

An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality



THE WINE CELLAR

January 2010 • Number 22



Spirituality
and
the Arts

*The heart of Jesus
is the wine cellar
of the blood of Christ.*

— Gaspar del Bufalo —

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An Anthology of Precious Blood Spirituality

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Kite Runners for the Realm

Normally I do not see movies based on novels I enjoy. Blame it on Barbara Streisand who several years ago made a disastrous adaptation of Pat Conroy's great novel about a dysfunctional family, *The Prince of Tides*. I almost did not see *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy because of this rule, but the casting of Sir Ian McKellan as Gandalf was a stroke of genius—he looked exactly like the wizard I had imagined when I first read Tolkien's classic tale in the seventies—even if Elijah Wood as Frodo was a bit of a stretch.

So I was skeptical about seeing *The Kite Runner*. But upon the recommendation of Precious Blood Brother Ton Sison—who knows a lot more about film than I do—I went to see the movie when it came out a couple years ago. For those not familiar with the story, *The Kite Runner* tells a fascinating tale of two boys, Amir and Hassan, growing up in Afghanistan before the Soviet invasion and the rise of the Taliban. Amir's father is a wealthy man who is generous to the poor and critical of the mullahs. Hassan is the son of the family's long time servant. Amir aspires to be a writer and Hassan loves to listen to his young friend's stories. In the kite flying competition, Hassan is the kite runner. It is a story of friendship, betrayal, and redemption. It is a story that has Precious Blood spirituality etched in the margins and scribbled between the lines.

Kite flying in North American is often seen as recreational. It is something to do on a lazy spring or summer day when the winds are blowing and the skies are blue. In Afghanistan, kite flying is more of a contact sport, a competition where one kite flyer tries to “cut” the string on another's kite. The kite runner, then, is the kite flyer's sidekick, a servant or a poor child who races to retrieve the kite cut down from the sky. In this sense, Precious Blood people are kite runners. We go to those who are cut off, those who have fallen to the ground, disconnected and discarded.

But there are many images like this in *The Kite Runner*. For example, Amir's father is concerned that his son doesn't exhibit the courage necessary to stand up for one's belief and that Hassan, Amir's best friend,

has to protect his son from the bullies in the streets. His father's intuition is verified when the kite runner Hassan is attacked by the bullies, and Amir, because of his fear, fails to help his friend. He betrays his friend by his failure to act, and because of his cowardice can no longer stand being around Hassan.

As the story unfolds, when the Soviets invade Afghanistan, Amir and his father escape first to Pakistan and ultimately to San Francisco. As they are being smuggled out of the country, the truck they are riding and hiding in is stopped by Soviet soldiers. The soldier looks at the refugees in the back of the truck and sees a young woman clutching an infant to her breast. The soldier tells the truck driver he will let them pass if he can have fifteen minutes with the woman. The woman's husband pleads with the soldier but it is Amir's father who stands up in the truck and faces the soldier. He tells the soldier to stop this indecency. The soldier points his gun at Amir's father who will not back down. The soldier's commanding officer comes over to see about the disturbance and intervenes to keep the soldier from killing Amir's father.

This memory of his father's courage sparks Amir's own journey of redemption. His father's friend calls him many years later and tells him, "There is a way to be good again." He tells Amir it is time to return to Afghanistan and make amends for the betrayal of friendship that occurred so many years before. This is the message *The Kite Runner* conveys: there is a way to be good again but it demands courage. It means looking evil in the eye and not blinking.

Films like *The Kite Runner* reflect how the arts play an important part in deepening our understanding and expanding our expression of the spiritual life, and specifically precious blood spirituality. This issue of *The Wine Cellar* explores how the arts can stir the soul in ways that lift our spirits, broaden our perspective, and engage our minds. In the ministry of reconciliation, Precious Blood Father Dave Kelly believes "art can take us beyond words and offer a safe place in which we can meet." He reflects on a project completed this summer in the neighborhood on the south side of Chicago where the reconciliation center is located where "youth and mothers of our community" joined together to create a mural on a viaduct, a dividing line in the neighborhood. "The mural was meant to recognize and embrace the pain and conflict," Dave writes, "while seeking to heal the

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wounds and build new relationships.” Through art and poetry, the ministry of reconciliation seeks to engage the imagination and move those on opposite sides beyond the walls to a new place of hope and healing.

Precious Blood Brother Ton Sison picks up this theme, reflecting on film “as an art form” and “the power of film to set alight the imagination” to build “a bridge to the ministry of reconciliation.” Referring to such films as *The Kite Runner* and *Babette’s Feast*, Ton offers a “must-see list” to reveal how, at their best, “films have an uncanny way of border-crossing from reel to real.”

The founder of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, St. Gaspar del Bufalo, employed the multimedia of his day to convey the story of redemption and reconciliation in the blood of Christ. Precious Blood Father Jerry Stack focuses on the painting of the Madonna of the Precious Blood that “was a regular fixture in the missions preached by Gaspar and his Missionaries.” This image, Jerry writes, is the one Gaspar wanted those who participated in the mission to remember because “it is an image of great tenderness” that “speaks eloquently of God’s unconditional love for all men and women.”

Artistic expression has been an important part of the mission of the O’Fallon Sisters of the Most Precious Blood for more than 150 years. Sister Mary Cecile Gunelson reflects on the history of the Ecclesiastical Art Department of the congregation and reflects how “making vestments has remained a major work of the Sisters” and reflects a “contemplative presence at the heart of the congregation.”

Precious Blood Father James Sloan has spent much of his life studying and teaching art history from Florence to San Francisco. His lifelong interest and appreciation of art sparks his reflection on how “for the believer, works of art speak of God in some way.” When viewed “through the prism of precious blood spirituality,” certain pieces convey “the power of Jesus’ blood.”

Shifting from works of art to the art of preaching, Precious Blood Father Richard Bayuk explores the use of images and

metaphors to tell the gospel story. “Metaphor and imagery can uncover and awaken experience and lead to change,” Richard writes, reminding us how “Jesus used images and metaphors extensively in his preaching.” He cites numerous examples from literature and life and homilies from some of his former students to engage our imaginations to become better storytellers, concluding with some practical ways to improve our preaching.

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Dayton Precious Blood Sister Eileen Tomlinson has told the story of Christ's redeeming love "through the medium of art" for many years. Here she offers four of her artistic creations connecting "the gospels with the Precious Blood" as she visually portrays the feasts of the Immaculate Conception, Holy Family, Sacred Heart, and the Precious Blood.

In our final essay, Precious Blood Father Thomas Welk reflects on "the liberal arts" and sees education as a means of empowerment that will break the chains of whatever enslaves human beings. Tom refers to Maria and Gaspar as "liberal arts educators in the truest sense of the word" because "empowerment and liberty were the hallmarks of their ministry."

The Soul of a Poet

As this issue of *The Wine Cellar* was going to press, we learned of the death of Adorer of the Blood of Christ Madeleine Kisner on November 20, 2009. Sister Madeleine was a frequent contributor and enthusiastic supporter of this anthology. Her poetry has graced our pages and inspired our souls. Her last poem, "Christ's Cosmic Call," appeared in the summer 2009 issue.

In preparing for this edition, I asked Sister Madeleine to reflect on the influence precious blood spirituality has on her poetry. "The spirituality, as an expression of Christ's total love for each person," Sister Madeleine wrote, "sees Christ's blood as healing those who are suffering and in pain, and as being redemptive and reconciling throughout life. Indeed, precious blood spirituality must relate and connect with one's life, and where it does, it becomes a living reality that touches every aspect of one's life."

As an Adorer of the Blood of Christ, Sister Madeleine said she must allow the imagery of the Paschal Mystery "to inundate my own life." Perhaps referring to the illness that would claim her body but not her spirit, Sister Madeleine said, "I can relate to Christ's sufferings in my problems and pains, as well as in my need for acceptance and healing, all the while knowing that Christ's personal love for each of his creatures is unconditional."

Madeleine's enthusiasm for the theme of precious blood spirituality and the arts is found in her punctuation and her poetry. She writes, "What a treasure there is in steeping myself in the spirituality of the precious blood to inform my creativity! As an Adorer poet-artist, I must make every effort to be faithful to the precious blood promises made with God and with myself at profession. Poetry helps me to steer the course of continuing spiritual growth in and through the precious blood. Where love is involved, creativity has a field day."

Those of us who were fortunate enough to know Sister Madeleine often had a field day in her presence because her love was genuine and her creativity and compassion contagious. In drinking daily and deeply from “the richness of the well of the precious blood, I am, as an Adorer, able to deepen my own spiritual life by recognizing the need for reconciliation,” Madeleine wrote. “As an artist, in season and out of season, I continue to reach deeply into the well of Christ’s Precious Blood in order to enrich the poetic aspects of focus, form, and freedom of expression.”

The final poem she submitted to *The Wine Cellar* is appropriately titled, “Onward Ever—Backward Never.” In the opening verse of the poem,

“I can relate to Christ’s sufferings in my problems and pains, as well as in my need for acceptance and healing...”
– Sister Madeleine Kisner, A.S.C.

Madeleine writes, “Our faith leads the way/hope springs eternal in our hearts!/But we are ready!/Our journey seems clear—to a new land we go!” We dedicate this issue of our exploration of spirituality and the arts to one of our poets of the precious blood, Sister Madeleine Kisner, with

deep gratitude for her enthusiastic spirit and creative presence among us. Enjoy the new land of endless opportunity and creativity, Madeleine, as you rest in the peace of our Divine Creator.



Onward Ever—Backward Never

For the A.S.C. Sojourners

All of us are sojourners, traveling along the way for weeks, months, and even years.
Sights and sounds intrigue us as we journey and enter the fray of our daily battles.
Our faith leads the way—hope springs eternal in our hearts!

But, we are READY!

Our journey seems clear—to a new land we go! We must keep the end in sight.
If we persevere we have the promise of a satisfying reward.
Excitement is fever-pitched—but very little attention is given to the
Terror, trials and troubles as we venture into the unknown!

Like the Israelites, the beginning invites us out of slavish misery, and
unknowingly, into the ongoing tumult of troubles along our sojourn.
Terror abounds—no food, no water, sickness and despairing death tries
the sojourners in their wanderings in the desert.

Hope is aroused in the Leader and in those who remember the end result—
the Promised Land!

Indeed, journeys are fraught with sacrifice—but God is always there to
comfort and to care for His sojourners.

Elijah, too, left his unrelenting Israelites, who forsaken God's covenant.
He set out to Horeb, attuned to his God, who directed him to
listen to His still, tiny whispering sound. God again directed him
to journey to Damascus

to anoint Elisha as the prophet to succeed him in establishing and restoring
the covenant of His Chosen people to the pure faith in the Holy One.

And the journey of the Wise Men was filled with wonder and a sense of discovery
As they followed the Star, leading them to the King of kings,
the Promised One from of old.

Their sojourn, too, was laced with the terrors of the night and the struggles
of the day as they
traveled onward in faith and hope.

As for all sojourners, doubts crossed their minds—they muttered:
Have we come all this way to be duped?
Is this Guiding Star a hoax? Maybe Satan is at the helm, leading us astray.
But Hope had its day again!
The three continued their journey, confident of unraveling their
findings about the Promised One.
Their faith opened Bethlehem and the Manger scene
as they knelt and offered their gifts
to the King of kings, the Promised One,
whom they believed and hoped would come one day!
And finding the child, was their reward for their persevering faith.

In an angelic command, Joseph and Mary had to flee into Egypt
because the Holy Child was in peril. Unhesitatingly, the family journeyed on
through trials, turmoil, and much sacrifice to shelter the Promised Child.
After the death of Herod, who sought the Child,
the Holy Family was commanded to travel
to the land of Israel. Warned in a dream about the ruler there, Joseph and Mary
settled in Nazareth. Here the Child was filled with wisdom,
and the grace of God was upon
Him, the Promised Savior of humankind.

And our own faith-filled journeys continue to lead each of us,
as we sojourn on the thorn-strewn path amid life's vicissitudes. As in all
journeys, faith and hope must abound in the daily struggles that rear up
Hydra-headed along our paths.
We can only offer our trials in union with those of our Suffering Savior.
He marked the way to Calvary but us with His Blood Footsteps.
We follow, steeped in His Precious Blood.

Our journeys end at the Cross of Salvation.
As faithful sojourners, we, too, will rise with our Glorified One—
on the appointed day—
And know the LOVE HAS CONQUERED ALL!

Madeleine Kisner, A.S.C.



Adorer of the Blood of Christ Madeleine Kisner died on November 20, 2009. She taught English for many years at Newman University in Wichita, Kansas and was a frequent contributor to The Wine Cellar.

