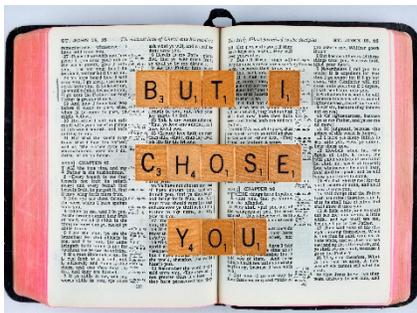


A weekly reflection by members
of the Precious Blood Community

May 14, 2025

Raechel Kiesel Ryan

“It was not you who chose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain....”
John 15:16



In the readings today, the disciples elect another to take the place of Judas, and Jesus sends them forth to “love one another.” Their election process makes me think of Pope Francis and the conclave to choose our next pope. Losing Pope Francis feels to me like the ultimate resurrection celebration for him and a great loss for the rest of us. I wish I had the ear of every cardinal going in to vote for the next pope. I wish any woman could be part of that process. I wish I could bend the ear of a whole lot of powerful people at the moment and help them understand the impact their decisions have on the most vulnerable. It helps me to listen to Jesus’ words in today’s Gospel: “This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.” I hear Jesus telling me in today’s readings that the calling is not just for our next pope. It is also for me and you. We are called to love our neighbors.

I work at Room In The Inn, a resource center responding to the needs of folks who are unhoused in Nashville, TN. Through the coldest months of the year, congregations from around middle Tennessee offer safe shelter, warm hospitality, and a communion meal with their neighbors in our foundational Winter Shelter program. Over 100 congregations of all denominations joined us this past winter in taking in their neighbors for a night. We often encourage people to get involved and “Love Your Neighbor, Y’all,” which sounds like just a cheesy tagline. But witnessing over 100 congregations of all denominations – who can agree on little – come together to claim their neighbors, who

often go unseen as community members, whose suffering we will ease, is powerfully living out the directive Jesus delivers today. In a country where every day it seems there is someone else being attacked, excluded, dehumanized, or disappeared, it is ever more important that we recognize that we belong to one another and show that love with great fervor.

So I invite you, as Jesus is inviting me today, as cardinals, to pray about who should shepherd our stinky flock and also about how we each will shepherd and be shepherded. How am I called to love my neighbors?

Raechel is concluding her studies at Catholic Theological Union and will receive the Certificate in Reconciliation and Restorative Justice. To learn more about the Schreier Institute, [click here](#).

This weekly reflection is made available to everyone in our Precious Blood family.
Feel free to share it with others. Would you like to write a reflection?
If so, please contact Vicky Otto at votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org