



## A weekly reflection by members of the Precious Blood Community

October 18, 2023

Fr. Dave Matz, C.P.P.S.

*“The harvest is abundant, but laborers are few.  
So, ask the master of the harvest  
To send out laborers for his harvest, Go your way,”* Luke 10:2-3a.

It is harvesting season in Minnesota! Even though I live in California, the autumnal change is in the air, with cooler evenings and the vibrant colors of leaves glowing in the sun's light with its long light rays that touch the face with a warming glow. One could stay there, but to those who are harvesting the dance between cold and warm are harbingers of urgent preparation for the coming winter. I am reminded of my Father who, being very aware of the elderly widows in our midst, would send out his five sons into the neighborhood to rake leaves and mulch and till the soil of vegetable gardens and flower beds, preparing them for their long winter's nap, and we did it for free! We would argue with our Father, "What's in it for me?" We snapped! Dad's retort was always, "Because you can, and I'm sending you over to help our neighbors in need!" We may have grumbled all the way, but a warm welcome and smile from Margaret, Mary, Hilda, Gert, and Clara would warm our hearts, as was the peace you felt after a job well done. A sandwich and some hot apple cider helped as well! In our neighborhood, the Matz boys were always welcomed when Dad sent us out!

As I write, Israel is now at war with Hamas, and there are equal amounts of civilian casualties on both sides of the conflict. As threats of massacres, genocide, and mass displacement of people are reported, once again, Jesus' homeland is caught up in chaos, not unlike his own time, when Rome occupied Israel, and various Jewish groups were coopted, segregated, killed, and crucified both from within Israel, between ethnic groups who lived there, as well as those from Rome. We find Jesus today on his way up to Jerusalem for his ultimate showdown with evil forces. There's urgency in the air! If people don't respond to my message this time, it may be too late! He needs help, so he instructs us to ask God, the real master of our lives, for laborers! And the 72 go! He's asking us to ask as well, and he's asking us to respond: Go your way! What should we take? Nothing but the gift of peace. Peace the core message of Jesus' life and a peace that only God can give, even in a world lost in violence and war! If you encounter a peaceful person, your peace will rest on them, and the Kingdom of God is revealed in us. If not, shake the dust off your shoes and move on because, for us, the Kingdom of God is here. Peace is still the gift we share.

Today, it still seems that despite Jesus' healings, his authority and shrewdness of his teaching and the way Jesus wants us to follow him, which he knew will lead us to God, is simply not what we want as a worldwide community. Israelis don't want peace with Hamas or the Palestinians, nor do Hamas with Israelis, and it's the civilians who suffer! We, the civilians, seem to be walling off even people in our own families because of infighting. Where is the gift of peace? St. Gaspar found that peace at the foot of the crucifix, the crucified one! The Precious Blood of Christ is the fertile ground that stirs the people to divine love. Jesus has already redeemed us with the price of his own blood. Why do we still demand the blood of our enemies or those different than us?

The harvest is abundant today, but laborers are few! My dad had that peace, and he taught us to give that peace in the neighborhood for free, not for a price! Pray for peace, be the peace, and give the peace that surpasses all understanding. God's Kingdom is revealed!

**Fr. Dave Matz is the Director of Sonnino Mission House in Berkeley, CA. He ministers with Spanish-speaking persons, immigrants, and the LGBTQ+ community. He accompanies and advocates for those who are on the margins of society, offering safe space and hospitality.**

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](mailto:votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org)