Beyond the Walls: Artistic Expression and the Ministry of Reconciliation

Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S.

I received a letter from prison from a young man, 17 years old, who had been sent from the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center to the adult Illinois Department of Corrections. He was 15 years old when he was charged as an adult and held in the juvenile facility due to his age. He spent the next two years in the detention center while going back and forth to court. On his 17th birthday, the age of being an adult in the criminal justice system, he was moved to the Cook County jail, an adult facility of 12,000 men and women. There he spent another six months or so fighting his case. He was found guilty and sent to a maximum security prison of the Illinois State Department of Corrections. In his letter he wrote, “Sorry it has taken me so long to write, but I needed to get my head around the time I have to do.” He went on to say, “Father, I want to do something with my life; I want to make my life meaningful; I want to give back to my community.”

Included with the letter was a poem. It was a simple and direct reflection that spoke of how it felt to be incarcerated and about the sorrow and guilt he carried each day. He spoke of the pain he inflicted on his family and the family of his victim and his deep sense of regret. His poem sought, in some small way, to begin to restore the harm he had done and the pain he had caused. Through his poetry, he was able to convey a message and express feelings and thoughts that otherwise were unheard.

In the midst of his harsh sentence of 27 years, he sought to express his sorrow and find a way to begin to reach beyond the prison walls. He spoke of trying to make a difference in the lives of other youth who were on a destructive path. In whatever way he could, he wanted to make up for his mistakes. He felt that in touching the lives of others, his life would

have meaning. He allowed—perhaps forced—himself to see beyond the walls of incarceration.

In our Hope and Healing circle—a monthly circle with families who have lost a loved one due to violence—a mother spoke of the question that haunts her, “Why my son? What did he do to deserve to be shot on the way home from school?” Amidst tears, she seeks some answer to a question that is rarely answered.

At the heart of reconciliation is a willingness to put oneself in the middle of these and many other stories. It is the work of trying to attend to the needs of the victim and so often it is the simple attention to that question, why? The work of reconciliation is to accompany the victim, yet not exclude or deny the story or dignity of the wrongdoer. Anyone who has placed themselves in the midst of violence—striving to be a witness of hope and a minister of accompaniment—knows that it is not a calm and quiet place. There is great emotion and often great tension. It is here, when rational words seem to fail us, that poetry and art can reach beyond the walls that are so often built up around us, and can stir the heart, expand the mind, and move the soul.

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Art & Reconciliation: A Safe Place to Meet

Reconciliation is a way of life, a journey that strives to restore old relationships and build new ones. It does not pretend that there hasn't been real harm done; it does not deny or sugarcoat the pain, in fact it embraces the harm done and seeks to restore and make amends. Reconciliation seeks to create safe places where stories are told and honored. The work of reconciliation recognizes that in the telling of the story—often a story of pain and disappointment—a new story emerges, a new way of seeing is possible.

In the work at the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago, there is often no clear line



drawn between the victim and the wrongdoer. I recently buried a young man who only months before had been held in Cook County Juvenile Detention Center. The young man who wrote from prison is both victim and wrongdoer. He does not deny the harm that he has done, but he too carries the pain and suffering of being a victim of abuse and abandonment.

Reconciliation asks how we can embrace the victim, the wrongdoer, and the community. As ministers, as ambassadors of reconciliation, we must stand in that tense and uncomfortable place and offer witness to God's love for all God's people. It is precisely here, when words so often fall short, that art and the expression carried within that art can be so powerful. A poem sent from prison, a sketch that carries the pain and the difficulties of losing a child to murder, a mural that a community constructs to carry the story of violence and the hope of a new way of living—all carry messages that move us beyond words. A piece of art hangs in our Center that carries the tension and pain of being a victim, yet recognizes the story of a young offender. Art can take us beyond words and offer a safe place in which we can meet.

*Art can take us beyond words
and offer a safe place in which
we can meet.*

This past summer we sought to use art and create a safe place in our community through a mural project. The neighborhood struggles from poverty and extreme violence. The mural was to recognize and embrace the pain and conflict while seeking to heal the wounds and build new relationships. At the very heart of the project were the youth and mothers of our community. These youth, many of whom have caused harm and offended, are also the victims of violence. Given the opportunity and encouragement, we believed that they could be a powerful instrument of hope and healing. We believed, too, that the mothers of the community were in a unique position to create a safe place where they and the youth could work together to create and restore relationships. And so, where a viaduct stood as the dividing line separating rival gangs and dividing a community by ethnicity, a new symbol of hope emerged.

The Mural: Telling a New Story

As these youth spent long hours at the site of the mural, a new story began to be told. They were no longer merely offenders, a menace to society; they were contributing to the community. Through their art, through the symbols of hope and peace that made up that mural, attitudes began to change. These youth began to see themselves differently. The

community residents, too, began to see the youth in a new light. Many of these youth, only months before, were sitting in the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center. The work in preparation of the mural allowed these young

Through their art, through the symbols of hope and peace that made up that mural, attitudes began to change. These youth began to see themselves differently. The community residents, too, began to see the youth in a new light.

men and women to speak about what they wanted to convey, not with words, but with images. They created a new story that overtook the story of destruction, violence, and individualism. Long hours preparing for the mural were spent telling stories and sharing pain and hurt. Many spoke about loved ones who were killed near the site where the mural would be created.

Mothers, too, told stories. One spoke of her child who was incarcerated, another about the child she had lost to violence. One of the mothers had just recently lost her son to violence—shot in his own neighborhood.

As the mural began to take shape, a new story was woven into the fabric of the community. This story carried a new message: that out of the pain and hurt, there was hope. A large image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was created as an ongoing holy site—a place where new stories can be told. Flowers and candles stand to mark that place and carry the hope that continues in the midst of the pain.

The mural project sought to re-engage the residents of a community. It sought to allow youth who had done harm to work to restore the harm done and to claim a new identity. Through the creation of a mural, a social space of division was transformed into a place of hope and of new possibilities. Residents began to stop by and commend the young people for their hard work. Stories were shared. An elderly man stopped by often and talked about the neighborhood through the years. As the youth listened, new understandings and relationships formed. This elderly man applauded the youth for their good work. He brought them water and snacks as symbols of his care; they gave him hope. These social spaces allow for a meeting place, a safe place where stories are told and, through the honoring of the story, a community begins to heal.

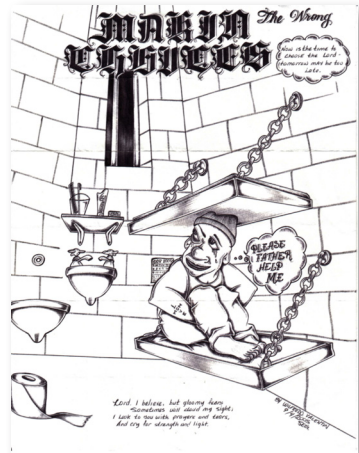


Art and Incarceration: Engaging the Imagination

Art has a huge contribution to make when it focuses less on the individual differences and more on what can bring us together as a human community. It can play an important role in reducing the “social distance” that keeps us apart. Art can encourage dialogue because, as Howard Zehr reminds us in *Visual Restoration*, genuine communication requires us to rely on visual as well as verbal media to activate participants’ imaginations.

For many years I have edited a newsletter for men, women and children who are incarcerated called *Making Choices*. It is a newsletter that is filled with poems and artwork that reflect the feelings and the experiences of those who are locked up. Within the poems and the art, feelings are expressed that go well beyond walls and bars of the jail/prison. The words and the art reach out to others and create new understandings and relationships both inside and outside the walls of incarceration. These images and poetic words seek to maintain a connection to the world in a place that idolizes isolation and confinement. The newsletter becomes that social space where people are engaged and differences are blurred. The poems and the art tell a story that desperately seeks to be told. In the hearing and honoring of the story, a world opens up.

Here is a poem by 17-year-old Sammy Salas who is incarcerated at Menard Correctional Center with a sentence of 50 years.



My word, my words

*I write with this pen, on this paper to let my soul bleed.
I've got so much pent up, and sometimes just to let it go is what I need.
When I was under stress in the world, I would smoke weed,
I'm incarcerated now, but when I write what I feel it makes me feel freed.
It's my ultimate high and it what I use to get by.
I just pick up my pen and write all my tears away.
When I feel backed against the wall, it's how I fight all my tears away.
With these words I feel like I could sprout wings and fly today.
Take myself high above the brick walls and bars that fill my day.
With my words is how I wash my pain away.*

*Can you feel me through the ink on this page?
Can you feel the fury I keep locked up in its cage?
Can you hear my voice jumping at you off the page?
Speaking out with such powerful rage?
Here, with the words, let me make you understand.
How they imprisoned a boy, but by law considered a man.
Here with these nouns and verbs let me make my stand.
Come through these words on this paper, let me take you by the hand.
Let me show you through these words how they sat me up on the stand,
Twisted my words; look how they played me,
All the time they gave me.
I wish I would have used my words more wisely.
Can't say this surprised me.*

*But don't count me out;
I'm coming back and I put that on my word.*

While I am not an artist or a poet, I have come to believe in the power that art has in expressing the pains and joys that we carry inside us. Through the arts, relationships are made and celebrated. Just last night a

I have come to believe in the power that art has in expressing the pains and joys that we carry inside us. Through the arts, relationships are made and celebrated.

young man, 16 years old and being held as an adult, said that the *Making Choices* newsletter changed his life. He went on to say how he felt touched by the poems and wanted to share his thoughts and feelings. He gave me his poem, written on the back of a grievance form. As he read the poems of others who also were locked up, he discovered that he was not alone, that his feelings that had so often caused him to feel alone were carried by others. The poetry and the art opened up a part of him that had been held captive for so long.

Victor Lopez, our art instructor, knows both the art and the struggle. He was incarcerated as a juvenile and spent the next 23 years in the prison system. He openly shares that it was only through his art that he found a way to survive, to make his life meaningful. He now spends his time at the Precious Blood Center sharing his passion both for art and for the youth who are struggling.

Our dream and our work are to break down some of the barriers and boundaries that often exist between people. The art and poetry is one way barriers are lessened and boundaries are blurred. We seek to create places—

social spaces—that allow us to dream together and imagine a world where children grow up without the fear of violence; a world where our bruised spirits are healed and our hearts are opened to new ways of living together.



Precious Blood Father Dave Kelly is a member of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. For the past 25 years he has worked with Kolbe House, the Jail Ministry of the Archdiocese of Chicago. He is also executive director the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago that promotes restorative practices and supports efforts toward reconciliation and healing. Dave studied theology at Catholic Theological Union and was ordained a priest on June 12, 1982.

For Reflection

- ❑ Nature often times allows us to have an experience beyond our individual selves. How has/could art allow you to see beyond your immediate world?
- ❑ Think of a time when a piece of art or a story caused you to let your guard down or think differently about someone or a situation. How can art – and the expression of art – bring us into a new way being with others different than ourselves?
- ❑ Think of a time in when you were estranged or in conflict with someone. What allowed you to re-connect or re-build your relationship? How does art help create safe places and safe moments in order to build new relationships?
- ❑ When have you willingly moved into an uncomfortable situation in order to witness to hope and/or the presence of God? Can the expression of art – oral or visual help bring us to a place in which we are able to move more freely in areas of tension and high emotion?



Reconciliation, Imaged and Imagined

The Power of Film

By Antonio Sison, C.P.P.S.

In the 1988 Italian film *Cinema Paradiso*, the young Salvatore would often sneak into the movie theater of his small Sicilian village when he shouldn't. There, in the darkened hall of the theater, the boy is filled with wide-eyed wonder at the images of light painted on the silver screen.

I was very much like Salvatore. As an angst-ridden teenager living in a Third World milieu where your possibilities are not always spelled out for you, I would go sneaking into the movie theater when I shouldn't—at the very first morning screening—and, in two hours of blissful solitude, watch new configurations of reality unfold before my eyes. In the darkened hall of the theater, the silver screen would become a portal to an alternative future—a light at the end of the tunnel. This is no longer just about watching a movie over popcorn and soda. It is contemplating. I experience a profound moral focusing. I am alone with my soul. In these propitious and, I daresay, “sacramental” moments, Holy Mystery would teach me not to be afraid to dream.

Film, Feasting, and the Future

The quasi-religious role of film art and the film viewing experience within the context of a materialistic and oftentimes cynical world is hard to contest. Cardinal Walter Kasper notes that in the “lack of spirit” of the present age, it is art that fills the void by offering a “utopian ideal of a reality that is...undivided and successful” (Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell [New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1991], 200). Said another way, art may represent the anticipation of a world that is fully redeemed and reconciled, a vision of definitive eco-

human salvation. Vincent van Gogh's masterpiece *Starry Night*, for instance, is a vivid utopian nightscape that evinces a transcendent harmony of nature and culture.

