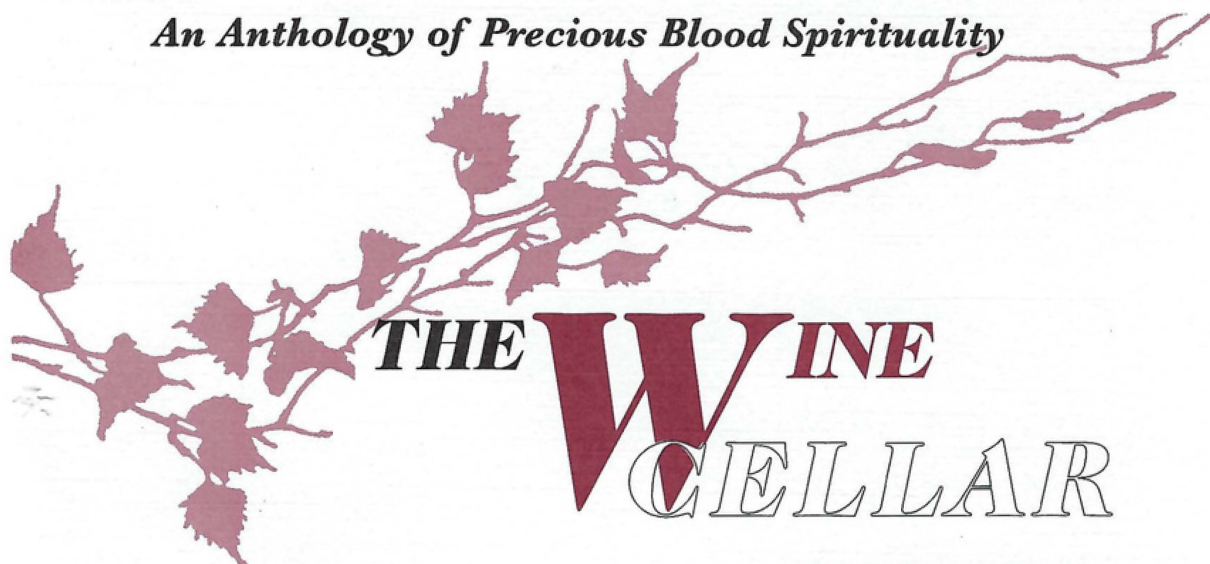


An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality



THE WINE
CELLAR

Fall 2002 • Number 13



*Mutuality
in
Ministry*

*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

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Published by the Kansas City Province

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

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

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Wine Openers

By Joseph Nassal, CPPS



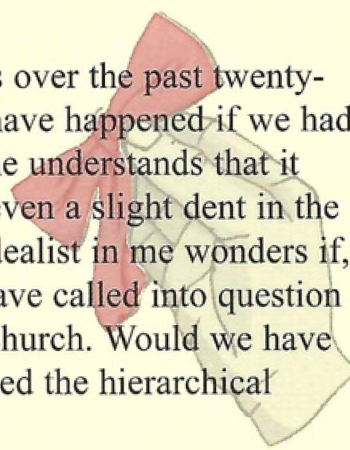
Trying to Understand

Moving back to Chicago to work with the team developing a Precious Blood Reconciliation Ministry has brought back many memories of the four years I lived here and studied at Catholic Theological Union before my ordination in 1982. One of the most memorable moments serves as a touchstone in shaping my understanding of the theme of this issue of *The Wine Cellar*.

In April 1981, at the deacon ordination at Saint Thomas the Apostle Church in Hyde Park, the men from various religious communities being ordained wore a blue ribbon on our albs to show our support and solidarity with the women in our class. As I recall, this was a tradition at CTU, as we knew our female classmates felt as called to ordained ministry as we did but were denied because of their gender. At past diaconate ordinations, the women in the class would stand in silent witness after each of their male classmates was called forth to be ordained. After each of us was called forth and replied, "I am ready and willing," the women in our class stood. But this time, much to the surprise and chagrin of the presiding bishop, these women were not silent. One by one, scattered throughout the church, the women in our class voiced their willingness and readiness for ordination.

The bishop was so flustered and angry that he started to walk off the altar. The president of the school persuaded him to stay. But before he would continue with the ordination, the bishop demanded that we remove the blue ribbons from our albs.

In reflecting on that experience many times over the past twenty-one years, I have often wondered what would have happened if we had refused to take off our ribbons. The realist in me understands that it would not have made much of a difference or even a slight dent in the armor of the official church position. But the idealist in me wonders if, by refusing to remove our ribbons, we might have called into question more clearly the issue of gender justice in the church. Would we have moved the conversation along or simply hastened the hierarchical



declaration of silence about the issue? It was a question of integrity for me then and remains even more one for me today.

In living out the call to discipleship in an institution that holds as its doctrine seven sacraments for men and six for women, mutuality in ministry raises

questions of integrity and authenticity. But this issue of *The Wine Cellar* is not so much about the ordination of women as it is

about the *subordination* of women in the church and how precious blood spirituality offers us avenues to help us arrive at more common ground around this issue of mutuality.

In reflecting on these questions of integrity, inclusion, and equality, I found this quote from Sherri Reynolds helpful in understanding our differences:

The spirituality of the precious blood invites us to see and trace these scars that are visible on the body of Christ, the Church.

*We put our truth together in pieces,
but you use nails and I use glue.
You mend with staples. I mend with screws.
You stitch what I would bandage.
Your truth may not look like mine,
but this is not what matters.
What matters is this:
you can look at a scar and see hurt
or you can look at a scar and see healing.
Try to understand.*

The spirituality of the precious blood invites us to see and trace these scars that are visible on the body of Christ, the Church. As we explore mutuality in ministry from the perspective of the blood of Christ, we see these scars caused by the subordination of women and seek to understand the hurt and the need for healing. Our contributors to this issue of *The Wine Cellar* name clearly the pain but also embrace the promise and the hope that mutuality in ministry reflects.

Christine Schenk offers an excellent summary of the latest biblical scholarship about mutuality as found in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. She then argues persuasively about why gender is a justice issue and offers some practical suggestions for making mutuality more of a reality in our parishes, communities, and place of ministry.

Meg Kopish shares four important lessons she has learned about collaboration in her more than thirty years of ministry, including her many years in community leadership. Meg reminds us that mutuality “like the paschal mystery, does not come cheaply or without pain.”

Donna Liette and Denny Kinderman have more than fifteen years of working together in giving retreats and preparing various prayer experiences. They draw upon their years of collaborating and familiar scripture passages to underscore the centrality of precious blood spirituality in practicing mutuality in ministry.

Mary Whited and Daryl Charron each offer their personal perspectives on the meaning of mutuality in their ministry. Mary shares a powerful dream of “losing my voice” and offers valuable insights on how precious blood people might raise a prophetic voice of reconciliation within the church and society. Daryl traces the formative moments in his life that awakened him to the reality of mutuality.

As I read through these challenging reflections, I recalled something writer Tim Unsworth wrote in *National Catholic Reporter* when his sister Ginny died. In reflecting on Ginny’s life - she was a Sister of Charity - and on the contributions made by religious women and men in the renewal of the church, Unsworth noted, “Religious women brought far more positive changes than the men, because male clergy understood power while religious women understood love.” Mutuality in ministry means we are ready and willing to try to understand one another - regardless of which planet we’re from in John Gray’s famous schema - while always relying on the power of love instead of the power to control.

I still believe it was the power of love that moved those who were told to be silent to find their voices and name their truth one Saturday morning in April 1981. May we also be “ready and willing” to be ministers of reconciliation in the church and in the world where for many equality remains a distant dream.

May we all “try to understand.”



A Journey in Mutuality: Building upon the Unity that is our Birthright

By Christine Schenk, CSJ

I am grateful for the opportunity to write about one of my favorite subjects: the biblical witness about what I believe to be God's original design for humanity - mutuality between women and men. This is an especially timely topic given present day gender conflicts in world societies and faith traditions. In this article I will discuss some findings from contemporary biblical scholarship about mutuality in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. I will share my belief that working for greater mutuality in our churches is a justice issue. Finally I have some practical suggestions for helping that mutuality become a reality in the Roman Catholic communion.

Mutuality in the Hebrew Scriptures

At first blush it may seem ridiculous to think we can find evidence of mutual roles for women in the Hebrew Scriptures. There are 1426 names in the Hebrew bible, of these 1315 are men's names and only 111 are the names of women, or nine percent of the total. All authors identified by name are male. These two facts alone signal the male centered concerns of the Hebrew texts. The focus of ancient Israel's story is on the history and important happenings in the life of the people. These people were, in the main, led by men: kings, priests, prophets, warriors and wise ones.

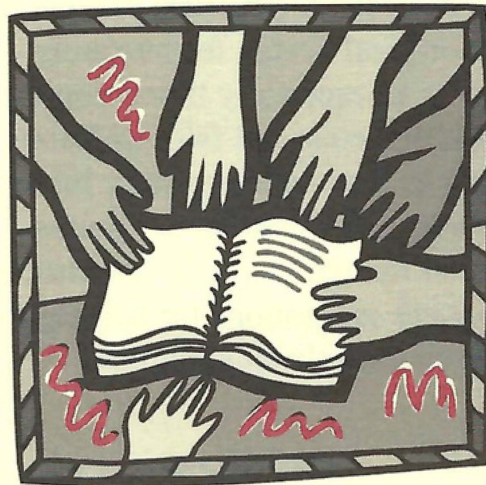
All historic periods in the Hebrew Scriptures were highly patriarchal. Laws governing communal life gave no legal rights to women who were essentially the property of their husbands or their fathers. One need only read the Biblical account of Ruth and Naomi to understand that women could not survive outside the patriarchal system (Ruth 1,8-14). Women's identities were derivative from their men folk, which is one reason we find so few women named in the scriptures.

Obviously, this is not what we would constitute a mutual society in today's understanding, because to be mutual, both parties must be equal.

