



The Cup of the New Covenant

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD
No. 28, April 2010

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD AS A WELLSPRING FOR JPJC

by Francesco Bartoloni, C.PPS.

The theme of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) is becoming more and more pressing, as many religious congregations and missionaries in their ministry of animation consider this issue to be essential. The same is happening in our congregation. Fr. Felix Mushobozi, a General Councilor, has the specific task of promoting this topic for the entire congregation. Here in Rome, the JPIC Committee is the most active committee in the office of the Union of Superiors General. Through specific research, meetings and seminars, and field experience, especially in a city as big and complex as Rome, the

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Bishop Erwin Kräutler, C.PPS. speaking at Symposium in Lima, Perú

Motivated by the Blood of Christ

by Felix Mushobozi, C.PPS.

Three images have come to symbolize Precious Blood spirituality: covenant, cross and the cup. Robert Schreiter, CPPS and Barry Fischer, CPPS have written extensively regarding these images. Here I will recall some of their reflections and underline the motivations derived therein for our missionary involvement in the ministries that promote Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

COVENANT

The biblical image of the covenant is commonly used to explain a relationship of love between humanity and God. It includes three areas of rela-

tions: between humanity and our creator; between persons and between humanity and mother earth. According to Schreiter the image of covenant evokes communion, community building and connectedness. The covenant by which God established a relationship of love was sealed by the blood inviting the parties to faithfulness. The blood of Christ is the bond of these relationships. The implication of this is that we must work to counter the individualism of our culture and the sense of isolation which many people experience.

Practically, Schreiter talks about the need to help people find their identi-

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ty in their relation to God and to one another. Motivated by the blood of Christ we are invited to explore situations in our ministries which address problems of bonding and communication. Schreiter suggests specific areas of possible activity: fidelity in marriage and other commitments; isolation of the elderly; and the inclusion of the oppressed and marginalized in societies. To these I would add care of creation and concern for the victims of climate change.

Our call is to take concrete measures so that we share God's covenant and especially, we share God's concern for the poor. Our option for the poor and marginalized is moti-

through death, the weakness and the powerlessness of suffering can be the road to strength, the instrument of human shame becomes the throne of divine glory. The cross as the altar of sacrifice through the son unites earth and heaven, marks the overcoming of death through the death of one person"².

The redemptive power of the cross is found in its power to overcome negative human experiences with real hope. Death is overcome by life as one places his or her hope in Christ, who not only died on the cross, but rose into an everlasting life. In this way, blood symbolizes both death and life.

Thus concludes Schreiter: "The blood of Christ in which the very

and conflicts, so that through concrete actions we affirm that every life is precious.

St. Gaspar sets the example for us. Motivated by the blood shed on the cross, he went to the condemned village of Sonnino to create with them the means for their survival and to invite them to conversion. Gaspar was imprisoned for opposition to Napoleon's invasion of Papal States and returned from prison with a zeal to renew the Church in chaos. Gaspar was moved with compassion for those dying of cholera in Rome and offered himself and his missionaries to assist them, even at the sacrifice of his own health.

Today many of our CPPS and ASC missionaries hear and respond to the cry of the same blood of the cross in their varied local circumstances. In the Central American Mission some missionaries have chosen to stay with indigenous people to make sure that their right to land and culture are respected. In our Peruvian Mission some missionaries have chosen to stay with the victims of pollution and degradation of environment so that their rights and responsibilities are attended to and peace is preserved. The cry of the blood of the cross is heard by those working for reconciliation among the victims of crime and prisoners in the USA or those attending HIV victims in Tanzania. In all our missionary activities "the blood of Christ is the source of strength to endure, but also the sign of ultimate hope that no suffering need be for ever"⁴. As one motivated by the blood of the cross, to give witness to the social gospel means that we confront the suffering, the death, the contradictions of our lives with confidence that there is a larger reality which can redeem us.