Conversely, art also works by negation, that is, the portrayal of protest and criticism precisely as a response to the prevailing condition of the "spiritlessness." A good example of this would be Pablo Picasso's famous painting *Guernica*, which depicts the human tragedy of the Spanish civil war. For its tacit indictment of injustice and violence, the painting is acclaimed as an iconic anti-war symbol.

Those who are engaged in the ministry of reconciliation and peace-building, such as John Paul Lederach, acknowledge the role of the arts as a frame of reference in understanding a key area of the moral imagination—"the capacity to give birth to something new that in its very birthing changes our world and the way we see things" (John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 71).

Artists and visionaries have long known that the imagination is the very humus within which the seed of possibility germinates. Of course, the flipside to this—a deficit of imagination—can be likened to barren soil that

Artists and visionaries have long known that the imagination is the very humus within which the seed of possibility germinates.

cannot sustain new life. In the compelling words of feminist theologian Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "what we cannot imagine will not take place" (Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretations* [Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001], 179).

As the most widely accessible art form, film plays a key role in rekindling the imagination so that an alternative, life-giving future enters the realm of possibility. The Oscar-winning Danish film *Babette's Feast* (Gabriel Axel, 1987), which is included in the Vatican's list of 45 best films, has become an avowed favorite in retreat circles, and for good reason: it invites Christians to engage with a sacramental imagination—here, brought to bear in a "miraculous" dinner profoundly savored and shared so that the community, previously in danger of extinction, becomes inspirited again.

In the summer of 2007, I helped lead a retreat on Precious Blood Spirituality for the men and women candidates-in-formation within the Precious Blood family. After a screening and discussion of *Babette's Feast*, we ushered the participants to a secretly planned dinner, a sumptuous and elegantly presented meal never before prepared at the Maria Stein Retreat Center. In our own Western Ohio version of *Babette's Feast*, where Baked

Cornish Hen took the place of the French dish *Caille en Sarcophage* (“Quail in a Sarcophagus,” the main course in the film), the candidates gathered around the table to celebrate the gift of community. In the context of this special meal, we had an imaginative taste of what it might be like to live as a truly reconciled and reconciling community, men and women representing various cultures and backgrounds, inspired by the same lifeblood. Moreover, the meal held special meaning for our extended community, the kitchen staff of Maria Stein, who found renewed creativity and joy in breaking out of the ordinary. They were enthused and grateful that they did not serve oatmeal and grits that day. The eschatological import of *Babette’s Feast*, imaged onscreen and imagined in our own actual feast, attests to the power of film to inspire and usher-in a new vision.

The Passion of Cinema

As an art form, the power of film to set alight the imagination meaningfully lays down a bridge to the ministry of reconciliation. When conflict gets to a point of spiritlessness so that the possibility of reconciliation does not seem forthcoming—in the case of deep, hurtful division in community, for instance, when the conditions for the rebuilding of trust are not in place and safe space remains elusive—film offers a way to invite possibility back into the equation. As various scenarios open up on the silver screen, the visual provides a pathway for the visceral (the affective, emotive aspect of a person) to take discernible shape. Consequently, the release of pent-up emotions—catharsis—becomes more possible for the viewer who finds in the medium of film a virtual safe space within which to sort through difficult emotions.

A good friend of mine—for reasons of privacy we can call him “James”—had to deal with a rapid succession of deaths in his family where no other member survives; he is left completely orphaned and shattered beyond belief. His misfortune, shocking and undeserved, short-circuits the imagination. A devout Catholic, James feels the ground shift beneath his feet as he grapples with the trauma. Catharsis would come unexpectedly, however, when he decides to step into a movie theater to view a film that depicts the final hours of Jesus as a merciless, bloody carnage. Through

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the scenes of relentless torture, James finds his inner turmoil virtually crystallizing onscreen, freeing him to lament, “God, when will the torture stop? There is nothing left. Nothing!” The release of James’ lament leads to a first step in the arduous but necessary cycle of grieving.

Though not necessarily involving parties in conflict, the case of James illustrates how films can play a role in easing us out of our emotional and psychological roadblocks that could prevent the movement toward reconciliation. As someone who is not a big fan of Mel Gibson’s work, it also forces me to re-think the power of a film like *The Passion of the Christ* in giving shape to our darkest fears and pains so that we may come to terms with them and reconcile with our own selves.

In its capacity to paint an alternative picture of a world truly redeemed, and its power to give form and shape to the inner workings of our emotions, film offers us a portal to a more creative, more hopeful journey towards reconciliation. Yes, a light at the end of the tunnel.

The Must-See List

I have been asked a number of times to recommend film titles that are of particular interest to reconciliation in its various forms. Though considerations of space preclude an exhaustive analysis of specific films, I offer a short but thoughtfully chosen list of fairly recent films along with capsule reviews that will help situate them within the discussion of reconciliation (I had already discussed *Babette’s Feast* earlier so let that count as one of my recommendations). I am also taking into consideration the availability of the titles; all recommended films may be obtained from Netflix, Blockbuster, or Amazon.

Whale Rider

Niki Caro, 2002

One tribe of New Zealand’s indigenous Maori community has to face the creative tension between the preservation of long-held traditions on one hand, and the prospect of change on the other. In the eye of the storm is Paikea, the girl who would be chief if she overcomes the thousand-year-old patriarchal tradition of male succession whose guardian is her own grandfather. This Oscar-nominated film presents a message that may be relevant to religious communities facing the reality of dwindling numbers: structures are made for people, not vice versa. The film also encourages reflection on the wisdom of welcoming “foreign prophecy,” that is, the openness to views and opinions that challenge our own. Short

of a dead giveaway, I also note the film's doxological ending, which helps us to imagine creatively and insightfully what a truly reconciled community could look like.

Red Dust

Tom Hooper, 2005

A riveting account of the work of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was a critical component to the country's transition to authentic democracy after the collapse of apartheid. The spotlight is on the true-to-life story of Alex Mpondo, a member of parliament, who seeks justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of the torture he endured as a political prisoner of the apartheid government. A difficult but ultimately hopeful film, *Red Dust* sheds light on the complex dynamics of social reconciliation.

Kite Runner

Marc Forster, 2007

Years after escaping Taliban rule and migrating to the United States, Amir finds himself returning to turbulent Afghanistan to seek some form of reconciliation with the memory of Hassan, his childhood friend whom he betrayed in the past. Based on a bestselling novel of the same title, *Kite Runner* is a moving film that invites a discussion on true friendship, father and son relationships, redemption, and the healing of memories. A running theme in the film: "There is a way to be good again."

Signs

M. Night Shyamalan, 2002

Reverend Graham Hess, a cleric who had turned his back on his vocation after the tragic death of his wife, defends his family against invading aliens. Ultimately, it is faith and serendipity that saves them. The film is not so much a tale about little green men than a heartfelt story about a family that struggles and overcomes the "alienation" resulting from personal tragedy. Reconciliation with one's religious vocation and among family members finds deeper focus in this intelligent sci-fi.

The Straight Story

David Lynch, 1999

The true story of 73-year-old Alvin Straight of Laurens, Iowa, who embarks on a six-week, 320-mile trip to Mt. Zion, Wisconsin, aboard

a lawnmower, to fulfill his single-hearted mission: to reconcile with his estranged brother Lyle who is dying. The film is a deceptively simple parable of forgiveness and reconciliation between siblings who have not been in touch for years due to some old feud that time had all but obscured. My intuition is that this film will resonate with not a few viewers.

From Reel to Real

By way of conclusion, let us rewind to the Italian film *Cinema Paradiso*, the first film I referenced. From his early “love affair” with the cinema, the boy Salvatore would grow up and journey into filmmaking where life and art would “kiss.” I too had chosen a similar pathway as I journeyed from being a rabid cineaste, to writing screenplays, to finally creating my own theological short films. At best, films have an uncanny way of border-crossing from reel to real, interweaving into the tapestry of my life, and encouraging me to be open to the creative movements of Holy Mystery, who is far more beautiful than what I can ever image or imagine.



Precious Blood Brother Antonio Sison, or simply “Ton,” teaches systematic theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. His research interest is the confluence between Theology and Cinema, and his course, “Imaging the Reign of God: Social Justice and Global Cinema,” is offered annually during the January term (J-Term). In addition, Ton gives lectures and retreats on the topic “Cinema: The New Stained Glass Window” for various academic and parish groups. He is also the author of the book, Screening Schillebeeckx: Theology and Third Cinema in Dialogue (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Certainly, his choice for all-time best film is Babette’s Feast.

For Reflection

- ❑ Try to recall a film that made a memorable impact on the way you see yourself, others, and God. What was your visceral response (your gut level reaction) while viewing the film? How did the film speak to you?
- ❑ Films may encourage us to reflect on faith and spirituality in new, creative ways. Think of possibilities for a “faith and film” session in the context of your ministry. Can you see film playing a role in enlivening your pastoral work?



Gaspar's Madonna

By Jerome Stack, C.P.P.S.

We normally don't think of Saint Gaspar as an artist, but it would not be stretching the point to assert that he was. In his day we was famous for the artistry of his preaching and one might well consider the Missionaries of the Precious Blood as the masterpiece he left to the church and world. This is to speak of art in a broad sense, of course, but Gaspar could also be called an artist in the more restricted and conventional sense because a significant part of the patrimony he left us is the Madonna of the Precious Blood or "my Madonna," as he sometimes referred to it.

Many of you who are reading this are already familiar with Gaspar's Madonna of the Precious Blood. It has adorned the walls of many houses of the Precious Blood family and has been depicted many times on holy cards and in various publications. It is a painting that we sometimes take for granted, but it bears closer examination and appreciation since it is Gaspar's artistic creation, at least in the sense that he oversaw the creation of the final form of the painting as it has come down to us today.

In this article I will explore a bit of the history of the painting, with a view to its unique place in Precious Blood iconography and also as a window into the mind and heart of the great apostle of the Precious Blood.

Some History

For many years it was believed that the Madonna of the Precious Blood was given to Gaspar by Pope Pius VII in 1815, when the pontiff commissioned him to evangelize the Papal States through the preaching of missions and retreats. This is, in fact, the attestation of an inscription attached to the back of painting in 1898 by Joseph Schaeper, C.P.P.S., then secretary general of the Society.

This lovely story is, unfortunately, not true, according to Precious Blood Father Beniamino Conti who has done extensive research on the image. The image of the Blessed Virgin given to Gaspar was either on copper or on paper (there seem to be two contradictory references to the image), whereas Gaspar’s Madonna of the Precious Blood is on canvas.

So where did the painting come from? It appears that Gaspar had an existing Madonna modified so that the Infant Jesus would hold a chalice in his right hand, offering it to the viewer. The original painting was probably the work of a famous Roman painter, Pompeo Batoni, who died in 1785. In his later years Batoni was famous for his full-length portraits of English nobility, but it is an interesting coincidence that he also painted the much venerated image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Church of the Gesù, just a few yards from the altar where the relic of St. Francis Xavier is displayed. It was this very altar that played such an important role in the life of the young Gaspar; certainly he must have often visited the little chapel where Batoni’s Sacred Heart is displayed.

There does not appear to be much of an artistic precedent for a Madonna of this design. As the late Charles Banet, C.P.P.S. noted in a article on the subject presented at the Precious Blood Study Week in 1960, there are images in which the Virgin or the Child Jesus holds grapes, obvious images of the Precious Blood, and one rather remarkable image of Mary (a statue in a French church) holding an infant Jesus who is bleeding from his side into a chalice. There is even a rather strange representation of Mary holding a wounded Infant in her arms. None of these images is quite like the Madonna of the Precious Blood, and in any case they are uncommon. It seems to me that the image originated in the spiritual and artistic imagination of Gaspar.

This painting was a regular fixture in the missions preached by Gaspar and his Missionaries.

This painting was a regular fixture in the missions preached by Gaspar and his Missionaries. Apparently having a “Madonna of the mission” was customary in the practice of the day, but Gaspar’s Madonna was a new design, something that did not exist before. Eventually Gaspar insisted that only “his Madonna”—or faithful copies—be employed in the missions by his priests and brothers. He was quite adamant that this be the practice.

Why This Madonna?

I suspect that most of us have not given much thought to why Gaspar chose this particular Madonna to be a prominent and regular part of

the “multimedia” presentation of his missions, along with the dramatic preaching, various processions, and other popular devotions. Apparently the image would be displayed after the regular sermon on Mary and then throughout the rest of the mission.