This being said, recent archaeological and ethnographic evidence attests that neither the narratives nor legal prescriptions in the Hebrew scriptures necessarily describe the lived experience of the people, particularly in matters of gender. Carol Meyers believes that "women probably had control over many important aspects of their life experiences even though scripture would lead us to believe otherwise." Perhaps for this reason we do find stories of strong Hebrew women leaders such as Judith, Miriam, Esther and Huldah.

While admitting the highly patriarchal context of ancient Israel, there are tantalizing traces of a different orientation in the Genesis creation accounts. Though often used as proof texts for women's subordination, contemporary scholars now find evidence for mutuality instead. Foremost among these is Phyllis Tribble in her groundbreaking book: *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*.

In Genesis 1,26 we read:
"God said, 'Let us make man (*ha adam*) in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth.' God created man (*ha adam*) in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them."



According to Tribble, the word for man (*ha adam*) is more appropriately translated "earth creature" or "humankind." This is because the word is plural in the original Hebrew and because there is as yet no differentiation into male and female. The very first story of creation then, points to our mutuality in God, in whose image both women and men are made. Tribble also notes that by including both singular and plural pronouns for God ("let us," "our own image," and "in the image of himself") as well as male and female images for God, the text witnesses to the ultimate mystery of God.

Since human beings are either male or female and (except for rare anomalies of birth) no one is both male and female, it seems clear that by imaging humankind (*ha adam*) as made in God's image - male and female - the scripture writer preserves the Divine Mystery even while

identifying the linkage of *ha adam* (the “earth creature”/humankind) to the divine. It is not incorrect to say that if God is imaged solely in male metaphor, God is incompletely imaged. Likewise, if God is imaged solely in female metaphor, God is incompletely imaged. The Divine Mystery is more fully revealed when both women and men image God. To take this one step further, it could be said that God is more fully imaged in the mutuality of our witness, both male and female.

Unfortunately, we rarely image God in female metaphor. One of the more fruitful areas of theological reflection in our era is discovering the divine feminine. For an excellent treatment of this fascinating topic, read Elizabeth Johnson’s groundbreaking book, *She Who Is*.

Genesis 2-3 tells us that woman was created out of Adam’s rib to be his helpmate. As in Genesis 1,26, the original being is called *ha adam* (earth creature) and is not identified sexually. Sexual differentiation occurs only after the woman (“*issa*” in Hebrew) is created. Now man is subsequently identified not as *ha adam* (earth creature) but as “*is*” (man). There is no giving of dominion as in preceding verses in which *ha adam* names various creatures and plants. Instead we have a pun, or play upon words. In Tribble’s view differentiation requires neither derivation nor subordination because as the text says: as *issa* is taken from *is*, so *ha adam* (earth creature) is taken from *ha dama* (earth). Tribble explains:

*God is more fully
imaged in the
mutuality of our
witness,
both male and
female.*

Woman is not derived from man, even as the earth creature is not derived from the earth. For both of them, life originates with God. Dust of the earth and rib of the earth creature are but raw materials for God’s creative activity. Truly, neither woman nor man is an autonomous creature; both owe their origin to divine mystery. Differentiation from the earth, on the one hand, and from the earth creature on the other, implies neither derivation from them nor subordination to them.

Woman is not made of earth like man but from *ha adam* (earth creature). Man (*is*) wasn’t created until differentiation occurs (*issa*-woman) and therefore both are equal. The relationship of the first couple then is one of mutuality and equality.

Mutuality in the Christian Scriptures

One could well ask how there can be mutuality in the Christian Scriptures since it is true women were subordinate to men in the New Testament period, perhaps even more so than in some earlier historic periods of ancient Israel. While it is true that social and political leadership roles were not open to women, it does not follow that there were not instances of mutual behavior between the genders even though societal structures discouraged it. As it happens, and I believe owing directly to the practice of Jesus, there are examples of mutuality in the Gospel writings, Paul's letters and the book of Acts.

Jesus' behavior with women was markedly counter-cultural given the norms of Palestinian Judaism. Palestinian Hebrew women were among the poorest in the world in Jesus' day. This was probably because unlike their counterparts in Egypt, Greece and Rome they had no inheritance rights and could be divorced for the flimsiest of reasons. In a culture in which women did not survive unless they were linked to the patriarchal household, it was disastrous to be divorced. Seen in this light, Jesus' proscription of divorce is markedly protective of women.

Jesus' behavior with women was markedly counter-cultural given the norms of Palestinian Judaism.

Take a moment and imagine yourself a woman in first century Palestine:

1. You are not permitted to speak to men in public. You belong to your father's household or your husband's after your father arranges your marriage before age 12. If you speak to a man in public it could be construed as infringing on your husband's or father's property rights. If you are raped, your father's household receives much less in bride price (you are damaged goods), and worse, you run the risk of being stoned as an adulterer.
2. You are not educated because only men are permitted to proclaim Torah, the main reason for learning to read.
3. You are not permitted to be a legal witness in court.
4. Your husband may divorce you even for something as trivial as burning the dinner (Rabbi Hillel) but you are not permitted to divorce your husband for any reason.

5. While technically you may inherit land, your husband has control over its use and its fruits.

6. When you become a woman and your menses appear you start a whole new way of life in which you cannot touch or be touched because those who touch you become ritually unclean. For a man this means he must bathe seven times before he can offer sacrifice at the Temple. You cannot touch household items because they too become unclean for all who would use them. When you have a child you are unclean for 40 days after the child is born if it is a boy, and 60 days if it is a girl. You do not go to synagogue when you have your monthly cycle. Women are not permitted to proclaim Torah at synagogue because one never knows when they will be unclean.

Considering what we have just described as women's social context, Jesus behavior with them is remarkable, even viewed through the unavoidably androcentric lens of the Gospels. Far from refusing to speak with women in public, Jesus welcomes them into his closest discipleship: *"After this he journeyed through towns and villages preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve accompanied him, and also some women.... Mary called the Magdalene, . . . Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who were assisting them out of their means."* (Luke 8,1-5) The clear implication in this text is that unlike our mental model of Jesus and twelve men preaching and healing throughout Galilee, Jesus also welcomed women disciples into his entourage to learn the ways of God. Some of these female disciples were well to do, and the text implies that they helped to fund the Galilean mission.

Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus challenge deep seated patriarchal assumptions:

that only women bear the burden of sexual sin; that Samaritan and Canaanite women are to be shunned and discounted; and that prodigal sons are to be disowned. Instead, men are challenged to own their complicity in adultery; the Samaritan woman becomes a missionary bringing her whole town to belief in Jesus; the Canaanite woman's fierce love for her daughter succeeds in broadening Jesus' own understanding of to whom the Good News is sent; and the wayward son



Women's equal call to discipleship with their brothers is most evident in the resurrection accounts, for it is upon the testimony of women that the proclamation of the resurrection depends.

is welcomed home with a huge party thrown by a forgiving father.

Women's equal call to discipleship with their brothers is most evident in the resurrection accounts, for it is upon the testimony of women that the proclamation of the resurrection depends. All four Gospels show Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the Mother of James and Joses, Salome and the other women disciples accompanying Jesus to

his death; anointing and burying his body; viewing the empty tomb; and finally experiencing his risen presence. Biblical scholars regard that the message of the Resurrection was first given to women as a strong proof for the historicity of the resurrection accounts. Had overly zealous male disciples fabricated these texts, they would never have included the witness of women in a society that rejected them as legal witnesses.

Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles provide evidence for the equality of roles of women and men in the first century church. In the last chapter of Romans, ten of the 29 church leaders whose favor Paul seeks, are women. Phoebe, Paul's patroness at Cenchrae, and Prisca, (who, with her husband Aquila, was a prominent missionary) are at the top of the list. This equality is also reflected in the Galatian baptismal formula: "*There does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus.*" (Gal. 3,28) The Book of Acts refers to "*Philip's prophetic daughters.*" (Acts 21,9-10) The early church historian Eusebius attributes the apostolic origins of the provincial Asian churches to their ministry, thereby acknowledging that at least some women were transmitters of apostolic tradition. What a pity that their names are lost to us! The Didache, an early worship manual, names prophets as the normal leaders of Eucharistic celebrations, which were often held in the homes of prominent women who also were called "prophets."

Why Women in the Church is a Justice Issue

Unfortunately, proclamation and education about Jesus' remarkable nonconformity to patriarchal norms is largely nonexistent in contemporary preaching and celebration in our

churches. When women and their daughters go to church, they rarely see themselves reflected in word and worship at all, let alone as the

If Church structures subordinate women, are we giving a false and ultimately blasphemous message that women's subordination is of God and that Jesus was himself a chauvinist?

fully equal human beings that Jesus saw them to be. To my mind this is a very worrisome subversion of the Gospel.

If Church structures subordinate women, are we giving a false and ultimately blasphemous message that women's subordination is of God and that Jesus was himself a chauvinist? While Jesus did call God "Father," he also evoked other kinds of images for God. He tells Nicodemus in that we must be born again of water and the spirit, a dynamic image evoking the powerful birth energies of the divine feminine (John 3,5).

Tacit acceptance of women's subordination and exclusively male images of God carry over to societal assumptions and structures. Could the patriarchal bias of the world's religions be a contributing factor to the universal subordination of women? A 1980s United Nations Report notes that "women constitute half the world's population, perform nearly two thirds of its work hours, receive one tenth of the world's income, and own less than one hundredth of the world's property." Participants in the 1995 Beijing conference learned that of 8000 abortions performed after amniocentesis in Bombay, 7999 were female.

I believe that reform of religious structures that purport to speak about God is foundational to proclaiming aright exactly what kind of a God we have. If we have a God in whose image both women and men are made, then our worship and religious leadership must reflect this mutuality. Perhaps then we can learn to value our daughters equally with our sons.

What Can We Do?