CUP

The blood of the new and eternal covenant that was shed on the cross

"Eucharist is the source from which we are empowered for mission and to work for justice, peace and integrity of creation."

vated by the fact that we are granted the same spirit which entitles us to address God as "Abba" – Father (Gal 4:6) and our recognition that Christ's disciples will be judged by the response they give to those in greatest need (Mt 25:31-46). The spirituality of the covenant that guides our relationships embraces the whole creation. God creator and sustainer of the world and all it contains dwells in all things giving them life and being. Through God's spirit we are united with all creation and share responsibility for it as indicated in God's covenant (Gn 9:8-17)¹.

CROSS

As a symbol for Precious Blood spirituality, the cross carries a wealth of meaning. Explaining the uniqueness of the cross as a symbol, Schreiter has this to say: "The cross symbolizes the great paradox in Christian faith: life come about

divine life was lodged is shed in this violent act; but out of that shedding has come new life, the Church and the enduring grace by which we are all freed from everlasting death."³ Such a spirituality of the cross has implications for our mission in the area of promotion of JPIC. First, we are motivated by the blood of Christ shed on the cross to be responsible for those who suffer, whose blood is diminished and devalued physically, mentally, morally, and in any of the circumstances of their life.

Secondly, we are urged by the same blood of Christ to be interested in staying with people in their suffering to help them find their way through that suffering, transforming and redeeming their circumstances. Conscious of the violence with which the blood of Christ was shed on the cross, we are invited to reflect on the blood of many innocent people shed through violence



An international community of CPPS members respond to the cry of the blood of illegal immigrants held in the Detention Center for Foreigners in Aluche (Madrid)

for salvation of humanity and which is offered daily on the altar, is a sacrament of love uniting humanity in praise and thanksgiving. That blood was offered on the cross so that whoever would thirst for love and hope, might receive it in the cup of salvation. It is celebrated in obedience to the command of the Lord: “do this in memory of me” (1Cor 11:23-26). The aspirations of the Eucharistic celebration do not end with the mass; “*ite missa est*” literally means “go, it is sent”. *Misa* from *missio* implies that what we celebrate in Eucharist, is to be sent and put into action. In this way we can see that Eucharist is the source from which we are empowered for mission and to work for justice, peace and integrity of creation.

“Happy are those who hunger and thirst for what is right, they shall be satisfied”; Happy the peacemakers,

they shall be called sons of God” (Mt 5:6,9). We need to drink from the cup of the blood of Christ to quench our thirst for justice. We drink from the cup to be purified so that we may be able to share that love and hope with others.

It is obvious that we need to evangelize ourselves before we can be sent for mission. Our life in community should be a witness to the world that we are people of the covenant. The bond of charity should form us as a people of the cross so that when we gather in community to celebrate Eucharist, “the sharing of the bread and wine open up new spaces in our daily lives to share from our abundance as the small child shared what he had in offering of the loaves and fishes to Jesus in the miracle of the multiplication of bread.”⁵ Having shared the cross and the cup in community, we are able to go forth

to proclaim and witness the social gospel, because we have experienced that bond, love and peace in community. In this way, our responsibility for one another is more effective and capable of reaching out to the poor and the marginalized.

The spirituality of the cup urges us to identify ourselves with those who live extreme human experiences such as hunger, diseases, persecution, discrimination, migration, refugees and the like. Fischer summarizes well how a missionary of the Precious Blood should feel when he raises the cup of the Eucharist: “When we gaze into the Eucharistic cup, which we hold in reverence, we see our lives as an intermingling of joys and sorrows, successes and failures, victories and defeats, virtue and sin.”

“The Eucharistic cup brings together the signs of death and of suffer-

ing and of injustices with the passion of Christ.⁶ This is the synthesis of what we see as the spirituality of the cup offered and shared in the Eucharist, which becomes the impetus for our missionary activities.