In some ways the choice seems a little out of character for Gaspar, who from his youth had regularly meditated on the Passion of Christ and who, in his preaching, sought to remind people of the need to make reparation to Jesus, whose Blood, as Gaspar would put it, was being horribly abused by sinners, and to offer propitiation or satisfaction to God the Father. Gaspar had a vivid sense of the evil of his times and of the need for sinners to repent. One would think that he might have chosen an image of Mary at the foot of the Cross or of a Pietà—some image of the Sorrowful Mother, to whom he was devoted in a special way—rather than the image he eventually chose.

One must, however, recall Gaspar’s third aim in preaching: to bring about the sanctification of souls, to bring people back to deeper relationship with the Lord. Certainly part of his strategy

for accomplishing this involved awakening in his hearers a lively sense of sinfulness as the cause of Jesus’ sufferings. While Gaspar could speak eloquently and dramatically of the sufferings of the Redeemer, it appears that the image he wanted to remain with those who participated in the missions was one that was warm, tender, compassionate and reassuring.

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The Language of the Painting

Not long ago I was browsing through that classic work of Frederick Faber, *The Precious Blood*, and came across an interesting observation. He argues that the power of evil (Satan) over our hearts comes from its power over our minds. Since our minds demand a constant diet of images and it is so difficult to rid the mind of them, the task of the believer is to change these images. “Our hearts will be what our minds are.”

I believe that Gaspar was very much aware of this (even if he never states this explicitly) and thus wanted to leave the people to whom he and his Missionaries preached an image that would stay with their minds and change their hearts: the Madonna of the Precious Blood. Long after the mission had ended, Gaspar wanted the people to recall the image of the painting.

Since Gaspar's time there have been many artistic renderings of the Madonna of the Precious Blood, but until reading Conti's article I had not paid much attention to the particular language of the original Madonna and how it often differs from other versions.

In Gaspar's Madonna both the infant and his mother are looking at the viewer of the painting. In some later versions, either the infant and the mother or both are looking elsewhere. The infant offers the chalice and the mother directs the viewer's attention to the infant with the gesture of her left hand. Both figures have serenely joyful expressions on their faces. (When Gaspar had a copy of the painting he made he instructed the artist that it not be sad but joyful.) The overall effect is one of tender compassion, of a generous invitation to drink of the wine that gladdens human hearts because it is the cup of salvation.

In this painting, sometimes referred to with the title "Mary, Help of Christians," we see Mary as Woman of the New Covenant. She is the first fruits of the covenant sealed in the Blood of her Son, symbolized by her holding the infant with the Blood of that New Covenant. She commends to the viewer not a suffering Jesus, but a warm and loving infant who offers the cup of the Blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It is an

It is an image of great tenderness and it speaks eloquently of God's unconditional love for all men and women.

image of great tenderness and it speaks eloquently of God's unconditional love for all men and women. It is a moving artistic representation of Jesus, whom Gaspar referred to as "thirsting for souls," seeking to slake

the thirst of the believer with his own Precious Blood. The image of the Madonna of the Precious Blood is meant to calm the fears of the sinner and invites the penitent to find forgiveness and healing in the Blood.

As noted, this Madonna of the Precious Blood was of special significance for Gaspar and he insisted quite firmly that no other Madonna be used by his Missionaries. "His" Madonna was to be the model for the Madonna used by the Missionaries. No others were to be permitted, because Gaspar thought that other representations would not communicate precisely what he wanted to express in the language of the painting.

The Precious Blood in Art Today

In the Madonna of the Precious Blood, Gaspar created an image that articulated his twofold devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to the Blood of Jesus. This image grew out of his unique spirituality but, as is often the

case with the saints, what was deeply personal also spoke powerfully to the people of his day as well as to subsequent generations of believers. The many reproductions of this Madonna are a witness to its broad and lasting appeal.

This Madonna and other interpretations of the original continue to have a place in the iconography of the Precious Blood. Undoubtedly

It is appropriate and fruitful to ask what other images of the Precious Blood might speak to the world today, just as the Madonna of the Precious Blood has for nearly two hundred years.

these images will continue to reveal the riches of the mystery of the Blood of Christ as it is viewed through the lenses of diverse artists and cultures. An image made popular by the Schönstatt Movement, for example, has Mary standing at the foot of the cross of her Son.

This image of Mary as Sorrowful Mother and Woman of the New Covenant seems to have struck a responsive chord in the hearts of many today.

It is appropriate and fruitful to ask what other images of the Precious Blood might speak to the world today, just as the Madonna of the Precious Blood has for nearly two hundred years. The spirituality of the Blood of Christ includes themes such as reconciliation, the blood of the marginal, the suffering, which cries out to us, the call of the Precious Blood to find forgiveness, healing, justice and peace. Perhaps future images will also incorporate these themes.

I hope that the mystery of the Blood of Christ will be more widely explored and expressed in the arts, in images that capture our minds, our imagination, recalling those insightful words of Frederick Faber: “Our hearts will be what our minds are.”



Precious Blood Father Jerome Stack has been a member of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood since 1966. For more than half of his years in ministry he was Catholic Chaplain at Metropolitan State Hospital in Norwalk, California, and more recently served for six years on the General Council of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood in Rome. He currently is an adjunct instructor in religious studies at Calumet College in Whiting, Indiana and editor of the C.P.P.S. Resources series.

For Reflection

- ❑ As I look at Gaspar's Madonna, how does the Lord speak to me through this painting?
- ❑ Is there another image of the Madonna of the Precious Blood that I find attractive? What is it that appeals to me?
- ❑ If I were to create my own Madonna of the Precious Blood, what would it look like?
- ❑ What other images of the Blood speak to me today?



Liturgical Art Reflects Contemplative Presence

By Mary Cecile Gunelson, C.P.P.S.

In 2008 the Ecclesiastical Art Department celebrated its 150-year history as a ministry of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO. This ministry began in Gurtweil, Germany in 1858. The Sisters' chaplain, Fr. Herman Kessler, intent on finding a means of supplementing their meager income, found a woman in the area to instruct the Sisters in the fine art of ecclesiastical embroidery. Soon the Sisters began creating beautiful vestments as a contribution to the beauty of the divine worship around which their lives were centered, as well as a means of supporting the fledgling community. When the political situation in Germany forced the congregation to immigrate to the United States in the 1870s, they brought with them their embroidery equipment, their skills, and this art which they loved.

The *Constitutions* of the O'Fallon Precious Blood Sisters express the evolution of the congregation in its early years: "Through the circumstances and events of time, however, God led our Sisters, first in Europe and then in the United States, into a more visible apostolic witness to his Kingdom." Thus the congregation, founded in Steinerberg, Switzerland, to live a contemplative life dedicated to perpetual adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament and prayerful reparation for the sins of humankind, evolved into an active apostolic community whose mission is reconciliation. Initially most of the Sisters were engaged in teaching, but in more recent times they serve in a variety of ministries. Alongside these ministries outside the confines of the convent, making vestments has remained a major work of the Sisters at the motherhouse in O'Fallon, and through the years they have continued to be a contemplative presence at the heart of the congregation.

A Brief History

A brief overview of the history of the Ecclesiastical Art Department reveals how the Sisters who led the congregation and the department responded to the “circumstances and events” of their time in history, trusting that God was leading them. In 1858 Sr. Philomene Troendle was sent from the convent in Ottmarsheim to start this new ministry in Gurtweil. As one of the first two Sisters to learn the art of ecclesiastical embroidery, she managed the department until her death in O’Fallon in 1877. Augusta Volk, a young woman skilled in hand tambourine stitching, heard a call to join the Precious Blood community and worked in the embroidery department with Sr. Philomene that first year. Several years later, when the political situation in Germany became hostile to religious

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and the invitation was given to come to the United States, Augusta was general superior of the community. She saw God beckoning and responded, eventually bringing all the Sisters who were able to make the journey to this new country. By the late 1870s the embroidery department was re-established in the congregation’s new motherhouse in O’Fallon.

The department grew steadily during those early years in the United States, and Sisters Euphemia Amann, Bernarda Lipps and Ambrosia Koebele were responsible for its management between 1877 and 1906. At that time all of the embroidery was done by hand, with exquisite attention to detail. Stories have been handed down about how the Sisters would go outside and study the flowers and then come back to their embroidery frames to express with vivid colors the beauty they contemplated. Every Sister in the department was an artist, but the work was a community effort (as it continues to be to this day) with several Sisters usually contributing to each article that was made. One of their chasubles was exhibited at the 1904 World’s Fair, held that year in St. Louis, and was awarded a gold medal. Along with an altar antependium, this chasuble was donated to the St. Louis Art Museum.

Sister Anselma Lange, an early American postulant, was sent to Europe to study art as a young Sister and subsequently served as director of the embroidery department from 1906 until 1945. During those years the ministry was expanded from making vestments “to include all aspects of anything that would be used in the Divine Services.” The stiffer Roman style

used for vestments was changed to the graceful, free-flowing Gothic style still used today. As director, Sister Anselma was known for her charity, and many poor missions were the recipients of vestments, albs and other articles without a thought of any required payment.

As the embroidery department grew, it became known beyond the Archdiocese of St. Louis. One contributing factor to this growth was

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the influence of Father Martin B. Hellriegel who became chaplain of the convent during this time. He was instrumental in promoting greater interest in the liturgical movement in the church, and the community was open to his leadership. Sr. Anselma, always willing to grow in the field of church art, eagerly incorporated liturgical symbols

filled with life and spirit into her designs. One of these symbols, especially dear to the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, was the Paschal Lamb slain and victorious, described in Revelations 5:1-12. This Lamb is the centerpiece of the department logo.

After Sr. Anselma's death in 1945, a young—just 25—and gifted artist, Sr. Hiltrudis Powers, was appointed director and remained in that position until 2000. Just out of the novitiate, Sr. Hiltrudis had been sent to study art and eventually received a master's degree. Her thesis was in metal work and she also gained expertise in stained glass and wood. When the convent chapel was renovated and enlarged in the 1960s, Sr. Hiltrudis designed and executed extensive art work for the new addition, expertly blending the new with the old. The stained-glass windows depicting the mysteries of salvation, the copper and enamel tester with its nine angels over the altar, the painted murals, the ornamented metal work above the tabernacle, and the decorative iron gates in front of the old sanctuary are testimonials to her artistry and imagination in using all of these media in praise of God. Like Sr. Anselma before her, she skillfully built her designs upon the church's liturgical symbols. As a result, her chapel art offers endless opportunity for meditative reflection.

Adapting to Change

Sr. Hiltrudis was alert to adapt to the changing liturgical needs of the Catholic Church. She incorporated silk screening into some of the embroidery designs and also designed and made many fabric banners. In

addition, she designed and silk screened sets of Sunday posters for the A, B and C liturgical cycles and responded to requests for painting murals, designing stained-glass windows and creating many other larger art pieces. Sometime during these years the name of the embroidery department was changed to Ecclesiastical Art Department (EAD) to reflect these expanded services. It became known nationally and even received orders from abroad.

In the ecumenical spirit of Vatican II, Sr. Hiltrudis also expanded the scope of the department by responding to requests for liturgical art and vestments from other Christian churches. When seminarians from Concordia Lutheran Seminary in St. Louis came to O'Fallon to order stoles, Sister Hiltrudis sought and received permission from the chancery to make liturgical articles for "anyone who asks in good faith." Later these seminarians served in churches

around the country and contacted Sister to request paraments.

"Yes, we will make them," she responded. "What are they?" The Sisters quickly adopted this new name for their altar superfrontals and pulpit and lectern hangings; Sr. Hiltrudis used her familiarity

with liturgical symbols to answer these pastors' requests for new designs. When the Catholic Church began to focus more on color than embroidery for priest and altar, Sister Hiltrudis said: "God bless the Lutherans; they keep us in business!"

Sr. Hiltrudis also responded to requests to instruct Sisters from other congregations who wished to learn the embroidery and sewing skills. She sent Sisters from the department to teach in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Texas and hosted Sisters from Ohio and South Dakota and Arizona who spent time at O'Fallon learning from and working with the Sisters in the department. Most recently Sisters from Uganda and Ghana spent a year in the department learning the skills and eventually establishing departments of their own. In addition to sharing their skills, Sr. Hiltrudis, like Sr. Anselma before her, responded to many requests for vestments, often taking vestments from the Sisters' sacristy to donate to needy parishes.