In preaching and prayer, there is a crying need to acknowledge the androcentrism of Scripture passages while simultaneously uncovering Jesus' radical affirmation of the full humanity and dignity of women. Further, celebration needs to include our belief in the ultimate victory of Jesus' resurrection power at work to overcome

sexism, racism and all of the other “isms” which denigrate the full humanity of God’s people.

Presently in the Catholic Church, there is little we can do to change the norm of male only presiders at Eucharist. However I think there is much that can be done to proclaim the Gospel in a way in which women and the marginalized can experience inclusion, empowerment, and even a kind of existential wonder at the fullness of God’s loving Word revealed to us in Jesus Christ. I offer the following suggestions as beginning steps for witnessing to that mutuality that is our birthright as God’s beloved sons and daughters:

Suggestions for Celebrating an Inclusive God in Jesus Christ

1. Be aware of androcentric bias in both Hebrew and Christian texts and try to alleviate it through inclusive proclamation and preaching. Change references to “Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” either by referring to our “ancestors in the faith”(now standard in the NRSV) or by including Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel. When texts refer only to “sons” as being the important offspring consider proclaiming “daughters and sons,” “offspring,” “heirs” or “children.”

2. When the readings mention Jesus’ women disciples by name (Joanna, Susanna, Mary of Bethany, Martha, Mary of Magdala etc.); or other prominent women leaders of the early church (Prisca, Phoebe, Junia, Lydia etc.) take the opportunity to educate about Jesus’ inclusive practice. Women (and especially the girl children) in our congregations can then begin to see themselves in the Gospel stories in roles other than repentant sinners, “gentiles,” or in need of healing.

3. Begin a “Woman and the Word” column in the parish bulletin and invite competent women to write their reflections on the readings.

4. In proclamation, reinstate the women leaders excised by lectionary texts. (In a landmark article in the May/June issue of Liturgy Training Publication’s *Liturgy* 90, Sr. Ruth Fox OSB presented a comprehensive study of women in the Roman Catholic lectionary. She found that the mention of women’s leadership was inexplicably excised from numerous lectionary texts. See also John

There is much that can be done to proclaim the Gospel in a way in which women and the marginalized can experience inclusion, empowerment, and even a kind of existential wonder at the fullness of God’s loving Word

Huels book: *More Disputed Questions on the Liturgy* for the canonical legality of adding verses).

5. Begin special vesper celebrations of the feasts of Mary of Magdala (July 22), Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, Therese of Lisieux, the many Marian feasts, and other prominent women saints. These provide preaching and presiding opportunities for qualified women and men lay ministers. (Visit www.futurechurch.org for resources.)

6. Holy Week is a particularly fruitful time to promote gender-balanced proclamation of the good news. It is not difficult to notice the heroic fidelity of Jesus' women disciples during this week.

Liturgical leaders could reinstate the Palm Sunday account of the woman who anointed Jesus that is unaccountably omitted every year. Perhaps we can finally keep Jesus' promise that every time the story is told it will be done so "in memory of her." Encourage women to preside at Tenebrae services, and invite them to join the priest presider at the Good Friday Commemoration of the Passion. Also on Good Friday have a special noon celebration featuring the many readings about faithful women who accompanied Jesus through the passion, death and resurrection. (The resources mentioned above are available at www.futurechurch.org.)

Claiming our Wholeness: Moving Toward Right Relationship in Christ

Who do we say Jesus is? I submit that we, his present day disciples, are called to witness as Jesus did to the often difficult, counter-cultural truth of a big and wide God of abundance. We serve a God who inexplicably heals the sick, makes the broken whole, and calls some of the most unlikely people to proclaim a healing love too profound and life-filled to be destroyed or denied whether by ignorance, self-aggrandizement, sexism, sin, or power structures that exclude. If a new church of mutuality and partnership is to emerge, it will need the energies of both men and women. Sexism and the domination of others are diseases that make all of us sick, and both women and men are afflicted.

We will not be whole as a church, nor will we witness to a God who is whole, until we have both women and men leading worship, and until our prayer incorporates gender balanced language about God. In this way, we respect the transcendence of the Divine Mystery who "*created (ha adam) in our own image ... in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.*"



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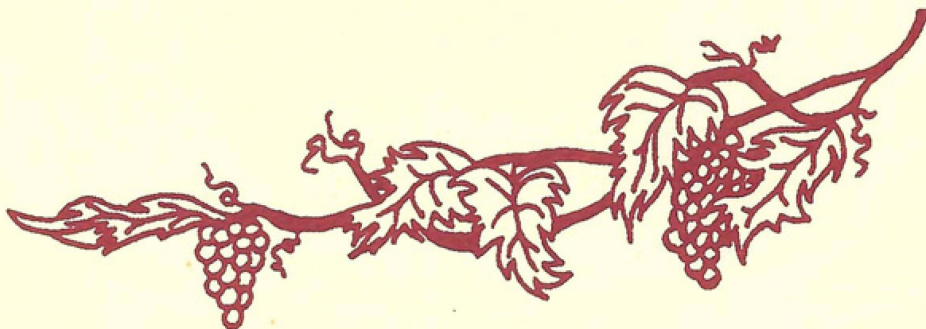


For Reflection

1. How do I feel after reading this article?
If a woman: Have I ever been treated unjustly and remained silent out of fear?
If a man: Have I ever observed a woman minister being treated unjustly and remained silent out of fear?
2. To what extent do I feel a sense of helplessness about changing the ways the church views women's roles?
3. How may I claim Jesus' power to forgive, transform and restore right relationship despite millennia-old subordination of women in church and society?
4. To what (if anything) is Jesus' Spirit calling me in this regard?



Christine Schenk is a Cleveland Sister of St. Joseph who worked as a midwife for 20 years serving Cleveland's low-income pregnant women and their families. In 1980 she helped organize a statewide coalition to expand Medicaid to include low-income pregnant women and their children. Schenk holds Masters degrees in Nurse Midwifery and Theology. Presently she works full time in Church renewal as the executive director of FutureChurch, a coalition of parish based Catholics concerned that Catholics will lose the Mass if nothing is done about the priest shortage. She is also the national coordinator of "A Call for National Dialogue on Women in Church Leadership," developed and administered by FutureChurch and partnered with Call to Action's 41 regional affiliates. Until recently Schenk also served her Congregation as Vocation Minister.

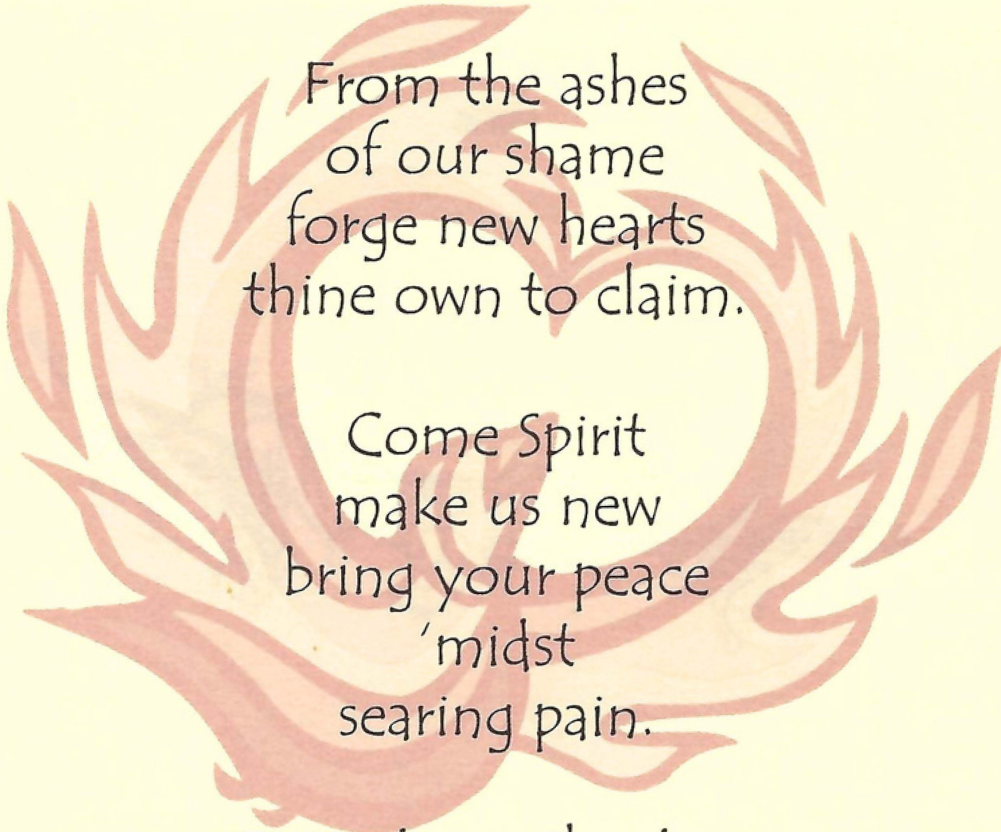


...there is in the image of the Sorrowful Mother the opportunity to seek solidarity with those women who suffer throughout the world today....There are situations and conditions under which this image of Mary continues to be important for us. It may not be as useful as a way of promoting a debilitating self-abnegation which can become a tool to oppress women. But there are other elements, as an invitation to solidarity with the suffering of the world, especially suffering women, which deserve attention....

-Robert Schreiter, CPPS

Phoenix

Paraclete,
consuming grace,
purify
deep soul'd disgrace.



From the ashes
of our shame
forge new hearts
thine own to claim.

Come Spirit
make us new
bring your peace
'midst
searing pain.

Drop down thy dew,
thy gentle reign
and
come again.

Christine Schenk, CSJ

Mutuality in Ministry: 'Establishing that Beautiful Order'

By Meg Kopish, ASC

The vision of the earthly ministry of Jesus was one of unity. Jesus' ministry was about mending fences - bringing the lost home, setting the captive free, breaking boundaries for life for others, and reconciling those torn apart. As ministers of the blood of Christ we understand the price of that type of fence mending. Yet we are incomplete if we do not engage in that risky business.