CONCLUSION

I am convinced that our choice to be actively involved in ministries which promote justice, peace, and integrity of creation is proper to our charism and is an expression of our spirituality. My reflections about our engagement in apostolic activities which promote JPIC have the objective of affirming that we must read the signs of times so that we can be more prophetic. My experience in meeting with other congregations in which JPIC is a priority is that there are a number of reasons for which a congregation may be resistant in making JPIC a priority of its mission. In some congregations there can be unwillingness to take radical positions and thus are satisfied with a kind of spirituality focused solely on prayer and interior life, untouched by pain and injustices of the marginalized in today's world. In others, it is the shortage of personnel which limit our options to engage in ministries demanding mobility.

In some congregations, especially in Latin America, inactivity can be the result of a clash between ideologies, theologies and ecclesiologies. In some extreme cases, a prejudice against JPIC activities has arisen which seems to reflect a certain kind of degeneration that has created a fear of being disturbed, with a resistance to any change of lifestyle.

The renewal of our congregation will not be effective if we do not

reconsider and broaden our understanding of mission. The workshop on mission which took place in Salzburg in July 2009 marks an important step forward toward this goal. With the help of modern scholarship in Missiology we were helped to pinpoint six essential elements of CPPS mission. Witness and proclamation; Liturgy, prayer and contemplation; Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation; Inter-religious dialogue; Inculturation; and Reconciliation.

As you can see JPIC is included as an essential element of CPPS mission. In this we echo one of the most important affirmations of the church's social mission. From the Synod of Bishops in 1971: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."⁷

The importance of this affirmation lies in the fact that the social mis-

sion of the Church is now seen as central to the mission of the church.

It was the stated goal of the mission workshop and the discussions in the units which have followed the workshop, to help the congregation move forward towards a common understanding of a CPPS theology of mission. The recent symposium on "Mission in Defense of our Common Home" (Earth Community) held in Peru, also advanced the dialogue between JPIC and Precious Blood spirituality. We must keep this conversation alive so that all will hear the cry of the blood and be sent forth into Precious Blood ministries that promote Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. ♦

¹ For these observations see Brian Davies, "A spirituality of Justice: A spirituality which can give coherence to every area of our life" in *hexhamndnewcastlejusticeandpeace.org*.

² Schreiter, Robert, "Covenant, Cross Chalice". (Published in the *Cincinnati Province Newsletter*, July 1, 1985), 1658.

³ Schreiter, R., *op. cit.*, p. 1658.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Fischer, Barry, *Cry of the Blood*, (Carthagen, OH: Messenger Press, 2004), 164-165.

⁶ Fischer B., *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

⁷ Synod of Bishops, 1971, *Justice in the World*, "Introduction", in David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 289.

CPPS FORMATORS' WORKSHOP

A workshop for current formators and vocation promoters and those who might be working in these ministries in the near future

Via Narni (Rome)

With trips to Albano & Giano

July 4 - July 17, 2010

Goals of the Workshop

- **To improve our formation programs by developing the formators theoretical understanding and practical skills.**
- **To create a network of support among the formators and vocation promoters.**

"Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel."

PRECIOUS BLOOD ECOLOGY: HEALING BLOOD FLOWS TO OUR WOUNDS

We live in a time of great advances in technology and a time of great abuses when the greedy actions of a few violate the good dignity of the many and the earth itself. In ways this is not a new occurrence. We know from Genesis (Gen 6) the story of the Great Flood that overwhelmed the earth in the times of Noah. At that time God was angry with the human beings who had become violent, choosing only evil so that their corruption had contaminated even the earth. Because of this, God brought forth a surging flood to destroy what was evil. God however saved Noah and his family and pairs of all the animals on earth so that they could begin anew. After the floodwaters receded, God established a covenant with Noah, his family, and with all the creatures so that they would be blessed, multiply, and never be destroyed again (Gen 9:7-17).

by Joseph Grilliot, C.P.P.S.

In this way, God affirmed through the bonds of covenantal relationship the blessing on humans, animals, and the plants and earth as well. From this epic history perhaps we can learn from the mistakes of those who chose evil: Human actions affect all of God's creation!