Thus did the seed planted in Gurtweil sprout, grow, and bear fruit. By 1995, however, it was evident that it would no longer be possible to continue with all the services that the EAD had been able to provide. The decline in the number of women entering the congregation and the advancing age of Sisters presently in the department necessitated a curtailment of many of its services and a refocusing of the energies of its

When the Catholic Church began to focus more on color than embroidery for priest and altar, Sister Hiltrudis said: "God bless the Lutherans; they keep us in business!"

aging members. As the leadership team of the congregation reflected on these circumstances and events, they asked the EAD Sisters to undertake a feasibility study of the department. This was begun as a way to discern how God was leading this ministry of the community at this time in our history. As a result of their study, the Sisters in the department made several recommendations which they hoped would enable the EAD to remain viable for many more years. At the same time they determined that it would not be fiscally feasible to incorporate lay workers as part of the EAD staff. Two of their recommendations were “to find a Sister to be prepared to take leadership of the department when Sr. Hiltrudis would no longer be able to do it,” and “to affirm the Ecclesiastical Art Department as a second career ministry.”

These recommendations were acted upon and in 2000 I took over direction of the EAD after working for about a year with Sr. Hiltrudis. In addition, a few of our Sisters who were ready to leave their full-time ministry joined the department. For several years we continued to do the embroidery for which the department is known, making vestments, stoles, paraments, and other fabric liturgical articles, eliminating silk screening and works of art using media other than fabric. When we no longer had enough Sisters to keep up with these orders we began to cut back the number of people we could serve and eventually discontinued taking new orders for paraments.

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Sharing the Gift

A few years ago, realizing that we would eventually need to close, we began looking for a community that might want to take over our “business.” A new community of young Benedictines who had recently moved into the Kansas City-St. Joseph diocese responded to our invitation. They already had a vestment department, but had heard of us from Bishop Finn and were eager to learn our embroidery skills. However, they said they would not be able to do the work we did for the Protestant denominations because their mission is to pray for and minister to Catholic priests. We agreed to work together nonetheless. Perhaps God had other plans for us than finding a community to take over the department.

During 2007-2008 several of the Benedictine Sisters came to O’Fallon to learn embroidery skills from the Sisters in the EAD. We gave

them the embroidery machines and materials we no longer needed and, in turn, visited them to see how they were progressing and to help them hone their skills. They have now begun to integrate into their repertoire the hand embroidery they learned from us. We also have collaborated in some projects and they are using motifs that we embroidered for them on their vestments. One of their very talented Sisters made beautiful Perpetual Help and Immaculate Heart of Mary hand embroidered pieces for us to use on two of our vestment orders. Eventually they may be able to make a line of “O’Fallon” vestments.

Around the same time that we began working with the Benedictines, one of our Sisters introduced us to Lucrecia Da Silva, a woman whom Sr. Paulette had assisted when Lucrecia and her family came to this country as refugees. Lucrecia wanted to use her sewing skill in service of the church. We trained her in using our techniques for making custom-fitted albs. When, in 2008, our congregation began the redevelopment of our O’Fallon property as a continuum of living for seniors and the EAD was moved from our spacious workrooms to a smaller space, we began to refer all alb orders to her.

These “circumstances and events” have brought us to the present chapter of our story. There are twelve Sisters in the EAD and we have a

We focus particularly on the values of presence, hospitality, reconciliation and response to human needs, which our congregation has identified as the core values by which we live out our mission of reconciliation.

permanent new space in what is now known as Precious Blood Center, the portion of our buildings still owned and operated by the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood. Each Sister works when and as many hours as she is able. We accept only a limited number of orders so that the Sisters may be free to

work at a leisurely pace and have time for activities that will enrich their “golden years.” When time permits, we make additional items which will be available for sale online and through the gift shop when it reopens after the renovation of our buildings is complete. In addition, we respond to requests for patterns, liturgical fabrics and other items related to this work and make referrals when we are unable to make what someone needs.

A Prayerful Presence

As we continue to discern where God is leading us in the light of our redevelopment, we reflect on our Constitutions which state: “Faithful to our heritage and rooted in prayer, we seek to carry forward our mission

of reconciliation through the Precious Blood of Jesus as he continues to reconcile all creation to the Father.” We focus particularly on the values of presence, hospitality, reconciliation and response to human needs, which our congregation has identified as the core values by which we live out our mission of reconciliation.

We try to maintain a prayerful presence with one another as we work, prayerfully mindful as well of the needs of the clergy and congregations that we serve. When visitors and tour groups visited the motherhouse before the renovation began, the places they were usually shown were the chapel and the Ecclesiastical Art Department. While we have not been able to have tours during the renovation, we hope to resume this ministry of hospitality. We also want to remain open to the possibility that some of the lay persons who will be living with us in the Villa Theresa Apartments may not only want to come for a visit, but perhaps also volunteer their sewing skills for a few hours.

We view our ministry with other denominations as a way of being reconcilers and building up trust and respect among churches despite our theological differences, and we continue to respond to their orders for stoles. In a sense, our working with the Benedictines, who as a Tridentine community living a traditional monastic lifestyle are very different from ourselves, is also a ministry of reconciliation. We find that in working together we grow in our appreciation of our differences and what we have to contribute to the mission of Christ.

Our ministry responds to the need that all human beings have for beauty and for a beautiful setting in which to offer praise and thanks to our provident God. We have inherited a rich legacy of beautiful liturgical art and the skills to create it. We want to continue to share these in every way that God opens before us. At the same time, we recognize that at some point we will no longer be able to do this ministry and that, like so many other ministries in which our Sisters have engaged, our community will need to let it go. As Sisters schooled in the Paschal Mystery, we trust that God will bring new life out of what we are handing over in faith.



Precious Blood Sister Mary Cecile Gunelson presently serves as director of the Ecclesiastical Art Department of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Missouri. Previous ministries have included teaching elementary and high school, formation directress for novices and Sisters in temporary vows, parish pastoral ministry, and leadership team of the congregation. She has a

Masters degree in formative spirituality. In her free time she enjoys sewing, reading, working with photos and graphic art on the computer as well as being outdoors in nature.

For Reflection

- What circumstances and events in my life and the life of my congregation call me/us to discern a new direction at this time in my/our life?
- What forms/expressions of beauty facilitate my/our life of worship?
- How have I/we experienced a time of letting go as a participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ?



The Arts and Precious Blood Spirituality

By James Sloan, C.P.P.S.

A confession: I don't go around thinking about the precious blood of Jesus as much as I should. Sometimes I do, especially at prayer, or reflecting on Scripture but otherwise not so often—at least not directly. I do go around thinking about life all the time. Isn't that what most people do? What is it that occupies your mind at various times of the day? Isn't it life in some form? We think of the life, the liveliness we see in young children and young adults, or even in older people. All around us life abounds.

Here at Sonnino Mission House in Berkeley, California a steady flow of bicyclers make their way along our street. A block away at the Berkeley Bowl, an extraordinary market place, the aisles are always jammed with shoppers, many from distant parts of the world, choosing among the dozens of kinds of cheeses, wines, bulk foods, at last count 31 kinds of apples, 18 varieties of pears, aisles of fruits and vegetables including exotic vegetables like taro, yucca, mogua, and nopales leaves. Mainly it is the astounding variety of people who shop there. One Midwesterner after a week's visit to the Bay Area said the most fascinating thing she saw was "the people in the Berkeley Bowl."

Cities across the nation abound with life, coffee shops filled with people engaged in quiet conversations, or students lost in their computer work, streams of students making their way to class, people filling auditoriums and concert halls and churches. Across the nation life pulsates with extraordinary creativity: in music, dance, theater and film, architecture, painting and sculpture, and literature. These works of human genius, creativity, vitality, imagination, and often great beauty and insight are all reflections of God who gave humans such giftedness.

Where is the blood of Christ in all of this? Since blood is life, the precious blood pulses through it all.

Through a Precious Blood Prism

In the church of San Clemente in Rome, there is a huge 12th century Iapse mosaic. Nine hundred years after it was placed there by an artist unknown to us, it speaks of what the blood of Jesus has accomplished. At the center of the mosaic is a large depiction of Jesus nailed to the cross. This is no ordinary crucifixion scene. Yes, there are the figures of Mary and John standing at the foot of the cross, but what really draws one's attention are the twelve white doves, above, below, and at the sides of Jesus, dominating the blue background of the cross, ready to fly off in all directions with the message of salvation. Surely they symbolize the twelve apostles announcing salvation won through the blood of Jesus.

This is what draws the attention at first but then one becomes aware of more: The Father's hand reaching down above Jesus' head, holding the wreath of victory. And from the

foot of Jesus' cross flows power and life into a now vibrant plant which sends its tendrils up and over the entire space of the mosaic, forming circular patterns which encompass many aspects of life in medieval times including shepherds, farmers, monks, and a woman feeding a flock of birds. Those who "look through the prism of Precious

Blood spirituality" look at this mosaic and sense the power of God, the power of Jesus' blood flowing down through that cross into the plant (the church) and nurturing all of human life.

Those who "look through the prism of Precious Blood spirituality" look at this mosaic and sense the power of God, the power of Jesus' blood flowing down through that cross into the plant (the church) and nurturing all of human life.

Seeing the precious blood of Jesus, powerful and present, where others might not is evident in two litanies of the Precious Blood. Joseph Nassal, C.P.P.S. in his litany links the blood of Jesus with *The blood of the poor, the blood of the unborn, the blood of the enemy, the blood of the old, the blood of the hopeless*. Al Naseman, C.P.P.S., does the same in his litany, speaking of the Blood of Jesus *spilled by death squads, running cold in those who fear, flowing in the veins of every race and people, afflicted with leukemia, pulsing in the bodies of youth*.

Much religious art, especially in centuries past is clearly "Precious Blood" in content. Or it is there if you look for it. I think of Giotto's early

14th century fresco of the crucifixion in Padua's Scrovegni Chapel. The faces of the angels swooping around the figure of the dying Christ are agonized with grief over what is happening to him, especially the angels who gather the blood of Christ in a cup. We are accustomed to seeing the trio of Mary and St. John and Mary Magdalen there at the foot of the cross. Magdalen always wears red, usually a color associated with martyrdom, though in her case in medieval times, it came to be associated, mistakenly, with the belief that she was a reformed prostitute. Sometimes Mary the mother of Jesus wears red as well, as does the apostle John. In Giotto's crucifixion scene the robe of Christ the soldiers are fighting over is red.

Fortunately one can access these fresco paintings on the internet just by typing in the word Giotto at the Scrovegni (or Arena) Chapel. I first spent time in that chapel in 1973. In those days there were no long lines, no need for reservations to enter. I simply walked through the open doorway and found the place empty except for two other people, a man and his little boy. The man was telling his son about Jesus and Mary from their stories illustrated on the walls of the chapel. The entire surface of the walls, floor to ceiling, is covered with Giotto's frescoes. They are as easy to read today as they were in 1305 when he painted them. They told the story of Jesus and Mary to people who were unable to read, which, in 1305 was just about everyone. It was a thrill again this past May to spend time in that chapel with my traveling companion, Precious Blood Companion Tim Madsen. The more you study Giotto's frescoes through the lens of precious blood spirituality the more you see and feel: the massacre of the innocents, the circumcision, Jesus in anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus taken down from the cross and placed in his mother's arms.

Taking a Closer Look

Even where the blood is not evident—and it very often is—it is there in the mind of the Christian beholder. You have to study the details. Quite often in paintings by great artists, Mary the mother of Jesus is shown wearing a red tunic, occasionally under the traditional blue outer garment; at other times she is dressed entirely in red as in Rogier van der Weyden's Duran Madonna. The baby Jesus upon Mary's lap may hold in his hand a red carnation, or a red-fleshed pomegranate, or a goldfinch—a symbol of the passion since the bird ate thistles and thorns—or he may be reaching out to grasp a red cherry offered by an angel.

It is important to study the details in a work of art. For explicitness there is a painting by Louis Cousin in 1648 called *St. Catherine of Siena Drinking from the Side Wound of Christ*. It was meant for private devotion.

Juan Patricio Morlete Ruiz' 1760 painting of *Christ Consoled by Angels Following his Scourging*, shows his back all bloodied from the lashes he received. There is surely no shortage of paintings depicting the bloodshed by Christ, or alluding to it through symbols.

For the believer, works of art speak of God in some way.

Appreciating a work of art, a person might say, "If this is so wonderful, in a way that stirs my soul, what must

God be like who is the source of all this?" This sentiment may come to mind while enjoying a choir, a soloist, an orchestra, or perhaps when deeply moved by a poem, or a fine piece of writing. A work of art may be so full of joy and the wonder of life, or the sorrow of life—the truth of life, that we think of the creator and sustainer of life, and what God has done for his people.

For the believer, works of art speak of God in some way.

