its past and forward to its future. This is also a time of transition in leadership at the school with the retirement of its Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the past twenty-five years and that of its President for the past twenty-four years. This article traces efforts to remain true to the College's mission in the face of ever-changing challenges, especially those of a fiscal nature, with an emphasis on the current situation.

Beginnings (1951-1967)

In 1951, St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana, opened an Extension Service in the Calumet Region, offering classes in borrowed classrooms in Whiting and Hammond, Indiana. The initiative was due, in part, to the advocacy of Precious Blood Father John Lefko, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in Whiting. Lefko, who grew up in poverty on the Lower East Side of New York, was a firm believer throughout his life in higher education as key to a person's moving out of poverty. In 1951, there was no higher learning provider in the Calumet Region, and the Catholic population, many of Eastern European background, worked in industry and could not afford a traditional college education living in dormitories on a campus for four years.

At the time there was ample employment in the area, and the lower middle class workers, with strong labor unions, were earning decent wages. Standard Oil of Indiana in Whiting employed 10,000 workers during the 1950s. Steel mills in South Chicago, East Chicago and Gary included Inland Steel, the largest in the nation. The Calumet Region in 1951 was one of the most productive industrial regions in the world.

Calumet College, as it was affectionately called, offered a two-year college education to “first generation” students; that is, those who were the first in their families to attend college. In 1961, the program was extended to a full four-year program and moved to downtown East Chicago, Indiana, where it was housed in donated or acquired buildings. Many of the classes met in the evenings or on weekends so that students could attend classes while working full-time jobs.

Growing Pains (1967-1975)

In June 1967, Father Lefko was appointed the first President of Calumet College. He discovered his first week that the College was about to lose its accreditation because of its poor financial condition. He and the Board of Trustees began work immediately to shore up the fiscal base of the institution, working tirelessly to raise money to supplement the college’s tuition-driven budgets. He made friends with many leaders of industry, including John Swearingen, the CEO of Amoco (formerly Standard Oil). While these efforts were successful to some extent, the College had no endowment and was essentially tuition-dependent. Moreover, it had to keep tuition low enough in order to be affordable to the students targeted by its mission.

Calumet College, as it was affectionately called, offered a two-year college education to “first generation” students; that is, those who were the first in their families to attend college.

In 1971, the college’s name was changed to St. Joseph Calumet College (SJCC) in order to recover a sense of its Catholic identity while distinguishing it from its mother institution. Meanwhile, competition had developed from two state institutions in the area: Purdue University Calumet (in Hammond) and Indiana University Northwest (in Gary), both of which were considerably larger than SJCC and much more affordable to cost-conscious students. Nevertheless, the Catholic dimension of the curriculum continued to attract students to SJCC, especially older students and those who had some college experience and entered degree completion programs at SJCC while continuing to work full-time.

Significant Challenges (1975-1987)

In 1975, when the Amoco refinery moved its administrative offices to the Chicago Loop and its research facilities to Naperville, Illinois, with John

Swearingen's support, the College moved to the 256 acre former Amoco campus in Hammond (with a Whiting post office address). Most of the twenty-three buildings were of no immediate use to the college, and these were sold or leased to small industries. The property included a woods and George Lake. The College retained the two largest buildings but found it difficult to heat and maintain them. Because the local C.P.P.S. community decided that it would be too expensive to build a residence for its members there, they set up a residence park of mobile homes on the property at a much reduced cost.

Lefko retired that same year but stayed on at the College for another twenty years as President Emeritus, helping in its development efforts. (He was succeeded as President in turn by Fathers James McCabe, Louis Osterhage, and Ronald Schiml during the next twelve years.) Lefko

Lefko had been very reluctant to move to the larger, unified campus because he foresaw the additional financial burdens it would entail.

had been very reluctant to move to the larger, unified campus because he foresaw the additional financial burdens it would entail. For example, it took \$2 million to retrofit the main building for college functions. Local citizens strongly resisted efforts by the College to raise revenue by sand mining George Lake or turning it into a sanitary landfill with a golf course atop it.

Eventually the College sold the woods and George Lake to a developer for \$1.2 million; he later sold it to the City of Hammond for about \$3 million. Years later the City invested over \$40 million in reclaiming the wetlands area of the lake, remediating the slag heap, and building a championship golf course and a clubhouse inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright.

During this period the College administration often struggled simply to make each payroll. Enrollment fell from a high of 1700 to under 800, and the College was offering more two-year Associate Degrees than four-year Baccalaureate Degrees. It had the reputation of being an "old folks" school because it did not have many traditional-aged students. By 1987, the college was \$3 million in debt and on the brink of having to close.