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Currently, one of the biggest challenges for our earth is global climate change. This frightful complex has already begun affecting our world and poses many problems in our near future from rising oceans to traumatic mega storms. We are using too many resources and burning too many fossil fuels. We're pulling carbon stored in the ground and releasing it into the atmosphere through

our reliance on coal, oil, and natural gas for energy. The increased carbon in the air traps more heat from the sun and warms the average temperature of the earth. This increased heat alters the ecosystems of all living things and pushes the climate systems to create storms of incredible strength. Because the carbon levels in the atmosphere are so high and are released at increasing rates, the global climate system may be on the brink of changes that would take millions of years to reverse. With this reality, it is clearly time to reduce our carbon emissions by using less energy. We can also begin mining our spiritual resources that might just fill many of our needs.

A PRECIOUS BLOOD ECOLOGY

In such challenging times a spirituality of the blood of Christ offers



The Rainbow: a sign of God's covenant with Noah and humanity

opportune insights. Within the triune God there is a creative movement of life that pours out into the creation and re-creation of the world. This movement of life flows into us like blood and water into our cups. As the divine grace flows into our vessels we might try to capture it not losing an ounce. However, the flow is too large and our chalices too small to contain the flow of life. If we try to hold onto it, the water becomes stagnant and the blood clots. However, by living with the flow and letting our life blood pour out for others, we are continually renewed. Saint Paul's letter reminds us, "But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us."¹ The grace of God is not meant just for us but to be shared and flow through the lives of all people.

In a mystical way the life blood and water flowing from the Triune God is the same sap flowing through the boughs of the trees and the shoots of all plants. This same life flows through mammals, frogs, insects, and all creatures on the earth. This same life breathes through every human being from Tanzania, Colombia, the United States, India, Italy, and everywhere else on the earth! We are truly rooted in connection with all of life through the Spirit of God and the Blood of Jesus Christ that flows through us all.

Through this manifest connection, the healing blood of life flows to the wounds in our world. Just like in our bodies blood flows with warmth and healing to our injuries, the life of God flows to our wounded relationships. If we are attentive, patient, and willing to respond faithfully, our relationship with ourselves, our communities, and with all that God has created may travel the path of reconciliation.

TAKING ACTION

This flow of healing blood and abundant life brings me the courage to respond faithfully to climate change and environmental problems. In our community house in Chicago we have taken a purposeful approach to

recycling. We examined the guidelines from our local recycling center for what kinds of materials they accept. Then, we prepared a little system of trash cans marked for metals, glass, cardboard, paper, batteries, and plastics. We take turns hauling the bags of materials to the nearby recycling center. In doing this I am becoming aware of just how many cardboard boxes and plastic bags we use on a regular basis. Perhaps we could create a little less waste by bringing reusable bags to the grocery store. I am also grateful for the way our recycling is a communal effort to reduce the use of resources. Although recycling programs are only one part, doing this with purpose and persistence is a clear step toward living more sustainably.

"Where the economic and material systems exploit people and earth, justice calls me to move with healing blood toward restored relationships."

Recycling is a good first step of healing in the blood of Christ, but a whole lot more is possible. We can all continue learning about sustainability, raise awareness about ecological issues, be more energy efficient, drive less and walk more, eat healthy food, write letters to lawmakers, buy from companies that practice sustainable methods, and even participate in direct actions that promote policies to better sustain our world. While there are many ways to respond to ecological challenges, every step moves me more deeply into restored relationships with the earth community.

ALL LIFE IS CONNECTED IN THE BLOOD OF JESUS

My understanding of the blood of Jesus flows through all of life. I've

become more aware of how I am fundamentally connected to my family, friends, and community; the soil, water, and air around me; the ants, birds, and coyotes in my backyard; the coal mines in West Virginia, oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico, logging fields in Brazil, and the many people who toil in these places. I am learning just how much ecological justice and human justice are interwoven and mutually reinforce one another². Because justice is grounded in right relationship, I must learn to live in harmony with the whole network of relationships that give me life from the roots of the soil to the birds of the sky. Where the economic and material systems that I live in exploit people and earth, justice calls me to move with healing blood toward restored relationships.