In his book, *Fully Human Fully Divine*, Michael Casey writes: "Filling our minds with God's good news means building into our lives a regular intake of words and images that counterbalance the contrary messages that have their origin in the interaction of concupiscence and the world around us. We need constantly to be reminded of the invisible aspects of our existence: our spiritual origin and destiny, our value in the eyes of God, the loving and forgiving presence of God in our life, the mysterious overlap of time and eternity."

This is what precious blood spirituality helps us to see and to do.



Precious Blood Father James Sloan studied art history in Florence, Italy and taught art history courses at the Kansas City Art Institute, Precious Blood Seminary in Liberty, Missouri and schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has had a lifelong interest in the arts. He was provincial director of the former Province of the Pacific, Companions director, spent many years in seminary formation, and was pastor of St. Barnabas parish in Alameda, California while also serving on the diocesan building committee.

For Reflection

- How do you experience God's presence in the abundant life all around you? Does Precious Blood spirituality help you to look at some things differently, more deeply? In what ways?

- ❑ Do some works of art (painting, sculpture, literature, film etc.) make you more aware of God's presence?
- ❑ Does looking at them "through the prism of Precious Blood Spirituality" enable you to appreciate them differently than you might otherwise, or find truth in them that you might otherwise have missed?
- ❑ Search out art books at your library or bookstore, especially books on the great artists of the Late Gothic, Renaissance or Baroque periods, especially Giotto, Duccio, Fra Angelico, and their followers which are so filled with examples of religious painting. Study them closely. How do they speak to you of Precious Blood spirituality?



Telling the Story: The Use of Image and Metaphors in Preaching

By Richard Bayuk, C.P.P.S.

Image and metaphor are indispensable elements of the written and spoken word that seeks to communicate effectively, evocatively and, yes, artfully. Good poetry, literature, storytelling, public speaking and preaching are all expressions of human creative skill and imagination. In this article, I will focus primarily on preaching and its use of image and metaphor; but I want to emphasize that what is said here applies as well to public speaking and writing of many kinds.

The use of image and metaphor is all around us, not only in the arts that I listed above, but also in everyday and informal conversation. It gets to the point with fewer words and paints pictures at the same time; meaning is not explained or confined, but rather is abundant as the words touch multiple experiences. Sayings, proverbs, adages, idioms and the like almost always use metaphor: “Up a tree,” “Out on a limb,” “I’m burning out (or up),” “Life is not a bowl of cherries,” “Where there’s smoke, there’s fire.” The list is endless, but they all share the use of image and metaphor.

Imagery taps into our imagination—which contains much of our power to change—and elicits differing responses. Advertisers do not appeal to reason; they touch our imaginations: “Maybe I can be thinner, more attractive, healthier, able to cook better, have less pain or more energy, if I just buy that product.” Other ways of trying to bring about change are not as effective, such as the appeal to reason (“Too much fat is not good for your diet”) or the appeal to will power (“Just say no” or “Forget about your fears”). Notice the absence of any concrete images in those statements. The

encounter with good but image-less preaching or writing might result in “I learned a lot” or “That gave me great pleasure” or even “I’m convinced.” Add the power of metaphor, image and story and the response might be silence at first, followed by “Wow!” or “Imagine that!” Imagination and the imaginative homily will connect with experience and move listeners, touch the heart and honor the power of the affective. Metaphor and imagery can uncover and awaken experience and lead to change.

Where Human Experience Meets Meaning

When I taught homiletics, I emphasized the use of imagery in preaching and tried to help students to be very intentional about using it. One of the introductory exercises I used was to have them imagine

Metaphor and imagery can uncover and awaken experience and lead to change.

that they were writing a 200-word article for the parish bulletin on some theological topic—grace, redemption, incarnation, repentance, faith—but not use the actual word at all. This usually necessitates using story or relating experience rather than simply explaining meaning. Try it sometime; it is a good challenge to move from doctrinal

explanations and catechism type answers to that place where human experience meets meaning, and real understanding can begin.

The writer and poet Kathleen Norris does something similar in her book *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith*. In the chapter titled “Repentance” she relates how she gave some parochial school children the assignment of writing their own psalms (a biblical genre filled with images and emotion), which resulted in their writing poems with an emotional directness and concreteness that otherwise may not have surfaced. One little boy wrote a poem called “The Monster Who Was Sorry,” in which he begins by admitting how much he hates it when his father yells at him. In the poem he responds by throwing his sister down the stairs, wrecking his room, and finally wrecking the whole town. The poem concludes with the words, “Then I sit in my messy house and say to myself, ‘I shouldn’t have done all that.’” The word repentance is not used, but the reality is described powerfully. A messy house (which is the result of his actions) becomes the metaphor for needing to change.

The images and metaphors for preaching can often be found in the scriptures themselves, which use them extensively. God is described, for example, as shepherd, father, mother, husband, king, lover, bridegroom, warrior, master, vineyard owner, savior, rock, fortress, way, light, potter,

judge, to name a few. Sin is described in multiple images, among them are becoming a harlot when one is married, rebelling against a father's love and leaving home, forgetting the past, wandering away like sheep, not being dressed when one is supposed to be ready for a wedding, becoming like a rotten bunch of grapes in a well-tended vineyard, breaking into a house by stealth, failing to release a neighbor from a debt, or not knowing what time it is.

Images and metaphors also come from our own experience, from the world around us, from poetry, literature and movies. In the film, *Latter Days*, a young Mormon man from Utah arrives in Los Angeles to begin his two years of mission work. At one point he encounters a woman sitting outside a hospital, weeping. She

has just lost someone close to her, and he doesn't know what to say at first. But then he tells her about reading the Sunday comics when he was a child: "When I was a little kid, I used to put my face right up to them. And I was just amazed

because it was just this mass of dots. I think life is like that sometimes. But I like to think that from God's perspective, life, everything, even this [her lover's death], makes sense. It's not just dots, and instead we're all connected. And it's beautiful and it's funny and it's good. You know, from this close we can't expect it make sense right now."

A student homily used a similar example: "I remember a National Geographic documentary which was filled with many compelling images. My favorite was a grayish photo in which you could see craters, dry riverbeds, valleys made by rivers, and great plains. I knew what I was looking at: the surface of the moon. But just then the narrator explained that it was a picture of a virus taken by an electron microscope, amplified thousands of times. The photo fooled me; I thought I knew what it was and I was wrong. In this documentary, the closer the camera got to something, the more unrecognizable it became. Sometimes, the closer we get to something or someone, the greater the possibility of losing perspective." The gospel referenced in the homily is Luke's account of Jesus returning to his hometown to speak in the synagogue—and experiencing rejection of himself and his message from those who know him best. There are no Sunday comics or electron microscopes in this gospel passage, but there are people who struggled with being challenged with a new vision and a different way of looking at things.

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In Real Time: Scriptures and Significant Events

There are times when the scriptures presented to us on a given weekend coincide with significant events on a parish, national, or international level, and the imagery in the scriptures connects with the images from concurrent experience. A compelling example was the week of the September 11th attacks. The temptation for many the following weekend was to ignore the scriptures and speak instead to what had happened, instead of letting the scriptures be a lens through which to find meaning in that horrific experience. The gospel for that Sunday was three parables: of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Child. In each one, that what was lost is ultimately found. A recurring image that filled our TV screens in the days immediately following the attacks in New York City was that of people walking the streets carrying photos of missing loved ones, many with words such as “Have you seen my brother,” or “I’m looking for my mother.” In my homily I referenced that image and I spoke of all the people who had been lost: the dead and missing, the shaken survivors, the confused citizens—even the perpetrators who were lost in their angry determination—lots of lost sheep and wayward children. How to embrace then—in the midst of the anger and sadness and confusion—a God who cares, searches, waits, loves, finds, heals, welcomes home and makes whole.

Another example was the July weekend several years back when the gospel was the parables of the pearl of great price and the discovered buried treasure. Earlier that week the nation had been riveted to the news accounts of nine coal miners trapped underground in Pennsylvania. Early that Sunday morning, they were dramatically rescued, unharmed, just hours before this gospel began to be proclaimed in churches across the country. I found it impossible not to make the connection between the image of these buried miners being discovered and rescued and the image of a buried treasure in the preaching of Jesus.

Jesus used images and metaphors extensively in his preaching. Some gospel narratives present us with powerful imagery as well. These

Jesus used images and metaphors extensively in his preaching.

images often resonate with images from our experience, and a preacher with a keen eye, a big heart, and a fertile imagination will make those connections. I recall a student homilist reflecting on the narrative of Peter leaving the boat and walking on water toward Jesus. He began the homily by describing the

experience of watching his little niece who was learning to walk. How she would crawl to a chair, hold on to it as she pulled herself up. Then, with her

mother several yards away—arms extended in invitation and calling for her to come—she would let go of the chair and take a step. Plop. Then roll over, get up and try again. As soon as she would take a step or two she would realize that she had nothing to hang on to, would lose focus and balance and go down. Eventually, she made it to Mom, having kept her eyes on the object of her faith and affection the entire time. This was a very effective image to connect with Peter’s stepping out in faith, taking a step or two, looking down and losing focus with his eyes off of Jesus, and beginning to sink, to go down. The faith didn’t outweigh the fear. (The image had the additional effectiveness of subtly presenting a feminine image of God.)

Another homilist tackled the overly familiar parable of the Good Samaritan. She focused on the image of the injured man being left for dead in the ditch. She made connections to all those people that are pushed to the side of the road by society and life, who become invisible to the extent that others are not willing to cross to the other side of the road and enter the ditch. She invited the listeners to recall what else one usually finds in the ditch or at the side of the road: garbage, refuse, litter, unwanted stuff—and the ubiquitous signs that let everyone know who is committed to picking up what lies on the shoulders and in the ditches. Not everything at the side of the road is trash and more names need to be on those signs.

Making Connections: Crossing Over

The imagery in the preceding homily also resonates with imagery in other gospel passages—and they begin to build upon one another. For example, the blind beggar at the side of the road and Lazarus lying unnoticed at the rich man’s door. The latter story also introduces the image of the abyss or chasm which became impossible to cross. That may remind us of Jesus saying to the disciples, “Let us cross over to the other side”; in this case in a boat on the sea and through a storm. It’s not a coincidence that in the literature of the time the church was often compared to a boat (even the word *nave* comes from the same root as *navy*) and that the boat was a common symbol for a community at risk. We still use the saying, “Looks like we’re all in the same boat.”

In more secular parlance we refer to the “ship of state,” meaning our country. Walt Whitman uses this image in his classic poem, *O Captain, My Captain*, written in the aftermath of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. (“*O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done;/The ship has weather’d every rack, the prize we sought is won/The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,/While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim*”

and daring:/But O heart! heart! heart!/O the bleeding drops of red,/Where on the deck my Captain lies,/Fallen cold and dead.”)

Crossing over is a timeless image with rich and multiple connections, not the least of which today is those who—sometimes in the face of real peril—cross borders and rivers and fences and oceans and

Crossing over is a timeless image with rich and multiple connections, not the least of which today is those who—sometimes in the face of real peril—cross borders and rivers and fences and oceans and cultures to find a better life, a new life.

cultures to find a better life, a new life. This imagery was used very effectively by a student who delivered a homily for the baptism of Jose Antonio, the infant son of an undocumented couple named Josephina and Antonio. They had previously crossed the Rio Grande and almost drowned in the process; then they traveled for two days through the desert before reaching safe haven. I offer here excerpts which exhibit use of the

imagery. Note how he connects multiple images that connect with each other and with the meaning of the sacrament. The gospel used was the account of Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan.

Josephina and Antonio, you left your home as many of us have, where we were nurtured by families and friends, becoming people of faith. On your journey searching for a new life, you had to go through the waters of a river, where you saw death before you. By the grace of God and your faith, you were able to pass through. In the water of that river, an encounter with death gave you new life.

Your walk through the desert tested you further and made you believe even more in God’s presence in your lives. Many of us have had to experience death in similar ways as we left our country and loved ones. From that barren desert you walked into a new life. This new life allowed you to plant a special seed that grew within the waters of Josephina’s womb, giving life to Jose Antonio. Your living water gave him life, as the river did for you.

Today this community welcomes your child as he enters the waters of baptism, the womb of the Church, and is born into new life as a child of God and member of the Body of Christ.

Images from Funeral Homilies

I want to close with two more examples of preaching, both funeral homilies. In each case, the student was actually present at the funeral, but

did not preach. For the purpose of preaching in class, they wrote homilies that they imagined themselves giving.

