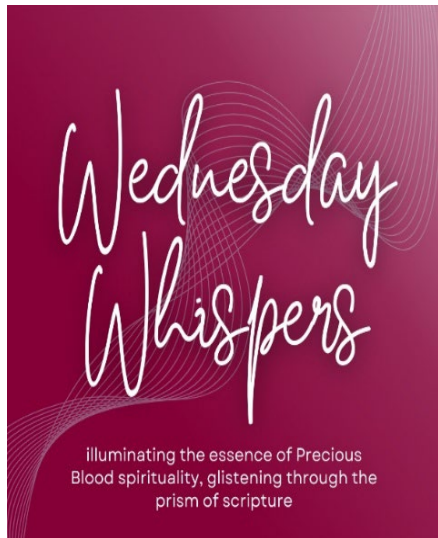




A weekly reflection by members
of the Precious Blood Community

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Sonja Bontrager

“You impose on people burdens hard to carry, but you
yourselves do not lift one finger to touch them.”
(Luke 11:46)



These are not whispers or a still, small voice. Here, Jesus and Paul are direct and fierce toward persons and religious systems that ignore and oppress the poor.

Current events and realities do not suggest whispering times, and perhaps it has always been so. Jesus chastises the prominent ones who look clean on the outside, make a show of meticulous adherence, but fail at the most important, to love the Lord their God with heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love their neighbor as themselves.

Our treasured-by-God neighbors carry the oppressive burdens that some in power do not lift a finger to remedy. Our beloved neighbors are criminalized, persecuted, terrorized, arrested, zip-tied, and violently displaced from their ancient homes. They are bombed, starved, poisoned, tortured, and separated from their children to be indoctrinated in the ways of empire. This empire cuts their hair and profits from it all while dancing and parading with religious nationalism.

Paul’s “Judge not lest you be judged” gets quoted to shut down this sort of criticism, and a modicum of humility about my own failings and fear of self-righteousness can

paralyze me from speaking out about injustices. Did I just do exactly what Paul told us not to do? Have I failed to listen and act to make things better? Do I make or perpetuate systems and rules that crush others under their weight, while celebrating advantaged winners within those systems? Do I honor human dignity? Have I forgotten to love the Lord with all my heart, mind, and strength and to love my neighbor as myself? *Por mi culpa, por mi culpa, por mi gran culpa.*

Confessing early in mass and asking for mercy prepares us for the personal and collective healing to come, but it is the horror of realizing what we have done to Jesus in our neighbors that makes us fall to the ground, to the heart of earth, to wait for the healing word.

I am new to this space. I pray that in this community I can better love our neighbors and find wisdom, forgiveness for shortcomings, and a chance to be useful toward healing our world. Thank you for your welcome.

Lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of God's mercy.

Sonja Bontrager is a new Associate with the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. To learn more about the Associates of, [click here](#).

This weekly reflection is made available to everyone in our Precious Blood family. Feel free to share it with others. If you would like to write one of these reflections occasionally, or to learn more about Precious Blood Spirituality, visit our website: pbspiritualityinstitute.org.