Years of Rebuilding (1987-2011)

In 1987, Mr. Thomas Katsahnias, the former manager of Inland Steel Corporation and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, brought on board Dr. Dennis Rittenmeyer, a Presbyterian, to serve as the College's first lay President. Dr. Rittenmeyer's first challenges were to re-negotiate the debt owed to local banks and to reverse the downward trends in student

population and programs. After tireless negotiations, local banks forgave much of the debt. Rittenmeyer took out a personal loan of quarter of a million dollars to cover expenses including faculty salaries. The College initiated an athletic program in 2001 in order to attract traditional-aged students. Two capital campaigns raised more than \$12 million. The name of the college was changed to Calumet College of St. Joseph, and the College built its first building, a student activities center/gymnasium, in 2010.

Before examining how these efforts turned things around, it is important to note significant changes to the economy of the Calumet Region during the past half century. Employment opportunities in the area

Employment opportunities in the area are dramatically different today.

are dramatically different today. Both US Steel South Works and Wisconsin Steel in South Chicago closed decades ago. Some of the newer steel mills are located east of Gary in Porter County. BP (the successor to Amoco) now has

only about 800 workers even though it is one of the largest refineries in the nation. The BP refinery is undergoing a \$3.8 billion upgrade in order to be able to handle “sour crude” in addition to “sweet crude,” the former coming from the tar sands of Alberta. While there are more than 2,000 contractors working on the project, and the “skyline” of the refinery seen from the College changes nearly monthly, the new production will only add fewer than one hundred new jobs. Today, the primary employers (after the steel mills) are health care and casinos. This has an impact directly and indirectly on a small Catholic college—directly, on our targeted student population who seek employment in the area; indirectly, on potential fund-raising sources for our development efforts.

While we have about 9,000 graduates, about 80% of whom continue to live in the Calumet Region, for the most part they are not particularly wealthy and are not a major source of fund-raising revenue for the College at present. Moreover, many of the local major industries, such as BP and Arcelor-Mittal, now have foreign owners. These companies no longer have close ties with the College even though someone from each of them sits on our Board of Trustees. While BP continues to be a generous benefactor, the largest donor in recent years has been the Horseshoe Casino in Hammond.

The CCSJ student population has nearly doubled to about 1300 today. Our athletic program now has eighteen sports, and athletes now make up about half of our full-time student population. Our College continues to serve primarily first-generation students; they tend to come from the urban core of the Region, and nearly all qualify for some kind

of student aid. For the past eight years *U.S. News & World Report* has identified CCSJ as having the most diverse student body of all institutions of higher learning in the Midwest. We are currently about 27% African American and 24% Hispanic. About half of the student body is Catholic.

Through the years the College has had increased competition from Purdue University Calumet (PUC), Indiana University Northwest (IUN), and Indiana Wesleyan. Until recently, Indiana lacked a community college system. However, Ivy Tech now has several campuses in our area and offers associate degrees. We have articulation arrangements with Ivy Tech, recognizing the credits students earn in their two years there toward a baccalaureate degree at our institution. PUC, IUN, and Wesleyan now offer several degree completion programs that compete with ours, and our enrollment in these programs has suffered as a result.

Today, the primary employers (after the steel mills) are health care and casinos.

Today, CCSJ awards very few associate degrees. While the student bodies of the two public schools (PUC and IUN) are significantly larger than ours, we graduate proportionately more students each year, in part to degree completion and other programs that favor transfer students and increasingly due to our graduate programs. We now have four fully accredited master's degrees: in public safety (law enforcement), education, quality assurance (business), and psychology. Additional graduate programs are on the drawing board.

While our tuition is the lowest of any private college in Indiana, it is still an obstacle for many. We currently have no debt, but our endowment is also quite modest (about \$5 million). There is constant attention given to balancing our mission and sustainability—the business requirements of maintaining an institutional of higher learning. Currently this is being done through strategic positioning and planning in accord with the competitive environment in which we find ourselves. Our key competitors have raised their admissions standards. Our strategic position and our long history of serving at-risk and underprepared students fold nicely into our mission of serving precisely this kind of student.

Maintaining the Mission; Striving for Sustainability

All levels of the school are responsible for maintaining the mission while striving for sustainability. In May 2010, at the request of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, the CEO of an executive search firm spent a full day on campus interviewing a cross section of College

personnel as a first step in a presidential search process. At the conclusion of the interviews he reported that in his twenty years' experience he had never before encountered a group in which *everyone* was on the same page about the mission of the school. There is great consensus and commitment to the mission which derives from that of the sponsoring community, the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Because of the College's mission and improved but always challenging financial situation, our salary scales for faculty, administration, and staff are not highly competitive with other like institutions. (This is generally true of Catholic

educational institutions.) There is, however, a great sense of ownership of the mission: many of our faculty, administration, and staff are also alums of the school. At the same time, our employee benefits are quite good. Three years ago, the Board of Trustees asked for a study

of our benefits, comparing us with nine similar-sized institutions. We found that, in general, we offer better health and retirement benefits than others in the study.