The vision is clear, but our willingness and determination at times cloud the picture. "Let someone else carry the banner, lead the charge, change their life, as for me I'm content, safe in my acceptance and complacency." Yet there is a restlessness within us, a desire for connection, that goads us on. We who commit to the Church's public ministry must be in the vanguard of modeling what we profess. At times we may even regret that we made such a public commitment in the Roman Catholic Church. But we who profess the blood of Christ know that it is a costly profession. We chose or were led into the wrong 'family' if we wanted an easy life!

Perhaps it was turning fifty or maybe an accumulation of life experiences that have added to a more seriously reflective point in my life. As I reflect on the past thirty years of ministry within the precious blood family, the number of people who have come into my life and allowed me to come into their lives strikes me. That is a larger picture than I could have imagined. That circle of connection is at the heart of mutuality. It is a part of the vision of Jesus "that all may be one."

Four experiences in my life have led me to appreciate mutuality in ministry. They were not always easy experiences but they were all about collaboration in ministry. The first was an early high school teaching experience on a religion faculty being the only woman with six priests. The second was working in the national Catholic vocation office in

Chicago. The third was the experience of being in community leadership. The fourth experience was the convergence of the three United States provinces of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ.

Lessons from Being "Blessed" Among Men

My first three years of teaching high school were in my hometown. I was excited to be back and have the opportunity to be in Iowa again and close to my family. I enjoyed the students and the classes I taught. I was teaching both social studies and religion to sophomores, juniors and seniors. I was the only woman in the religion department; the other six were priests.

One of my early rude awakenings was at a religion department meeting when there was heated discussion about some topic and the comment made by one of my colleagues was, "Well, if the six of us can't agree..." I counted seven religion faculty members in the room. I realized I wasn't being counted! I was invisible to that fellow, but not for long! In time I came to be both recognized and regarded, and it was due to my participating and being both persistent and consistent. In my three-year tenure there I came to consider my priest colleagues as friends.

Lessons of Collaboration

At the National Catholic Vocation Council (NCVC) I was administrator for the umbrella organization that was the collaborative creation of the four Catholic vocation groups: diocesan priests, men religious, women religious, and the laymen's group-Serra International. It was exciting, fun and hard work. The hard

Collaboration is neither the easiest way, nor the most efficient, nor always effective. However, it is the way to get more involvement, input, sharing and ultimately, greater ownership of the end product or result.

work was the raising of funds to keep NCVC going and the collaboration with the directors of each of the organizations and the NCVC board (a twelve-member group comprised of individuals from each of the four organizations and the US Bishops Committee).

It was my time at NCVC that convinced me of the absolute worth of collaboration and also made me realize how difficult and painful true collaboration is. At its core, collaboration causes you to give up what you personally believe is best or the right approach, to take on another's point of view to get another perspective on the matters at hand for a greater good.

Collaboration is neither the easiest way, nor the most efficient, nor always effective. However, it is the way to get more involvement, input, sharing and ultimately, greater ownership of the end product or result. It is a Gospel approach to living and an antidote to a society that honors independence and rugged individualism.

Lessons of Leadership

Community leadership is not for the faint of heart. That is an understatement, however, I have not had a more satisfying ministry nor a more difficult one than that of community leadership. I have likened it to being a vending machine - if individuals don't get what they want, they think it's out of order, kept their change or needs a good kick! It has been more rewarding than any other ministry as well. To help another person get to a better point in her life or think of herself in a better light or assist someone in finding his way home is a great privilege to witness.

During the time of my community service the three provinces of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ in the United States converged into one province. Convergence was a process of both refounding and restoration. Refounding in the sense of getting all of us in touch with our early motivations for choosing this lifestyle in this family of the blood of Christ and discovering the obstacles in our communal sisterhood that kept us regionalized.

Convergence was a process of both refounding and restoration.

The vision of convergence was that of having a larger critical mass of committed individuals for ministry, for a future not our own. It was also seen as a better way to use our resources of leadership, personnel, and finances. It was a process of remembering, reflection and renewal.

While this has not been everyone's experience to date, it is still a worthwhile vision and goal to be reached. If we had the courage to admit it, going back to what we were would no longer be as satisfying. It is not a panacea for differences, character flaws, independence,

revitalization or recommitment. It is a gift offered to those who engage in the process and work with the outcomes.

Convergence is a deep experience of mutuality, but like the paschal mystery, it does not come cheaply or without pain. Embracing the vision and being consistent in our belief and efforts toward what Maria De Mattias called “that beautiful order of things that the great Son of God came to establish in His Blood” is the price. I am reminded of the

line from 2 Corinthians 4,10 of how “*always we carry in our body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus, too, may be visible in our body.*”

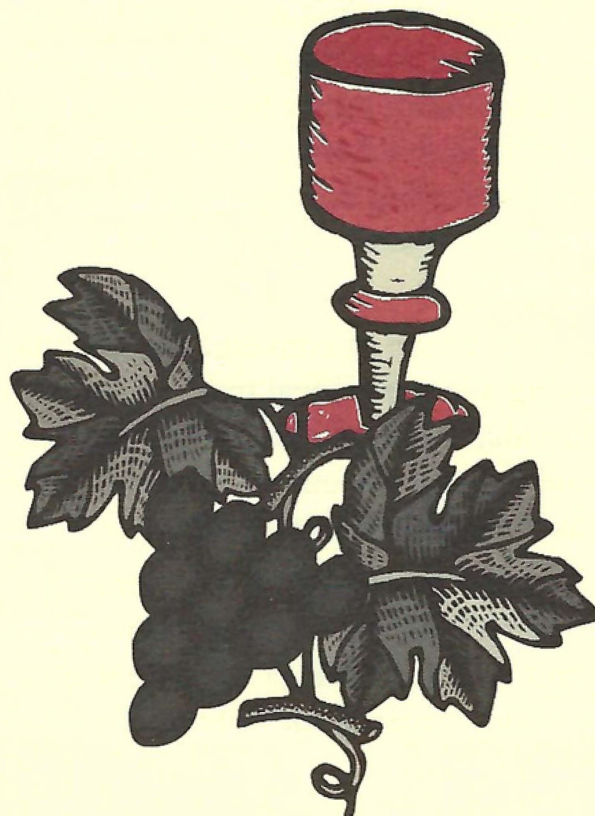
This vision of Jesus is a vision for all times and all peoples. It is not a nationalistic vision but a universal vision.

We struggle all of our lives with the ambiguity of the Christian message and the life of Jesus, with the tension of the message and the pull of choosing between goods or between good and evil. This vision of Jesus is a vision for all times and all peoples. It is not a nationalistic vision but a universal vision. As a precious blood family, we are being charged to move deeper into the vision of unity that is trans-

national. These are the boundaries that we are now being stretched to break. We have talked for years about being international communities but we are now being asked to delve more deeply into that reality.

The unity that Jesus speaks of is of one universe, not merely one region or province or locale.

Can we drink of this cup? We who have a hard time dealing with those we live with, are closest to in our local houses and communities, are challenged not only to envision this unity but live this unity into reality. It is not merely accepting other nationalities or cultural groups, nor is it conforming to other cultures to live among them. At its core, it is the ability to go beyond cultures, respecting where



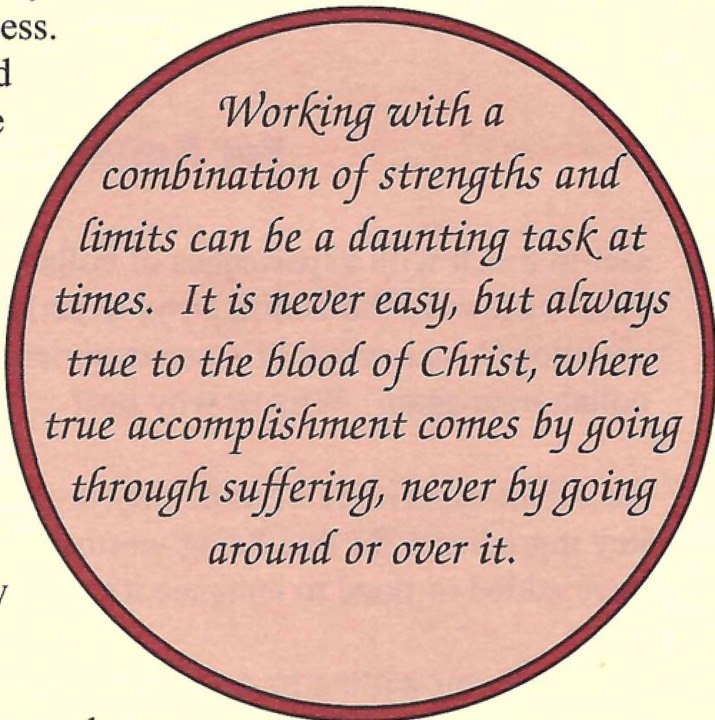
others and we have come from and transcend the cultural differences in our living and our ministry.

The Teihardian view of evolutionary movement toward God and the Spirit's movement in creation calls us to another epic embrace. We need to seize the moment with courage. The gifts we have been given in this family of the blood of Christ demand it. We are pioneers of the promise just as we are beneficiaries of that promise. All of us are leaders, yet the ministry of leadership belongs to those at a given point in time who have been asked by their community members to serve in that specific role. May they be supported in our care and by our prayer for them. To lead and wear one's authority lightly is a special gift.

Lessons of Convergence

The experience of convergence - the process of coming together of the three former US-ASC Provinces into a single province - was a multi-year reality and we are still living into that process.

The ties of history, heart and home are deep and sensitive bonds. Convergence was envisioned as tapping those strengths and deepening them into a new reality. It is an arduous process and all of us are never at any given point at the same spot. That is one of our many challenges in this new century to work with and through. It is however a worthwhile endeavor to give our best efforts to now and for the future.



Working with a combination of strengths and limits can be a daunting task at times. It is never easy, but always true to the blood of Christ, where true accomplishment comes by going through suffering, never by going around or over it.