The first is the funeral of the student's 61 year-old mother in the Philippines who died of cancer (after five years of chemotherapy) on Palm Sunday in 1995, the day after her daughter's wedding. The first reading was Isaiah recounting his vision of all people climbing God's mountain and partaking in a great feast, of God wiping away every tear and destroying the veil of death. The gospel was the account of the crucifixion and Jesus commending his spirit to God. Here are several passages from the homily that show the use of the imagery.

Mama Milagros, our mother and your friend, has died. For five years she wrestled with her cancer, living each day with uncertainty and sometimes with fear. She told me once in a quivering voice, "Though I know that I will end up dead with this illness, still I am afraid of dying." As I looked at her, she just bowed her head, trying to hide the tears than ran down her face.

The day before Mama died, there was rejoicing. Our sister Imelda got married. She veiled herself joyfully. You could see Mama's joy when we visited her in the hospital after the wedding... There was a wedding and now her funeral. The joy we experienced last Saturday, the laughter and the smiles, have been replaced by a veil of tears.

Remember Mama's words: "Still, I am afraid of dying." Even though she worked as a nurse in the hospital for all those years, it was not easy for her to face her own death. And this must be what Jesus felt.... As we commemorate his passion, death and resurrection this week, we remember that he knew fear as he experienced the eclipse of God, this God whom he loved and whose will he followed faithfully.... But when all hopes turned into hopelessness, he uttered in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

This is the faith that will enable us to move on. It is a gift from God, the God who promised to destroy the veil that veils all peoples and to wipe away the tears from all faces.... This is the love that brings us to this table of rich food and choice wine. As we share in this banquet, we commend Mama Milagros to God, and pray that the veil may be lifted and the love and life of resurrection may enter.

The second homily was written for the funeral of Rogelio, a 28 year-old pastoral worker in the Philippines with whom the homilist worked while doing his pastoral internship. Rogelio died suddenly and unexpectedly of a heart attack. The student was invited to give the homily at the funeral mass, but declined because it would have been too difficult. The following excerpts are from the homily he wrote and preached in class, the

homily he couldn't give. The pertinent readings are Psalm 90 and the Luke's account of the crucifixion.

The night that Rogelio died he sent me a text message before going to sleep. It was about 1:00 A.M. because he had had a long day in the parish that Saturday. The ending of the text message read, "May you feel the embrace of God as you sleep tonight." I have sat with those words much of the week and have realized this is a time when many people don't feel the embrace of God, because the pain and sorrow, the anger or guilt is too strong, too heavy to carry. Feeling embraced by God might be the last thing we are feeling as we wonder why. Why, God, could you let this happen? And it's ok to feel this way. Maybe the cry of our hearts is more like, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" We know whose words those are. Jesus perhaps didn't feel embraced by God in those last moments. Like many gathered here, he knew confusion, uncertainty, sadness.

Several months ago, Rogelio and I visited the home of a young woman and her small child, no more than four years of age. As we visited I noticed a framed photograph of a young man and I said to the woman, "This must be your husband; he is very handsome." She replied, "Thank you, brother. My husband died less than a year ago of a sudden heart attack." It was a quiet moment of sadness, and at that point the little girl walked to the table, took the picture, sat on the floor in front of us, held it close to her chest and embraced it. I said, "She really does remember her father?"

"Oh brother," the woman said, "She loved him more than anything in the world."

If that little girl could take a picture of her father, hold it to her heart and embrace it, how much more will God take us, his children, and embrace us in our pain?

The psalm today says, 'Our years come to an end like a sigh, so teach us to count our days so that we may gain a heart of wisdom.' Part of that wisdom is coming to see life as very fragile, something to be embraced and cherished and held as a gift from God.

As the little girl's mother said, "Oh brother, she loved him more than anything in the world." God so loved the world. Through Jesus death is destroyed. Yes, Jesus did ask why God had abandoned him. But he then said, "Into your hands I commend my spirit." And so we have the courage now to commend our brother Rogelio to God, who embraces him eternally in the kingdom. Let us allow ourselves to be embraced by the comfort, care and compassion of God that is all around us.

Helpful Hints for Homilists

Using imagery and metaphor effectively in writing or speaking or preaching doesn't happen automatically. Some are more adept than others, but we can all become more skilled in its use and more aware of it when we see and hear it.

Read poetry; it's filled with metaphor and images. As an example, consider *The Night Has a Thousand Eyes* by Francis William Bourdillon: “*The night has a thousand eyes, /And the day but one; /Yet the light of the bright world dies /With the dying of the sun. /The mind has a thousand eyes, /And the heart but one; /Yet the light of a whole life dies /When love is done.*”

Listen to good storytellers. One of the best today is Garrison Keillor, whose weekly radio show includes a ten to fifteen minute monologue titled, *News from Lake Wobegon*. I once sat in a crowd of 5,000 people watching the show broadcast live, and as he told the story that night a deep silence came upon the crowd, an almost hypnotic effect of his spinning tales and painting images. Even though these stories are not “true,” they touch our lives because they speak to universal experiences.

Columnists, especially human interest or humor, are another rich example of the use of imagery and metaphor. They have the ability to describe vividly the particulars and particularities of life. One of my favorites was Erma Bombeck, who—like a good homilist—saw grace in every corner of her life and who named it with eloquence and heart in every column. Her very last column in 1996 was a good example. It was titled, “Let's Face It, Not All Ruts Need Repairs.” Here are a few excerpts, ending with the final sentences of the column.

Well, Betty Crocker has had her eighth face-lift, and I'm sitting here looking like a car backed over my face. I'm not alone. There's an army of women like me who talk about cosmetic surgery, but our philosophy prevails: No guts to live with the ruts.... Frankly, I didn't think Betty was all that shallow. She's not a model on a runway for crying out loud. She's selling cake mix. Did Uncle Ben hit 45 and go out and buy a rug? Did Colonel Sanders lose the glasses and get contacts?

Realistically, everyone grows old, but some characters don't have to mess with the aging process. Miss Piggy doesn't need a nose job. Barbie doesn't need liposuction. I belong to the Mother Teresa school of skin care. So I didn't moisturize enough. My deeds will be measured not by my youthful appearance, but by the concern lines on my forehead, the laugh lines around my mouth and the chins from seeing what can be done for those smaller than me or who have fallen.”

In the words of one writer, “our homilies are all around us.” Homilies await us outside our door, in a movie or poem or column, in experience and relationships, in story and memory. They are best communicated through the rich use of metaphor and image. Or, as the saying goes, “A picture is worth a thousand words.”



Precious Blood Father Richard Bayuk serves the Kansas City Province on the Leadership Team and also as Treasurer and Director of Communications. Most weekends he preaches for the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging. Previously he served as Director of Advanced Formation at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, where he also taught Homiletics.

For Reflection

- ❑ Try the exercise described in this article, in which you explain or describe a theological concept or term—for example, grace—without using the word itself.
- ❑ Recall some of the best homilies you have heard. Do they have anything in common? What made them memorable for you? Answer the same questions for the worst homilies you remember.
- ❑ What are some of the images and metaphors that one might use and develop when speaking or writing on themes related to Precious Blood spirituality? Consider as a starting point some of the images that we commonly refer to—including *outside the wall*, *bringing near*, or *cry of the blood*—or concepts like *inclusivity* or *redemption*. Familiar images in art and writing such as *cup* or *cross* or *lamb*. How can this rich variety contribute to preaching, writing, prayer and identity?

Giving Form to Spiritual Concepts

A New Creation for the Blood of Christ

By Eileen Tomlinson, C.P.P.S.

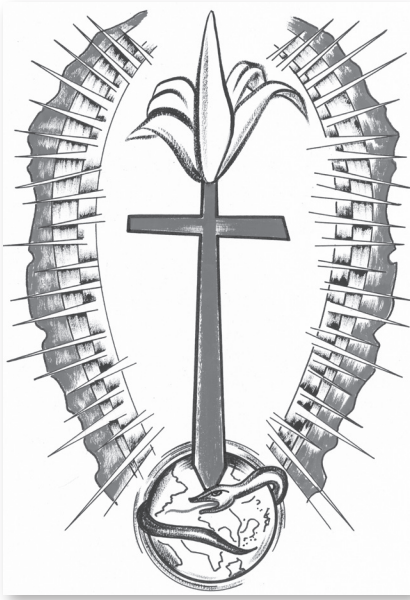
We, like Jesus, have been called to proclaim God's love for all creation. This is always a new creation. Through the Church, through our Congregation, we are sent on a mission to give concrete expression through diverse ministries. My ministry from the very start was to spread the message of Christ through the medium of art, especially visual or plastic art.

Some years ago after living religious life for about twenty years, living the liturgy and praying the Precious Blood devotions, I began to connect the gospels with the Precious Blood. Every Friday I spent time reading and pondering on the coming Sunday gospel. It was natural to put some form into some of these ideas. They turned out finally to be symbols of the blood of Christ. I have selected four of these symbols to present in this article:

- The Immaculate Conception prepared Mary for the birth of Christ and heralded the splendor of the Incarnation of the Redeemer;
- Feast of the Holy Family (Year B) when Simeon says, "My eyes have seen your salvation which you prepared in the sight of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32);
- The Sacred Heart of Jesus when we celebrate the universal love of Christ as he pours out his blood for us; and
- Feast of the Precious Blood when we honor the Lamb of God who through his blood washes away the sin spread over the whole human race.

The Immaculate Conception

The Immaculate Conception is the greatest victory of the Precious Blood because as Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B. writes, “it is in prevision of the merits of the bloody death of the Savior that Mary has been preserved from the slavery of sin from the first instant of her existence.” In the gospel for the feast, the Angel Gabriel greets Mary and says, “Rejoice O highly favored daughter. The Lord is with you.” Mary has this in common with us all, that she was redeemed by the Blood of her Son, but she has this in particular that the Blood was taken from her most chaste body; she is the source of it.



Symbolism: The lily represents Mary’s singular purity. The mandorla is an oval-shaped nimbus used exclusively for the Blessed Virgin. It envelops the entire figure. The serpent represents Satan holding the world in bondage. The stem of the lily is the Root of David. Its form is a cross representing Christ who vanquished the demon by his bloody death.

The Holy Family, Year B

It was revealed to Simeon by the Holy Spirit that he would not experience death until he had seen the Anointed of the Lord. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Simeon recognized the child Jesus as the Anointed of the Lord. Anna the prophetess, already eighty-four, was a witness, gave thanks to God and talked about the Child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Israel.

Symbolism: A first-born male child belonged to the Lord by the double title of first fruit and head of the family. Simeon’s prophecy intimately



associates the sorrows of Mary with the persecutions which her Son is to undergo. Jesus saves the world by his sufferings. Mary is associated in his work of redemption by the sword which pierces her heart. In union with Mary, who presents the Immaculate Lamb to the Holy Trinity, we too can offer the Precious Blood in the firm hope that he will be both touchstone and cornerstone for all nations.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart

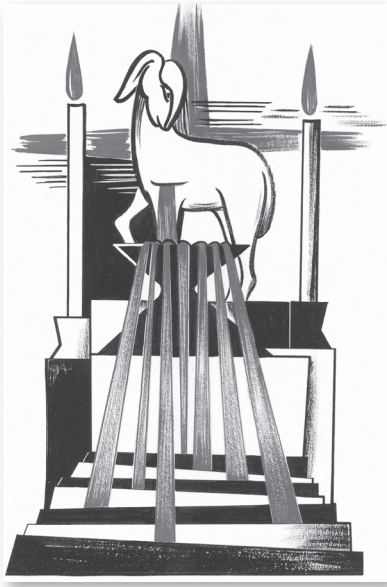
The Sacred Heart is the fountain-head of the Blood of Christ. As Jesus says in the Gospel of John, “I give you a new commandment: Love one another. Such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for each other” (13:34). All devotion to the Sacred Heart is found in these words of Christ. The Heart of Jesus pierced upon the Cross reveals to us Christ’s human love, but beneath the veil of the humanity of Jesus is shown the ineffable and incomprehensible love of the world. Nothing expresses so much love as the Heart of Jesus pouring out even the last drop of Blood for us.

Symbolism: The Heart of Jesus is the living symbol of Christ’s redemptive love. Christ said in a private revelation to St. Margaret Mary, “Behold this Heart burning with so great a love for humankind.” Our command is clear: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with your whole mind, and with your whole strength.” This *totus* denotes devotion. Thus understood, devotion constitutes perfection, for it is the very flower of charity. Devotion to the Sacred Heart is then summed up in the worship of the Incarnate Word manifesting his love for us and showing us his Heart as the symbol of his love (*Christ in His Mysteries*, Dom Marion, p. 266, 365).