Impelled by the flow of Precious Blood I long to live more fully God's covenant with Noah and humanity, the animals, plants, and with the whole earth. In this way I seek to live sustainably, be joyful in community, and honor the creatures and plants of the Earth with whom I share life. By taking up this covenantal journey in the healing blood of Jesus, perhaps we can share a world of beauty, peace, and sustainable life with the children of today and those of many generations into the future³. ♦

¹ *The Green Bible*, New Revised Standard Version 1989, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 2 Corinthians 4:7.

² "Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment, just as environmental deterioration in turn upsets relations in society. Nature...is so integrated into the dynamics of society and culture that by now it hardly constitutes an independent variable." Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, Vatican, 29 June 2009, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html, Accessed 29 January 2010, #51.

³ "We must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it," Pope Benedict, *Caritas in Veritate*, #50.

Responding to the Cry of the Blood in the Slums of Mumbai

Our Precious Blood missionary presence in Mumbai began on May 31, 2007 in response to an invitation from Bishop Bosco Phena, the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Mumbai. Frs. John Peter and J. Anthony Daniel are serving as chaplains to the Tamil people in some ten slums. Before our arrival there were other Tamil chaplains from different dioceses who ministered for three to four years. Some of them were committed to the people, while others merely seemed to be passing their time. All the work we do in the slums is in collaboration with the local Bishops and the parish priests who support our efforts.

Among the most challenging areas we serve are Ray Road, Juhu, and Cheeta Camp. In these slums the people are living in pathetic conditions. Until our arrival, a big problem existed between the slum dwellers and the parish due to language. Because they did not speak the local language it was difficult for them to participate in the sacramental life of the Church.

We spent the first six months getting acquainted with the situation and then trying to find solutions to the many problems that the people faced, like the need for food, clothing and shelter. We also motivated the parents to send their children to school for education, especially the girls. Some attend Catholic schools while others are in Government schools. Since many parents could not afford the fees for the catholic schools they could not go there. So we negotiated with the parish priests and arranged that special reduced fees be asked of these needy families.

The next problem we tackled was that of the rectification of mar-

by J. Anthony Daniel, C.P.P.S

riages. Fr. John Peter has rectified 28 marriages and I, five. We also face the problems of mixed marriage and the sacraments of initiation. All these problems we tried to solve with the help of the Chancellor/Episcopal Vicar.

On January 6, 2009 there was a big fire in Cheeta Camp caused by the explosion of an LP Gas cylinder. It was a real tragedy. Some 400 families lost everything and in a short time nearly half of the slum houses were burnt into charcoal. The fire

occurred at 8:45 PM. Fr. J. Anthony Daniel rushed to the scene and opened the Church, which served as a shelter for the people as the people abandoned everything and ran for shelter. Muslims, Hindus and Christians took refuge together in the Church, without discrimination of religion.

With the help of the Missionaries of Charity and the Church we were able to provide clothing, food, biscuits, milk powder, mats, buckets, mugs, bed sheets, etc. There was a great show of solidarity as this was the biggest tragedy Mumbai faced,



Life in the slums of Mumbai

as a slum was turned into ashes. With the financial assistance of the Indian Vicariate, on December 24th we distributed blankets, mats, plates, glasses and food grain to help these needy families.

Among all the difficulties and crises that we face in the slums, are the celebrations held at Cheeta Camp's "Mother Velankanni Church." The chapel is thirty-three years old. Previous to our arrival the people would come on Wednesdays and Sundays for a liturgical celebration conducted by the lay people but with no reception of Eucharist.

There was no communication with the diocese. The Bishop realized the difficulties that we would face and asked the Missionaries of the Precious Blood if we would take this new unit. Due to some difficulties, we did not assume the mission in 2008.

With the help of Bishop Agnelo and Fr. J. Anthony Daniel, CPPS, we constructed a residence for the Missionaries and on June 1, 2009 this new ministerial unit was formed and Fr. Daniel appointed as first Priest-in Charge. Fr. F. Sagaya Ruben, CPPS was the new Tamil Chaplain with residence in the new community.