Early in the convergence process we enlisted the help of two Dominican Sisters, Mary Beth Beres and Joan McCann, to work with us on gauging our cultural readiness for coming together, what they called in their final report to the provinces as "Implications for Collaboration." In their concluding summary, they stated the gifts and challenges each of the three existing provinces would bring with them into a single reality. No group had all the gifts or all the challenges. They spoke the

truth from an objective perspective after working in each of the provinces with small focus groups.

Working with a combination of strengths and limits can be a daunting task at times. It is never easy, but always true to the blood of Christ, where true accomplishment comes by going through suffering, never by going around or over it. And the Good News is that salvation is already ours: “You have redeemed us, O Lord, in your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us for our God a Kindom.”

We are too close to the initial process and experience of convergence to be able to talk at length and great depth about it. Yet as we are continuing the process to make real this convergence into true confluence, that point at which streams combine, we trust in God’s Spirit, who never flies backwards and always leads us on toward our true home and our truest selves.

Blessed be the Blood of Jesus Christ!



For Reflection

1. Get in touch with experiences of collaboration in your own life. What were the feelings you experienced in those situations? As a result of those experiences would you collaborate again? Why or why not?
2. Recall an experience of mutuality in ministry. What were the key ingredients for that being worthwhile? What would you have added or done to enhance it?
3. What are you willing to do to encourage mutuality in your ministry now or in your local community or region?
4. What advice would you give to others about collaboration? About creating environments for collaboration to happen?



Meg Kopish, ASC, DMin, is Senior Director, Sponsor Services for the Catholic Health Association (CHA), St. Louis, MO. She has significant experience in religious congregational leadership and in new sponsorship arrangements. She served in Rome as general councilor for her congregation, the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. She previously led her congregation's former Ruma Province in Red Bud, IL, first as provincial councilor, then as provincial superior. Meg's prior ministries include secondary education, pastoral care and campus ministry.



Mary as the first disciple, as the first adorer, is the one who enters in a special way the Paschal Mystery. The Gospel of John portrays Mary as standing at the foot of the cross of Jesus. There is much of the life of Jesus which no doubt had not been clear to her. That it ends in his public execution as a criminal and the dashing of all his dreams is indeed a sword which pierces her heart. In this, she suffers with all the women whose sons go to prison, who are misunderstood and misjudged by legal authorities, whose dreams for a better life are crushed. Mary's walking with her son, her not abandoning him on the cross, her taking his dead body once again in her arms as she once contemplated him as an infant, shows us the fidelity of God's being with us in the midst of the most crushing disappointment.

-Robert Schreiter, CPPS

Naming God: Do You Mind?

Great and Gracious God,
my language is so limited
to attempt to address you
who are so powerful,
so generous, so loving.

I rely on certain images to help me grasp the mystery
of Your Divine Presence.

So, do you mind
if at times I call you Father
when I remember your forgiveness
for the time I was practicing to pitch
and threw the baseball
through the basement window?

Do you mind if I call you Dad
when I recall the times
you took me to the game
and we sat in the bleachers
and cheered,
win or lose?

Do you mind if I call you Mother
when I remember your mercy,
your compassion,
your creativity,
of being able to take hand-me-down clothes
and make them my own?

Do you mind if I call you Mom
when I recall your gentle breath
upon my skinned knee;
your gentle touch upon my bruised ego?

When I am lost and lonely,
may I call you Grandpa -
for you are the one who stands at the fence
and calls until all the cows
and all the children
are home?

When I am hungry and cold,
may I call you Gram -
and smell the aroma of home
in the cinnamon bread and rolls
waiting for me in the warm kitchen?

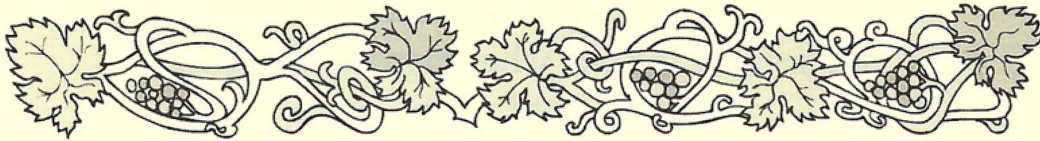
When I am hurting or helpless,
may I just call on you
by any old name
and know that you are
forever young?

When I am confused and uncertain,
may I just call on you
and know that you claim
me as your own?

O Divine One,
do you really mind
what I call you?
For you know me,
you know when I sit and when I stand,
when I sin and when I win,
when I lose and when I gain,
when I am in pain
and when I am filled
with joy.

You know me,
and that is all that matters.
Do you really mind
what I call you?

- Joseph Nassal, CPPS



*Now it came to pass that man lacked
a help-mate that was his equal.
God created this help-mate in the form
of a woman - a mirror image of all that
was latent in the male sex.*

*In this way, man and woman are so
intimately related that one is the
work of the other.*

*Man cannot be called man without woman.
Neither can woman be named woman
without man.*

-Hildegard of Bingen

*(Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen by Gabriel Uhlein;
Bear & Company, Santa Fe, New Mexico © 1983, p. 101)*



Mutual Planning for Liturgies and Prayer Services

By Donna Liette, CPPS
and Denny Kinderman, CPPS

Hildegard says it well. God established that “*it is not good*” for us “*to be alone.*” (Genesis 2,18) Especially we who have chosen a celibate lifestyle need to be in relationship with our help-mate if the other is a mirror image of all that is latent in our own sexuality. Without mutual male/female sharing, our reaching out in our ministries to offer “life-giving redemptive love” (*Mission Statement of the Dayton Sisters of the Precious Blood*) can lead to burn out. We quickly become ineffective because no one gender has all the gifts needed to carry out the mission of Jesus with the energy and authenticity it deserves. We cannot be our true selves without the other.

In the mid-1980s, aware of our separate treasures and the potential for future possibilities through mutual collaboration, our precious blood congregations of men and women in North America began planning for common experiences and sharing. There have been combined retreats and congresses, and more recently the Precious Blood Leadership Conference has offered the Proclaim Jubilee Workshops through the Human Rights Initiative Committee.

We were honored to be able to present the closing liturgy during the most recent of these HRI workshops. We have been collaborating in liturgies and prayer services, parish missions and retreats, ministries and workshops ever since campus ministry brought us together at St. Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Indiana, in the late 1980s.

When we come together to plan a liturgy or prayer service, as we have many times over the past fifteen years, we can't pretend that we don't need to call each other to an awareness of our gender differences in thought, word, and action (sounds like an old catechism answer). Only when we are willing to confront our own concerns regarding gender can we enter into the process of jointly creating prayerful

settings for rituals that will potentially open all hearts and allow God to touch us and those to and with whom we will minister.

We cherish our different approaches to prayerful expression and are reconciled to the give and take that is required as we focus on the particular community we hope to call to prayer and to a deeper relationship with God. We deal with each other's point of view about whether a particular congregation in the bay area of California might be moved by liturgical dance? Can we do an anointing with the parishioners in a small farming town using our own fragranced massage oil? Will college age students appreciate praying to "Mother God" or seeking absolution from only the male (priests) campus ministers at the campus ministry reconciliation service?

Only when we are willing to confront our own concerns regarding gender can we enter into the process of jointly creating prayerful settings for rituals that will potentially open all hearts

Will the retired sisters at one of our centers embrace a female presenter and references to Sophia?

Oh, yes, what about the language. Do we start the Lord's Prayer with both Father and Mother? Do we even name the prayer Jesus taught "the Lord's prayer?" Should "Lord" not be used? Do we replace "Son of Man" with the "Truly Human One?" What about "kingdom?" Is "queendom" a suitable substitute? Does everyone understand "kindom" even though our spell check doesn't?

But when all is said and done, above all, we make sure that references to God don't require the personal pronoun "he" or "him" unless we balance them with "she" or "her." This leaves us confronted with attempting to find ways to speak intimately of God without personal pronouns. It is so counter to intimate human communication to have to relate to God more from our common humanity than from gender specificity. "Godself" will just have to work!

Reflecting on these years of working together, we have come to appreciate a difference between collaboration and mutuality. Collaboration has a goal, which can become the sole reason for working in a united endeavor. On the other hand, mutuality for us has more to do with the process involved in a shared endeavor. Attaining a goal or end result, while desired, is not seen as primary or even possible without first tending to the relationship between the individuals collaborating in the planning process.

When we set out to have a truly mutual planning session, our precious blood spirituality assists in making holy the planning encounter itself. Our spirituality invites us, as authors, to speak the truth to each

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collaboration and mutuality.*

other, to minister to each other, and to call each other to transformation. We will reflect on these three areas of mutuality that have been at the core of our planning and ministering experiences.

Launched From a Posture of Truth

*Only in open and truthful dialogue
will we come to mutual acceptance and respect.*

It was a hot and dusty day, when an assertive and inquisitive Samaritan woman chanced upon a thirsty and tired Jesus at the well of Jacob (Jn 4,4-43). The culture, customs, and religious practice of the times made their gender difference a significant aspect of that encounter: “*You are a Jew, how can you ask me, a Samaritan woman.*” (Jn 4,9) Women and men admittedly have their own culture, their own way of being in the world, their own way of life. We have unique ways of being, of thinking, feeling and taking action. But thirst is thirst, and counter to acceptable behavior, a conversation ensued. Jesus helped her see that her bucket could be left behind and offered her to drink of his cup. He invited her, not to do the dishes, but to clean up her relationships; he explained that she was not to cook for him but to prepare for her town’s folks an invitation to the eternal banquet! He saw this woman as one equally deserving of healing and proclaiming the Good News.

In their conversation words like “Spirit” and “truth” could be overheard. Both agreed God is Spirit, neither *she* nor *he*. “Authentic worshippers” realize that our metaphors of God come from the bottom up revealing more about ourselves than the divine. Elizabeth A. Johnson in *She Who Is* makes a plea for female metaphors of God as defending “the equal dignity of women” (*She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, New York: Crossroad, 1993, p. 211).