The Feast of the Precious Blood

The Blood of Christ is Precious. “But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers opened his side with a lance and immediately there came out blood



and water” (John 19, 33-34). The Church honors this Divine Blood as symbol, instrument, price and pledge of our Redemption. It is the life of the Church. It flows so to speak from the heart of Jesus into our hearts and it is the unceasing source of pardon we seek. It is our salvation.

Symbolism: The seven sacraments are symbolized by seven streams issuing from an overflowing chalice for the nourishment of the faithful. The Mass is Christ and the Church in the act of offering to his Father the perpetual oblation of himself. Christ even in glory stands before his Father as the Lamb that was slain.



Sister Eileen Tomlinson is a member of the Dayton Sisters of the Precious Blood. She has spent over 50 years teaching art at Teachers’ College Athenaeum of Ohio, Regina High School in Norwood, Ohio and at Salem Heights in Dayton, Ohio. She also designed vestments in the Ecclesiastical Art Department at Salem Heights. In California she taught seniors and contributed art work and other services to the San Luis Rey Academy and Parish. Sister Eileen is now at Salem Heights, still on hand as “artist in residence.”

For Reflection

- ❑ A symbol is an object used to represent something abstract. What symbols speak to you in these designs?
- ❑ What is the importance of knowing symbols in religion or even in everyday life? What are some symbols not included here. What do they mean to you?
- ❑ Speaking of art, Pope Pius XII said, “Art is a window opening to the Infinite.” How does art open the infinite to you?
- ❑ Philosopher and historian Benedetto Croce said, “Art is perfectly defined when simply defined as intuition.” How do you think “intuition” applies to other arts—music, literature, writing and other kinds of making or doing? Do you see yourself drawn to one or more of these arts?

The Liberal Arts

Satisfying the Hunger for Freedom

By Thomas Welk, C.P.P.S.

Liberal. Now there's a word that can raise some hackles! For many people, the word liberal is a noun ("You liberal") rather than an adjective, and often is used as an accusatory and disparaging label. There was a time during the Cold War years when calling someone a Communist was the height of an insult. Not anymore. Today we have substituted liberal as the insult.

"Art" is another word that can be a red flag. For many people there is no practical value to this "artsy stuff." Will engaging in artistic endeavors put food on the table or a roof overhead? This art stuff is good for those who have it made, but for those struggling in the trenches with the basics of making a living, the arts are an unnecessary luxury.

Combining the two words, "liberal arts," presents us with a totally different concept than what is popularly understood when the words are used independently of one another. As a field of study, the liberal arts challenge us to expand our horizons to gain a deeper understanding of reality. Many of our contemporary mistaken notions of the liberal arts do not reflect the original understanding of this field of endeavor.

The origin of these two words is obvious. Liberal is from the Latin *liberalis*—of or pertaining to a free person. Which in turn is from the Latin word *liber* (book), from which, interestingly, we get the words library and liberty.

The connection between the two words becomes even more obvious when the root meaning of the word arts is understood. "Arts" is derived from the Latin *ars, artis*—to join or arrange. The dictionary defines the arts as "the disposition of things by human skill, to answer the purpose intended." In the liberal arts, the purpose intended is freedom.

A Long-Standing Debate

For the Romans, the *liberales artes* were restricted to a freeman; these were courses befitting a noble man. Which raises the question of which came first: Did being free allow one to take these courses? Or did these courses make one a free man? And, yes, the word “man” applies strictly here. Women were not allowed to engage in this course of study.

In the liberal arts, the purpose intended is freedom.

Some of these liberal arts courses included literature, philosophy, languages and history. These courses still encompass what is known today as a liberal arts curriculum. They are distinguished from courses that deal more with a professional or technical curriculum.

Within the academic community there has been a long-standing debate regarding the place of a liberal arts curriculum. Do we need to teach students how to make a living or how to live? It appears to me that in most instances it is the former that is emphasized to the detriment of teaching people how to live.

This point was forcefully brought home to me in the mid 1970s when I was listening to Albert Speer being interviewed by Johnny Carson. Speer was an architect by training and the Minister of Armaments and War Production for the Third Reich. He was tried and convicted at the Nuremberg trials and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment at Spandau. After his release in 1966 he wrote two autobiographical works, *Inside the Third Reich* and *Spandau: The Secret Diaries*.

Speer made the mandatory rounds of talk shows, pushing his books. During the interview on the Tonight Show, Carson asked Speer how he could so easily fall under the spell of Hitler and the Nazis, since he was such an educated man, having a doctoral degree. Speer stated that even though he had a doctoral degree, he did not consider himself an educated man, since his degree was in a technical field: architecture. His academic years included very little course work in the liberal arts and humanities.

As such he had no courses that taught him how to think and question, and so fell easily under the spell of the Nazis. Unquestioning loyalty was required of all involved in Hitler’s inner circle. Speer considered himself “trained,” not educated. He had been taught how to make a living, but not how to live.

In working with physicians, I find many of them also acknowledging this point. Their many years in school are heavily focused on a technical curriculum. There is very little room for coursework in the humanities and the liberal arts. Many of these same individuals are hungry for this kind of

education, and after retirement go back to school in pursuit of a degree in the courses befitting “a free person.” As a retired physician friend recently told me, “I was trained, not educated.”

Setting People Free

Jesus began his ministry by proclaiming, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.... He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives” (Luke, 4:18). Enabling people to be free to live life fully was the focus of the ministry of

Speer considered himself “trained,” not educated. He had been taught how to make a living, but not how to live.

Jesus throughout his lifetime. “So Jesus said to those who believed in him, ‘If you live according to my teaching, you are truly my disciples; then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’” (John 8:31-32). As Jesus further fleshed out this

discussion with his disciples, he reminded them that not knowing the truth enslaved them. Jesus promised that it is through his teaching that they will find true freedom: “If the Son frees you, you will really be free” (John 8:36).

Jesus never believed that ignorance is bliss. Ignorance causes many, many more problems than it solves, including enslavement. Being enslaved can be of one’s own making or it can be caused by another.

Dealing with the literal reality of slavery was a difficult dilemma for the early Christian community. This is clearly reflected in Paul’s letter to Philemon. Paul had befriended the runaway slave, Onesimus. Now he was in trouble with the law. He appealed to Philemon to disregard the Roman law and set Onesimus free.

The ruling powers of the Roman Empire instinctively realized that the teaching of Jesus was subversive. The Christians were put to death in Rome not so much because of their theology *per se*, but what that theology led them to do: strive to empower the poor and the marginalized, just as Jesus had done. The Roman economy was dependent on lots of free slave labor.

They realized that if these slaves were educated, they would then also be empowered. Empowerment would be the first step to demanding freedom. The opportunity to engage in the *liberales artes* was categorically denied them. These Christians who were espousing this had to be eradicated for the sake of the economic well-being of the Empire.

This same attitude was prevalent during the history of slavery in our country. It was forbidden to teach slaves how to read and write. With education they might well become too “uppity” and no longer stay in their place.

In many instances, gender also determined whether one was able to get a formal education. For most of history women were denied the opportunity of going beyond even a few years of schooling. In my own family as we were growing up on a farm in North Dakota, it was the boys who were allowed to go to high school after successfully completing eight grades of education in a one-room country school. Even though my two oldest sisters were quite capable of tackling a high school curriculum, they were told by my father that education was not necessary for women, since their primary role was as a housewife and mother. Times changed, and the next two younger girls were allowed to pursue whatever educational endeavors they wished.

One of these sisters told me a few years ago that as an older adult she had a conversation with my father about this. As she shared with him how she regretted not getting more than an eighth-grade education, he became emotional and apologetically shrugged his shoulders, stating that “this was just the way it was then.”

Unfortunately, that is “still the way it is” in many parts of the world. Girls and young women in Iraq and Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia (to name only a few countries), for example, are in peril of their lives for daring to go to school. Education might well make them too “uppity” also.

Blood of Liberation

As stated earlier, Jesus made it clear that making people free was an integral part of his ministry. In chapter eight of John’s gospel we see Jesus teaching his disciples about freedom, freedom from the enslavement of sin. Jesus was willing to totally give of himself to set his brothers and sisters free. He was willing to shed his blood to the last drop. Talk about a liberal arts teacher! By setting things right; by helping us to arrange our lives in right connection; by redeeming us with his blood, Jesus brought us back into right relationship with the God-Creator who initially gifted us with life.

Gaspar and Maria followed in the footsteps of Jesus. They dedicated themselves to minister to the poor and disenfranchised. It was a work that consumed their lives. Empowerment and liberty were hallmarks of their ministry. As Jesus had come to save and set people free, so Maria and Gaspar saw themselves called to be Missionaries of the saving blood of Jesus. They were “liberal arts educators” in the truest sense of the word.

Just as the early Christians would not let themselves be silenced by the Roman ruling class, so Gaspar would not let himself be intimidated by the secular powers of his day. Napoleon’s henchmen could put his body into jail, but they could not imprison his spirit.

Iron bars do not the strongest prison make. Neither Peter nor Paul could be contained by a prison. Following the Word of God, their spirits were free. It was a Word they courageously preached to God's people.

Maria de Mattias did whatever she could to ensure that the young women of Italy had access to education. If this meant challenging the powers of her day, be they religious or secular, so be it. In 1861 when the Proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy was issued, Marie wondered: "What will happen to our Congregation: Will our schools survive? Will we be able to continue to do a little good for the girls, the young, the women, the families—all who are so hungry for God, for culture, for justice, and for truth?" (Maria Spinelli, *Woman of the Word: The Life and Ministry of Maria de Mattias*, translated by Sr. Loretta Gegen, A.S.C.)

Confronting the Culture

In my opening comments I reflected on the difference between education and training. I do not wish to disparage the importance of acquiring a technical skill. I am in awe of what my car mechanic can do to keep my clunker running. His skills are highly appreciated. I am also in awe of what my physician can do to repair my injury-plagued knees and the cuts I endure on my hands and fingers in my wood-working projects.

Yet, there is more to my life than mechanical objects and bodily/physical functioning. In the words of Jesus, "Not on bread alone shall people live" (Luke 4:4). How do we nourish the hunger and thirst of our spirits?

Enslavement many times is not imposed from the outside; frequently it is of our own making. The culture and society in which we live espouses a very materialistic value system. Its message ("It is by bread alone that people live") stands diametrically opposed to what Jesus taught. Even though we proclaim ourselves a very religious and Christian-based culture, I seriously doubt that this is the reality we live by. We may be "religious" in the shallow definition of that word by going to church on Sunday and echoing pious platitudes, but that does not make us a spiritual culture. There is much hunger and thirst in the land.

As a materialistic culture we place extreme emphasis on the physical. This is manifested in many different ways, including our unrelenting demand for medical interventions in life-threatening situations, even

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when there is no reasonable expectation of a beneficial medical outcome. We proclaim our belief in life after death, but many times this does not go beyond mere lip-service. Our culture teaches us how to live in this world; it does not teach us how to live beyond the physical.

How will this hunger and thirst be satisfied? What will bring freedom to God's people? The basic tenet of Christianity is that we are redeemed by the Blood, the life of Christ. The "call of the Blood" comes to us from many different directions.

As Precious Blood people, our challenge is to be truly artistic—continuing the redemptive work of Jesus by "disposing of things" in their original purpose and right order. This will bring about that beautiful order of things envisioned by Maria de Mattias and preached by Gaspar del Bufalo. This will result in true "liberalism," a freedom longed for by every human spirit, and make us all people of the liberal arts.



Precious Blood Father Thomas A. Welk has a doctoral degree in pastoral counseling, with emphasis on end of life issues. A native of North Dakota, Father Tom came to Wichita in the fall of 1970 and joined the staff at Newman University. In the summer of 1981 he began working with a committee of interested community members to help start a hospice program in Wichita. When Hospice was legally incorporated in the summer of 1982, he served as a member of the first Board of Directors, and was actively involved in putting together a hospice service plan. He became a staff member of Hospice of Wichita (now known as Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice) in August 1983. He is presently the Director of Professional Education and Pastoral Care.

For Reflection

- In what areas of my life is there enslavement? What sin/separation keeps me from the freeing power of God?
- Do my possessions own me, or do I own my possessions?
- We hear much about the slave trade (especially the buying and selling of young women for sexual purposes) flourishing in many parts of the world, including the U.S. What can I do to expose this slave trade and help to free these women?
- Within academic institutions of higher learning there often is a struggle to maintain a curriculum that includes the liberal arts and the humanities. Is there a way I can influence this debate to ensure students learn not just how to make a living, but also how to live?

Next Issue:

Ecology

Summer 2010

If you are interested in contributing to the Summer 2010
edition of *The Wine Cellar*, email Joe Nassal.
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