



A weekly reflection by members
of the Precious Blood Community

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Eileen Givens

“Stretch out your hands.” (Mark 3:5)

Moving from New Jersey to Florida thirty-seven years ago, God’s grace landed me at St. Andrew Catholic Church, which at that time was run by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. My family was blessed to be part of a culturally diverse congregation which is still my parish today. After all these years, the rich diversity of this community continues to flourish.

This past Monday our nation celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Today’s gospel is related to the work that he was trying to accomplish. There is a Sabbath healing controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus’ actions show us that human compassion must come first, even if it breaks a Jewish law. Martin Luther King, Jr. stood for this same compassion in his actions in life. He wanted people to consider how to live out Scripture’s values of love, justice, freedom, and unity in our own communities.

Our parish is looking forward to our annual International Festival in February celebrating the diverse cultures and traditions of many different countries from around the world. It is a full weekend of sharing food, music, customs, and culminates in a beautiful multilingual liturgy. The celebration of the diverse cultures helps us to learn about each other and accept one another as brothers and sisters in Christ without judgement. We have learned that when we come to know the things that unite us, we can more easily be the compassion of Christ to one another.

Wouldn’t it be a beautiful miracle if individuals from all countries could get together and unify as one with acceptance and love for one another instead of hatred and war? This was Martin Luther King, Jr.’s vision of the beloved community. May we all seek to see Christ in the stranger. May we all accept one another with compassion, and without discrimination.

Eileen Givens is a Companion (lay associate) with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. She currently serves as the Director of the Movement. To learn more about Companions, [click here](#).

This weekly reflection is made available to all who are part of our Precious Blood family. Feel free to share it with others. Would you be willing to write a reflection? If so, please contact Vicky Otto at votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org