While we can discover who human beings ought to be by contemplating who God is, we do not come to a knowledge of specific gender roles revealed in God. In *Exclusion and Embrace*, Miroslav Volf uses the aphorism of Friedrich Nietzsche to illustrate this point. Nietzsche turns the creation account in Genesis 2,18-25 upside down saying man created woman out of the rib of God. Here woman is a “cultural construct whose primary agents are men,” not God. (*Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, Abingdon Press, 1996, p. 168) Her femininity arises not

We transfer what we know of ourselves, even our societal and religious attitudes toward gender roles, on to our image of God.

out of divine revelation but out of the schemes, illusions, and preferences of men whom society and religions accept as empowered to do so. We transfer what we know of ourselves, even our societal and religious attitudes toward gender roles, on to our image of God.

Therefore, although God created woman, culture and religion are inclined to recreate woman according to the liking of 50% of the world’s population. It is not good for either gender, nor any class, race or religion to hoard power and

privilege for that is life threatening.

Jesus offers life-giving water springing up from within. He holds out to us a cup in which are gathered all the biases and fears, hopes and dreams of humankind. Drinking of this cup we give witness to the truth that we are all one through our participation in the blood of Christ. In this cup is our salvation, our embrace of a God who gives the freedom we need to put down our buckets, our yokes, and our lies. Partaking of this cup we swallow the truth-telling potion of honest dialogue, revealing in some fashion “everything I ever did,” as we encounter Jesus in our mutual acceptance and genuine collaboration. Then, like this first evangelist woman, we will leave our buckets behind, so essential for mutuality, and go “into the town” two by two to spread the good news.



Ministering to Each Other

*The spirituality of the blood of the covenant awakens us
to inclusivity and hospitality,
while the spirituality of the blood of the cross
invites participation in the paschal mystery.*

Having no appreciation for her daring, the followers of Jesus dared to challenge Mary's approach to their table. They objected to what this foolish and wasteful woman thought she was doing, squandering a whole pound of "*costly perfume made from genuine aromatic nard*" (John 12,3) for a foot washing and using her hair as a towel!

But Jesus welcomed her and accepted how she had chosen to minister to him. He created a safe place for her in the midst of the hostility of the men by questioning "*why do you criticize her?*" and instructing them to "*leave her alone.*" (Mark 14,6)

The cordial Jesus saw her as an equal. As she anointed his feet so he would wash the feet of the women and men who would be at his table and invite all his followers to wash one another's feet: "*as I have done, so you must do.*" (John 13,15b) We are to offer hospitality. By our welcome we are mutually caught up into a way of becoming a new creation, a new church, a remembering community. "*Wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.*" By washing feet, taking risks, trying out new roles, imagining fresh possibilities, ministering in innovative ways, both women and men make a memorial of Mary's bold approach to ministry and her excessive display of love. As she and Jesus have done so we, women and men stained by precious blood of the new covenant, must do, offering welcome and creating a safe place for the outcast and for one another.

While the gospels record the dialogue between Jesus and the disciples, the real conversation took place in the action of the courageous and all-out love shown by Mary and Jesus' acquiescence. Margaret J. Wheatley in *Turning to One Another* writes, "Conversation can only take place among equals. If anyone feels or acts superior, it destroys conversation. Those who act superior can't help but treat others as objects to accomplish their causes and plans. When we see each other as equals, we stop using and misusing each other. We are equal because we are human beings. Acknowledging another as an equal is a gesture of love." Simply stated on a Hallmark card, Maya Angelou says: "You

*Covenant spirituality places us on an equal
playing field where we reverence
one another's stories.*

have so much experience to offer. So do I. I have so much understanding to give. So do you. Only equals make friends.”

Covenant spirituality places us on an equal playing field where we reverence one another's stories. Listening to one another during planning sessions is a prayerful exercise, a holy conversation, a gesture of love, an acknowledgement of friendship, and an encounter with God. As the blood of the lamb kept those behind the marked doors secure, so we offer one another a safe place for sharing, so that what is prepared and presented for prayer or ritual will be a memorial of what God has done among us.

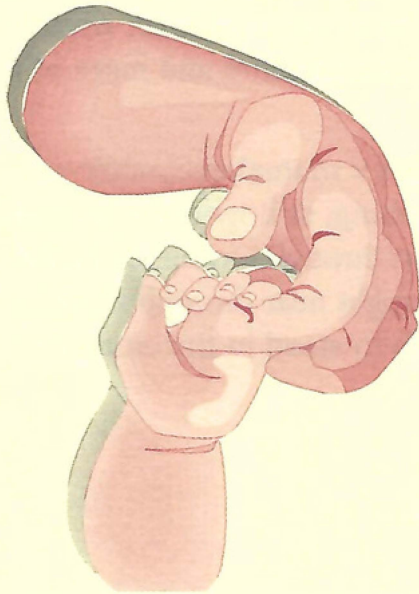
Mary's anointing the feet of Jesus was a ritual of preparation for his burial (Mt 26,12; Mk 14,8; Jn 12,7). The costly perfume alerts us to the manner in which the paschal mystery, in the words of a Eucharistic Prayer, has been “entrusted to us.” We are precious blood people; our mutual planning becomes a mutual ministry of being planted as grains of wheat ready to die to self that something new might be given birth. We go all out in our preparations for a retreat or mission, as a calling to be passionate and compassionate in responding to the cry of the blood. With the confidence of a Mary of Bethany, we hold with reverence the complexities of life entrusted to us, so that God can bring about resurrection. Faithful to the new covenant in Christ's blood, our God raises up God's people, as we have witnessed on several occasions at the end of a parish mission.

Transforming Each Other

*The spirituality of reconciliation calls us
through transformation to a new creation.*

At first, perhaps faced with the discomfort of this encounter, Jesus just ignored the woman's plea. As the disciples grumbled about her, bringing on more uneasiness, Jesus explained, “*my mission is only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*” (Matthew 15,24) She was a Syro-Phoenician, a Greek by birth, and a foreigner, who had a

compelling way about her. When Jesus finally listens, it is with an openness that allows him to take in her wisdom (Mark 7,24-30, Matthew 15,21-28). An insight from this outsider gets inside Jesus and it transforms him.



Jesus heard the cry of the blood in this foreign female. How “foreign” are we to one another in our masculine and feminine ways of thinking? How aware are we of our latent attitudes and practices? On what trajectory are we launched toward wisdom and truth? It’s a skill and a grace by which we are able to offer non-judgmental listening and presence in an open quest for truth. Jesus exemplifies this, for he caught the implications in her comeback: “*even dogs under the table eat the family’s leavings.*” (Mark 7,28)

The fruit of mutual self-dying is mutual indwelling. To be merely tolerant of each other’s gender will not lead to mutual ministry. Birthed through the labor pains of dying to self is the blessing of awareness. Jesus offers for us a prayer affirming that mutuality calls for radical openness that we might enter into new awareness, new life. “*That all may be one as you, God, are in me and I in you; I pray that they may be one in us.*” (John 17,21) Simply tolerating the other does not create oneness. Authentic mutual ministry arises out of the break down of alienation through reconciliation that brings about an integration that leads to wholeness and holiness.

Reconciliation is a process initiated by the victim. Our spirituality of reconciliation calls us to be aware of the pain we endure by our separation, the suffering experienced as we give in to the lie, the rage within as we are objectified, classified, and put aside. We pray that God’s grace will well up from within and move us to forgiveness. Then we reconstruct our remembering in the new dawn of forgiveness and sing a new song of unity. Only then will our ministry be mutual in accord with Jesus’ prayer that we might give witness that we are one in God, in Jesus and in each other.

*To be merely tolerant of
each other’s gender will
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ministry.*

Through the grace of reconciliation we become a new creation by which we are made capable of cherishing and taking in something of the other to become a part of who we are. I allow that idea of the other to become my inspiration, that movement of the other to flow through my body, that song of the other to come from my soul, and that word of the other to be spoken with my conviction. Of this kind of mutuality, in his desire to cultivate for himself the qualities of non-violence, which he considered feminine, Gandhi said: “I have become more and more of a woman.”

Unless we have a change of heart through a mutual encounter we remain the same, still unforgiving, still searching, still ignoring, and still without the God we will attempt to call upon through a ritual destined to be empty. If we believe we have been brought near through the blood of Christ, how near to each other do we wish to stand in the emergence of a new church?

Conclusion

In today’s world, and particularly in our precious blood family, are we not more deeply recognizing the need and the call for women and men to be true to themselves and speak the truth to one another? As we come together in shared reflections or for mutual tasks, does not our spirituality call us to seek ways in which we can remember, celebrate, and believe in the old story in a new way? We believe precious blood people have the spirituality and charism to be a life-giving presence throughout our world today. Ours is the calling in the blood of Christ to witness that women and men can share the power and their gifts as equals, empowered by God to move forward the building up of the kingdom of God in a truly mutual manner. “In this way,” as Hildegard said, “man and woman are so intimately related that one is the work of the other.”



For Reflection

1. Where do you see God’s image not fully represented because there is no visible sign of woman and man mutually ministering?

2. What are the buckets that you are called to put down in order that you might move beyond merely tolerating another to actually sharing ministry more completely and joyfully?
3. How do you demonstrate inclusivity, hospitality, and offering a safe place in your ministry?
4. Where are you pouring out extravagant love, taking risks and being criticized by those around the “table” - listen to the words of Jesus.
5. When do you hear the cry of the blood to challenge authority and bring justice?
6. Is there a precious blood brother or sister in your area whom you might risk inviting into a mutual ministry - creating something new or more intentional?



Sister Donna Liette is a member of the Sisters of the Precious Blood (Dayton). She holds a Masters in Education/Supervision from New York University and a Master's in Pastoral Studies from Loyola University in Chicago. She also completed the Institute for Spiritual Leadership (ISL) in Chicago. She has ministered as a teacher, principal, and campus minister. Presently she is the director of Mercy Manor, a transitional home for women coming out of prison.