Our mission involves many challenges regarding our targeted student population. Many of our students come ill-prepared for college work. Moreover, first-generation students experience less family support in some cases, and less *effective* family support in others, than their peers. Further, minority status is identified as a risk factor in the literature pertaining to retention and persistence to graduation. Our data and experience confirm this.

With respect to academic readiness and achievement, much of our work in recent years has focused on our freshmen and sophomores, and this for three reasons. First, the success of our at-risk and underprepared undergraduates lies at the heart of our mission. Second, our degree-completion and graduate programs reflect a cohort design tailored to the needs of older adults. Our retention and persistence to graduation rates in these programs are remarkably high. Third, our own analyses strongly suggest that if we can keep our students on track through their freshman year, they have a good chance of succeeding. To this end, we bring our general education faculty and our student services staff together to work as a team in our CORE (Centering on Retention and Enrollment) Initiative.

Through the CORE Initiative we have strengthened our general education requirements, carefully sequenced the general education courses,

For the past eight years U.S. News & World Report has identified CCSJ as having the most diverse student body of all institutions of higher learning in the Midwest.

introduced learning communities for most freshmen, and expanded our mentoring and tutoring programs (services that are offered free to students). We identify new students' needs in the admissions process as

While our tuition is the lowest of any private college in Indiana, it is still an obstacle for many.

well as in testing during Orientation Week before classes start. Those needing remedial work are assigned to remedial courses, receive tutoring, and are closely monitored. In learning communities most freshmen take courses over two semesters with the same twenty or so

students. Their teachers and mentors meet regularly to track the progress of each student, and early intervention strategies are used.

At the same time about one quarter of our students are above average, and we have discovered that we are losing them at a higher rate than other students. Accordingly, we have just approved an Honors Program to offer students who test high upon admission.

The vast majority of students enrolled in our degree-completion and graduate programs are working adults, and some (notably police officers enrolled in our Public Safety Management and Public Safety Administration Programs) are able to draw on tuition-reimbursement benefits provided by their employers. In contrast, few of the students who enroll in our *traditional* programs hold high paying professional or skilled positions, even though many work. Moreover, many of these students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Few are in a position to finance the cost of their education on their own. In a given semester between 90% and 98% of these students receive some form of financial aid and/or loans. Immigrant undocumented students do not qualify for state or federal aid, but the College offers them financial assistance on its own.

Commitment to Social Justice

An essential part of the mission of the school is its commitment to social justice. For the past ten years every student must take an introductory class on Catholic social teaching in his or her first semester at the College. The course includes a ten-hour service learning component. Social justice also runs as a thread throughout the curriculum.

While many of our students struggle to balance college work with family and job responsibilities, and most face serious economic challenges, our programs and student co-curricular programs also stress volunteerism and offer outreach opportunities. There are also efforts that engage the entire college community in these efforts. For example, CCSJ personnel

who want to wear jeans to work on Fridays pay a \$2 fee that is periodically donated to the Whiting-Robertsdale food pantry. Since the program began in April 2009, we have contributed nearly \$7,000 to the pantry. Regular collections of materials are done for a local soup kitchen, a shelter for battered women, and a facility for unwed mothers. We also help support a Whiting Middle School after-school program, a literacy and computer literacy program in a Pentecostal church in Gary, and the Hammond Adult Education program.

An essential part of the mission of the school is its commitment to social justice.

Each year in May the “We Are Family” Guatemala Project sends a CCSJ group to the C.P.P.S. missions in Guatemala for a week, taking along supplies of crayons and pencils, toothpaste and toothbrushes, vitamins and aspirins for the La Labor community there under the leadership of Precious Blood Father Bill Beuth. The group also works on a project to improve the quality of life of that community in some way. These efforts led to the development of a computer lab for children and a sewing machine workplace for women of the village. Last Christmas the sewing machines were stolen, and funds have now been raised in the U.S. to replace them.

For the past eight years a social justice committee has been an engine that helps drive the social justice mission of the school. It includes the President, two of the five Vice-Presidents, members of the local C.P.P.S. community, faculty and staff.

The group meets every two weeks for one and a half hours. Its objectives are fourfold: to disseminate Catholic social teaching, to advocate on behalf of social justice, to convene people of good will on social justice matters, and to take direct action. It keeps track of social justice issues within the school, in the broader community and in the world.



Serving in Guatemala

This past year its focus has been on the need for comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration policy which affects some of our graduates, many of our current students, and our prospective students.

The new leadership on the Board of Trustees and in the Presidency of the institution is fully committed to the College’s enduring mission

even as they continue to strive to keep the enterprise solvent and growing. Without changing our name despite our growing graduate programs, we now refer to ourselves as “Your University of Choice!” The next five to ten years will be exciting and challenging, but the commitment and creativity are already in place to help ensure success.



For Reflection

- Why is it important to define one’s personal or corporate mission clearly?
- In the last decade what challenges have you encountered in trying to balance mission with sustainability?
- What do you (and your colleagues) need to do in order to clarify mission and balance it with sustainability in a rapidly changing world?