The people and the Diocese are very happy with the presence of the

"We spent the first six months getting acquainted with the situation and then trying to find solutions to the many problems that the people faced..."

Missionaries and their work in the Parish. Fr. John Peter, CPPS and Fr. Maria Anthony, CPPS render their collaboration and support.

The crises that the Missionaries faced in the initial stages were the crown for the Society to grow and to yield bountiful fruit. Thanks must be given to Fr. Joseph Montenegro, the Provincial Director of the Italian province who always dreamed of having a mission in

Mumbai. We also thank Fr. Barry Fischer and Fr. Francesco Bartoloni who cooperated for this new venture, as well as Fr. Amaladoss, the Vicariate Director.

Through the availability of our Missionaries, Fr. J. Anthony Daniel and Fr. John Peter, Fr. Sagaya Ruben, the dream became reality and this new community is alive and continues to grow, grow and grow. ♦



CINEMA

The New Stained Glass Window

This retreat-workshop represents an imaginative, open-minded dialogue between Theology and Cinema with

Br. ANTONIO SISON, C.P.P.S.

International Center of Precious Blood Spirituality
Salzburg, Austria

June 25-27, 2010

"The crises that the Missionaries faced in the initial stages were the crown for the Society to grow and to yield bountiful fruit."

A SEED OF JUSTICE CALLED THE VILLAGE OF HOPE

The Village of Hope is the response of the Sisters Adorers of the Blood of Christ and the Missionaries of the Precious Blood to one of the current crisis in Tanzania: the plague of AIDS. The work is situated six kilometers from the city of Dodoma, in one of the poorest regions of the country.

There are many reasons for this project and we have faced many challenges since we began in 2001. We respond to the persons who are suffering from AIDS, not only with a generic and preventative support but with the desire to give a new hope for life by means of treatment with antiretroviral.

When we began, this perspective did not exist in Tanzania. The big effort of the government was justly directed toward sensitizing and educating the population on the problem of AIDS, in order to avoid the transmission of the virus. This meant that the principal target of the entire AIDS program was directed towards healthy people, while those suffering with AIDS were simply ignored. For those with the disease, there was little care as they waited for death. This did not seem right to us. A dream began to take shape of creating a place which would privilege those suffering from AIDS, giving them concretely the possibility of a future. We want the silent voice of the AIDS sufferer to be heard.

Faced with the immense number of people who needed help and given the limitedness of our resources, we needed to make a choice about how to direct our efforts. After careful consideration, the choice fell to the children who have lost both parents from AIDS; these children themselves being affected by this terrible illness.

by Vincenzo Boselli, C.P.P.S.

WHY THE CHILDREN?

It was not a choice simply dictated by the tenderness which arises in one's heart for a child who is suffering, but from affirming that this was the group that suffered most in this social context.

The orphan has never been an unsolvable problem in Africa. On the contrary, the extended family model responded well to this problem. The great patriarchal family welcomes an orphan child and treated them like the others who still had a father and a mother. The orphans received love, care, help and treatment the same as the rest,

elderly people find the necessary food when finding food for themselves is the major undertaking of everyday? These children, being recognized as orphans of parents who died of AIDS, become a visible witness that someone in the family died of AIDS. This illness is still a source of shame for the greater part of the population of Tanzania, because it is associated with conjugal infidelity or extramarital relations. And finally, there is the fear that these children can become a source of infection for the whole family. All of this rendered these children to be considered an unbearable weight, which is sometimes cruelly expressed as, "The sooner they pass away the better."

"A dream began to take shape of creating a place which would privilege those suffering from AIDS, giving them concretely the possibility of a future."

since children in a patriarchal society were not only the responsibility of the parents but of the whole clan.

The advent of the great number of orphans suffering from AIDS overwhelmed Tanzanian society, which was unprepared to give an adequate response. The old model was no longer feasible. Caring for them was often placed on the shoulders of the weakest of the family, namely the grandfathers or grandmothers, who most of the time were dependent on alms for their own support.