Denny Kinderman, a member of the Cincinnati Province, was ordained June 3, 1967 and spent the first 17 years of his priesthood (14 as pastor) at St. Mark parish in Cincinnati, OH. After a study sabbatical, receiving a Masters of Theological Studies, and a Certificate in Biblical Spirituality, he went to Saint Joseph's College as a member of the Campus Ministry team. In 1993 he became director of the Precious Blood Companions, the Lay Associates of the Missionaries. As Companion Director for both the Cincinnati and Kansas City Provinces he now lives in Chicago. He has given retreats and preached parish missions between his other work since 1987.





Mary, Woman of the New Covenant

Devotion to Mary has always played an important role in Precious Blood spirituality, from the time of Saint Gaspar and Blessed Maria forward. It was likewise instrumental in the devotion of Mother Theresa Weber and Mother Maria Anna Brunner prior to their founding communities of sisters which were to become part of the Precious Blood family. It is only fitting that we turn to Mary to seek a model for our own discipleship....

-Robert Schreiter, CPPS

Dreaming Of Mutuality: One Woman's Perspective

By Mary Whited, CPPS

I remember my dream so well. The pastor at the parish where I was ministering invited me to read the gospel and preach the homily at a Sunday Mass. The gospel reading was about Jesus' returning home, going to the synagogue, and proclaiming from the book of Isaiah: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. God has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives..."* (Luke 4,16-21)

As I stepped up to the lectern to read this gospel, I suddenly realized that someone had moved the lectern to a place in the sanctuary that was out of view of the congregation. Although I could not see the congregation from this space, I knew that those assembled would still be able to hear me. I glanced down to read the passage. The lectionary was gone! The person who had read the second reading had taken it away. Yet I knew this gospel by heart. I could proclaim it from memory. As I opened my mouth, "A reading from the holy gospel of Luke," I heard a "click." Someone had turned off the microphone. Startled, I awakened from my dream.

Many times since that powerful experience, I have pondered this dream and sought to uncover its multiple layers of meaning. At one time, my dream spoke to me of my growing up in a family, a culture, and a church in which I had been taught to survive by "losing my voice." Being a woman, I had learned well to minimize my inner authority and to believe that my experience could neither be trusted nor would it be welcomed.

Today as I ponder the topic of mutuality of women and men in ministry together, I return to this dream, for it was a turning point in my readiness to engage in the kinds of relationships that mutuality requires. Over the years I ministered in many situations that called for cooperation between men and women. But until this dream, most of my

efforts had stayed at this level of cooperation: focusing on the tasks to be accomplished, smoothing over the inevitable conflicts that arose, and often not risking the vulnerabilities required to deepen relationships. My dream broke through unconscious patterns of thinking. It ushered in a new maturity in which I could risk speaking the gospel I knew “by heart.” My dream mentored me in my struggle for the power to speak; even more, it challenged me to trust that people would listen.

A Radical Inclusivity

I ponder the passage from Luke that was so clear in my dream. I wonder what Jesus thought and how Jesus felt as he returned home to the synagogue and read from Isaiah. How energized Jesus must have felt by the power of the Spirit of God rising up in him to anoint him! He must have felt the Spirit’s presence readying him for his mission of preaching the glad tidings to the poor and liberating the oppressed.

It is interesting to note that while the mystery of God’s Spirit cannot be tied to any specific gender, in the Hebrew Scriptures the word for spirit is grammatically the feminine, *ruah*, meaning moving air or wind. In the beginning, the Spirit, *ruah*, hovers like a great mother bird over her egg, to hatch the living order of the world out of chaos (Genesis 1,2). From the very beginning, *ruah* is present to create new life, to sustain energy, to nurture connectedness, and to reconcile what has been broken or divided. In light of being anointed by



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the Spirit of God, Jesus’ mission was truly grounded in both the feminine and the masculine. From this dual perspective, his ministry gave rise to a mutuality, that is, a radical inclusivity of women and men disciples who were “no longer servants but friends.” (John 15,15)

Jesus announced an alternative reality that was based not on “power-over,” that is, domination, but on “power-with.” He invited people to

pause and to reflect on how they related to one another and then to shift their views to a more mutual perspective. According to early Christian writings, and in particular the Gospel of John, the experience of equality led the women and men disciples of Jesus to take for granted their equal ministerial roles in the earliest Christian churches. However, as Christianity gradually became more mainstream, the leadership of women in Christian churches became less and less acceptable, and ministry came to be seen in terms of specialized functions. The power of relatedness shifted to a power of control.

Mature Face of Ministry

Jesus' inclusive vision, which ebbed for nearly two millennia, is re-emerging today as women and men strive together to re-imagine and re-discover ways to minister together. In ministry today, the ideal of the self-sufficient minister or the support person in the background is giving way to a more mature face of shared ministry. We are witnessing practically to what we have often preached - that Christian communities are graced in surprising ways with a variety of ministerial gifts and that in this work of God we have a deep need of each other.

During the past year, I participated on the Precious Blood Human Rights' Initiative Committee that focused the third of its three-year efforts on mutuality between men and women in ministry. Working with this committee has provided the most significant experiences of mutuality that I have had in ministry. Each man and each woman on the committee freely offered his or her gifts and talents. In an atmosphere of openness, differences of perspective were sorted out and built upon.

A workshop, *A Journey in Mutuality*, was an outcome of our efforts. Our working together seemed to strengthen the bonds between members of the committee and to bring new life and energy to members of the precious blood family who participated in the workshop.

New energy is available to us when we see possibilities. In my attempts to see possibilities for mutuality between women and men, I have discovered that

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imagining, which is an intuitive awareness, is key to change. It evokes new energy. I believe that imagining, that is, envisioning an alternative reality, is essential for the transformation of society and a church that does not yet fully value the giftedness of both women and men. In a world that relies heavily on rationality, imagination and dreaming can be dismissed. Yet, I believe that women and men in ministry need to imagine together a reality that moves them beyond exclusion to inclusion, beyond isolation to connection, beyond invisibility to visibility, and beyond loss of voice to speech. I believe that men and women in ministry together can span their differences and equalize the power of their relationships by examining the dynamics present in their working together and then imagining possibilities for relating mutually.

Emmaus: The Power of Imagining

Imagination, which reflects mystery and initiates new possibilities, touches our spirituality. It can profoundly influence our manner of relating to who God is and to how we connect with one another. As we re-imagine our place in the traditions of our faith, we open ourselves to shifts in our perspectives that bring us beyond the familiar lenses out of which we view relationships in our church and our world.

When I try to image particular aspects that make a relationship mutual, the Emmaus story comes to mind. Picture the two disciples walking down the road. One, Cleopas, the other unnamed, like so many women in the gospels. Some scholars wonder if the pair were, in fact, a man and a woman. Their relationship is obviously grounded in their common experience of being disciples of Jesus.

It was on that seven-mile walk together that they were able to talk about their lives and the stories of all that had transpired the past several days. There must have been openness between them and a recognition of their differences. There must have been a trust and a vulnerability that allowed them a possibility of being deeply influenced by the other.

To work toward right relationships with God and one another necessitates our being together in ways that are inclusive, healing, and celebratory of differences.

For when the stranger approached, he was invited to become a part of their conversation.

Pieces of the puzzle fit as the disciples remembered specifics in the context of the larger story, as imaginings were explored together, and as the disciples' eyes were opened to see what had been previously hidden. In their encounter with one another, in their welcoming the stranger, and in the burning of their hearts, they recognized the Risen Jesus and returned together to spread the good news that he was alive.

As precious blood people, we walk the journey to Emmaus each and every day. To walk it alone is to miss the grace of encounter with the other and with the Risen Jesus. Nurturing our spirituality of reconciliation implies that a primary dynamic out of which we live our lives is relational. To work toward right relationships with God and one another necessitates our being together in ways that are inclusive, healing, and celebratory of differences.

As men and women whose spirituality focuses on reconciliation, aren't we called to exercise a power that is *shared* rather than a power that is *imposed*? Aren't we invited to open our minds and listen with our hearts to the brokenness and suffering present in relationships between men and women in our church today? How comfortable are we with spanning the breaches and bridging the gaps that lie between men and women in our world today?

Enfleshing a vision of mutuality depends on our willingness to tell our stories and share our dreams as part of a larger story of disciples of Jesus walking the road together and sharing their dreams. A power is given to us in our knowing that Jesus walks beside us explaining the scriptures and remaining with us.

But putting flesh on this dream of mutuality can only happen as each person and each community trusts the inner processes that bubble up from within themselves. Dreams of transformation will be ignited, not simply from some centralized, formal plan that plots each step of the journey, but from the aggregate of many sparks that evidence the personal attitudinal shifts and the many collective choices toward recognizing the relatedness that is already present. Let us believe that change that occurs in one place will have repercussions for the whole. Let us trust that dreams of mutuality can be realized if we are sensitive, personally and collectively, to the movements of the Spirit who anoints us and sends us forth.

What is at stake is more than the ability to minister together, men and women, side by side. What is at stake is the ability to be open to the Spirit of God, the one who can never be domesticated, the one who forges bonds of solidarity between men and women who engage in

ministry. Hovering over a chaotic and orderly universe, *Imposed* breathes on the chaos and seeds our dreams with a possibility of true mutuality coming to birth.



For Reflection

Recall some different settings in which you have experienced women and men together in ministry. Then consider:

1. In settings where you experienced mutuality, what contributed to these situations being mutual?
2. From your experience, what stands in the way of mutual relationships in ministry?
3. If you could imagine a relationship based on mutuality, what would it look like?
4. In what ways does precious blood spirituality invite us to mutuality?



Mary Whited is an educator, retreat and spiritual director, facilitator, and administrator. She currently serves on the General Leadership Team of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO. She holds degrees in spirituality, educational administration, & mathematics and has served in parish ministry, congregational leadership and formation, and education.



Forming a Spirit of Mutuality: One Man's Perspective

By Daryl Charron, CPPS

My eyes were open to the possibilities of mutuality in ministry in 1988. I had seen glimpses of it in childhood, but only within the context of religious education. It was in 1988 when my formation director challenged me to go to Visitation Parish in Kansas City to listen to a group gathered to discuss the United States Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter on women, *One in Christ: A Pastoral Response to the Concerns of Women for Church and Society*. The pastoral boldly asserted that "sexism is sin." I remember feeling the pain some of the women expressed that day. I realized then that this is a justice issue.

The pastoral letter sought to ground male-female relations in our church in a model of "partnership." Men and women are created equally in the image of God and are to be partners in the ministry of the church. The bishops accepted that women are now a part of the work world. There was a recommendation to expand as much as possible the lay ministries available to women in the church. Pope John Paul II saw this pastoral letter as unacceptable so the Vatican intervened in its drafting. The language of partnership was replaced by the pope's preferred anthropology of complementarity. The pastoral letter went through several drafts in the effort to satisfy these papal demands and was finally tabled by the bishops in recognition of its unacceptability to U.S. Catholic women.

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Though I was only 21 at the time and in initial formation, I began to understand how the Vatican's rejection of this pastoral letter threatened the credibility of church authority and its ability to maintain its own pastoral ministry without the services of women. Several months later, after the pastoral letter was not accepted, my formation director and I went to a prayerful protest in front of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception to stand in solidarity with a group of women gathered there who were distressed by the outcome of the pastoral letter.

At the end of the prayer service, as my formation director and I walked back to the car, we saw the bishop of the Kansas City-St. Joseph, MO diocese, the Most Rev. John J. Sullivan, standing in the doorway behind the cathedral. He seemed to be staring at us. We both looked at him and waved. He waved back. I have often wondered what was going on in his mind that day because Bishop Sullivan was known and respected for empowering the laity, both men and women, in his diocese. I pondered the respect I had for him when I went to his funeral twelve years later.

Formation for Mutuality

I was fortunate in my formation to feel the impact of sexism in our church in a very real way. We discussed it at house meetings and I could hear firsthand from a couple of our priests in parishes the pain that some women felt from oppression and exclusion. I was proud to be among a missionary group who immediately began thinking of ways to become more inclusive. It started with using more inclusive language in the liturgy. Before long it expanded to the point of having lay companions engaged in ministry right alongside us.

I continued on my conversion experience towards mutuality in ministry when I began graduate studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. My closest friends at CTU were women fully engaged in feminist and liberation theology. I cherish the memories of theological reflection we did with one another. I also cherish the fact that I had mutuality in ministry modeled for me by my professors who team taught courses together as men and women. I came out of CTU thinking that mutuality in ministry could continue to be a reality in the life of the church. I was determined not to let go of that. As my final project for my Masters of Divinity degree, I was part of a team of seven men and women who wrote a plan of ministry together.

In my first assignment I continued to foster this spirit of working with women in ministry. I thoroughly enjoyed working with a woman social worker at the hospital as well as working alongside precious

blood women companions in parish and justice and peace ministries. The blessings continued as I went to my next assignment at a retreat center where I once again experienced team ministry of men and women working together.

It was at this house of prayer that mutuality in ministry and how we could do it well became more focused. We hired a psychologist as a facilitator to help us with systemic teambuilding. Each member of the staff took a cognitive index inventory originated by Kathy Kolbe to determine how we could each use our gifts to benefit the others on the team. There was also the added benefit of working with other sisters of precious blood congregations. I learned a great deal in a very short time

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and how there is no better way to learn about mutuality in ministry than practicing how to do it on a daily basis.

I continued my efforts in trying to model mutuality in ministry when I joined the Human Rights Initiative Committee of the Precious Blood Leadership Conference. For over three years now I have been working with women and men from all the precious blood congregations in the United States as we grapple with justice issues pertinent to our spirituality and the signs of the times. It has been an enriching experience to be on this committee and learn how to work well together as women and men. Most importantly, I have discovered how our spirituality calls us to mutuality in ministry.

Inspired by the Blood

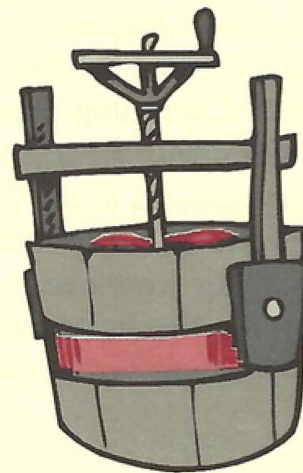
I believe that my initial conversion experience in 1988 to engage in mutuality in ministry was inspired by the spirituality of the precious blood. My experience in hospital ministry has taught me the redeeming effects blood can have. It renews life in a person in need of receiving it. The precious blood of Jesus Christ has the power to renew the church. Those who claim the name of the blood of Christ can be the instruments through which the renewal happens.

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The cry of the blood is heard from those in our church opposed to the sin of sexism. The cry is heard from women and men who hope for a future church renewed and liberated from this injustice. We are motivated by the spirituality of the blood of Christ to bring about change and we draw on the grace received through the blood to reconcile and transform those situations where the sin of sexism has caused division in the church and the world.

It was inspirational and encouraging to read recently in one of our precious blood periodicals that one of our priests challenged us to shed the vestiges of clericalism so as to minister in greater collaboration with the laity, both men and women. This encourages me as a brother in community striving for mutuality in ministry. As a religious brother, I have felt my share of the pain of clericalism the past seven years. The pain I sometimes feel angers me because the future church I want to help promote is not being realized.

Rosemary Radford Ruether has described the church as essentially a Spirit-filled community in which all the members are radically equal and have the capacity and the call to minister to one another, without benefit of social hierarchies - male over female, father over children, lord over servant, clergy over laity. I hope for the development of this kind of church where men and women are liberated from patriarchy. I want to promote an equal sharing of ministries in liturgy, church administration, theological education, and social praxis as we continue to break the chains of clericalism.



I have my women peers and professors at CTU to thank for bringing me to this realization in my faith journey. The recovery of an understanding of the church as the whole People of God is an ecclesial development that I want to encourage in the formation of our future missionaries.

As I seek to live through the struggles inherent in collaboration and mutuality, the spirituality of the precious blood is my guide. Often I will look at one of my favorite spiritual images hanging in my room. I have a tapestry of people working with a winepress. Men and women are engaged in the art of making wine together. It is a significant image for me because wine is "the blood of grapes." The winepress represents a place where all the conflicts and injustices in society come to be concentrated and are crushed by God. Christ treads the winepress and is crushed in it. Reflecting on this has given me hope that my suffering

through injustices will be one day vindicated. There are some injustices that God alone can vindicate for those who suffer. But the image of blood reminds me not to give up the struggle. The winepress suggests that injustices cannot be resolved without divine intervention. To know when to struggle and when to wait upon God will always be a part of my spiritual journey.

I thank God for all those who were part of my formation as I listened to them and learned from their spiritual insights. I am determined to pass the message of mutuality in ministry on to those new to the formation process. I will help them identify behaviors, actions and attitudes in themselves that reflect an attitude of superiority rather than a spirit of mutuality. We will then seek together to try to move from exclusion to inclusion, from condescension to collaboration. The Precious Blood Vocation and Formation Conference has been striving to do this both by example and education. Our annual get-together of candidates, women and men, in formation has already sparked a strong interest in collaborative efforts among them in ministry. They are asking for opportunities to minister as teams now. This is very promising for our future together.

Since that first listening session I attended in 1988 on the Bishops' pastoral on women, my ears and eyes are becoming ever more open to the possibilities of mutuality in ministry. May the blood of Christ empower us in this prophetic venture.

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For Reflection

1. Reflect on your present ministry or experience in parish decision-making. Is there a spirit of mutuality? How are decisions made? Are the views of all members of the team or staff heard and valued?
2. How are differences of opinion, ideology, theology, or ecclesiology handled? How are they seen as opportunities for growth and learning? Is diversity welcomed or feared?

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3. What qualities and characteristics need to be present to create an environment that fosters mutuality in your ministerial setting?
4. How does precious blood spirituality support movements toward mutuality in ministry?



Br. Daryl Charron is a member of the Kansas City Province of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood. He is currently serving as Initial Formation Director of his province. Daryl has enjoyed serving on his province's Justice and Peace Committee the past seven years and also on the Human Rights Initiative Committee of the Precious Blood Leadership Conference the past three years. Another worthwhile ministerial experience has been working with the economically challenged in the inner city of Kansas City the past three years.



Mary, Woman of the New Covenant

EDITOR'S NOTE: The quotes from Precious Blood Father Robert Schreiter sprinkled throughout this issue of *The Wine Cellar* are from a presentation he gave at Newman University in Wichita, KS at an International Symposium on multiculturalism and globalization sponsored by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ June 25-26, 2002. The full text of Father Schreiter's presentations can be found in the *Newman Review*, Volume 3, 2002.

*As wide-ranging as the image of Mary as mother can be,
the image of Mary as woman (of the new covenant)
speaks especially to our time.*

*For it has been a new awareness of women
that marked the last decades of the twentieth century.
The struggle for equality of women with men in the First World,
and the drive to improve educational possibilities for women
in the Third World,
have been gradually transforming the status
and roles of women in the world today.*

*This first of all recognizes
the inherent dignity of women as human beings,
made in the image and likeness of God.*

*But it is also key to solving
some of the intransigent problems of our world.
Experts on poverty note that, in many countries,
the single most important factor in raising people out of poverty
is better education for women.*

*Women with literacy and with education are better able
to care for their families,
and to be agents of their own history
rather than simply subordinate to men.*

*Women who are better educated
are also better able to look after their own health
and the health of those around them.*

*Improving the status of women is essential
for the betterment of the world as a whole.*

-Robert Schreiter, CPPS