These children need adequate, quality food. Where can these

Is it just the poorest link of society, the elderly, who has the responsibility to provide a solution for the orphans? Was it just that the most innocent should suffer and die for the mistakes of others? No. It was this that led us to decide to focus our response to caring for the children. And thus, with the orphan child suffering from AIDS at the center of our attention, this project was born.

WELCOMING INTO A FAMILY

After the death of their second parent, the majority of the children are found in a state of complete abandonment. There is no one who can



Sr. Rosaria, ASC with children in the Village of Hope

or wants to take care of them; none to provide for their affective, medical, nutritional, and instructional needs.

The first part of the project was to create an environment that could receive, from all over Tanzania, children orphaned of both parents and affected by AIDS. Our aim was to diminish the impact of the consequences of the illness. We wanted to create an environment in which the children will have the desire to live; to have them rediscover the love of a family, with someone they can still call Dad or Mom; and to have them understand that they still have the possibility

to look to the future with serenity. Twelve family homes have been created in which these children live with adoptive parents. Each family is composed of ten or more children, a “mom and dad,” plus a nurse who acts as a big sister. She substitutes for the parents on the days on which they return to their own family and she helps the mom with the daily household chores. After getting up and having breakfast, the smallest go to nursery school. The bigger ones go to elementary school where they join healthy children who are going to the same school. Since January of this year, the older ones have begun to go to high school, which

will open up for them new perspectives on life. In this way the children are reinserted into a larger context than that of the village community. They find people who respect them and they find the occasion to begin again to recover those relations necessary for every child to grow normally.

HOME ASSISTANCE

A second part of our ministry is to reduce the number of these children. To do this we created a network of contacts to seek out those children who have lost only one parent. Through accompaniment, we seek to help the remaining parent to understand the importance of his or her role for the care of the child, as well as, to provide for the child’s future. In fact, it is necessary that the parent also enter into therapy and regain a way of life that benefits the child. As the parent benefits from therapy and begins to feel better, they feel a stronger desire to take the medi-

“We wanted to create an environment in which the children will have the desire to live... to have them rediscover the love of a family.”

cine precisely for the love that they have for their child. The program seeks to stir up in the remaining parent the desire to begin again, the awareness of their responsibility towards the child, and above all, the hope that there is still a future for both.

SAFE MATERNITY

A third part of the project is encouraging pregnant women to be tested for AIDS. If they test positive for AIDS, they are encouraged to follow an antiretroviral therapy beginning in the sixth month of pregnancy. By means of monthly visits, the expectant mother is followed for the whole period of pregnancy, until the moment of delivery. At that time she will receive care in order to give birth in a secure way and avoid having the child be infected during delivery.

The mother will remain in the Center for a brief period to avoid breastfeeding, to learn to prepare the necessary nourishment for her own baby and will attend short courses on child care, hygiene and economics in order to undertake small initiatives for self-support once she leaves the center.

This is the reason we created the maternity center within the Village: to be a center that helps the couple to accept their illness; that protects them from the stress of relatives and curious people; and instructs them in the preparation of alternative food instead of maternal milk, while helping them with a contribution for the purchasing of milk.

CONCLUSION

It is said, "In order to change the world it is necessary that someone, however small, have the courage to begin." When we began, many offered discouragement. But we trusted in God and providence. We welcomed his invitation, and in

"Was it just that the most innocent should suffer and die for the mistakes of others?"

August 2002, we received the first three babies.

Today, there are more than 160 children within the institution and more than 350 being helped in our external programs. In total, the number of those suffering from AIDS who are followed by the Village of Hope has already surpassed 2000. Many HIV positive mothers are embracing healthy children and many adults have begun to hope and to live again.

Certainly we have not eradicated the roots of the injustice that has been perpetrated towards these AIDS victims, and especially

towards the children in Tanzania. But was this what God was asking of us? Or rather was God asking us to be salt and to be the light of justice in this situation, reversing the course of injustice in our little way? We don't know and we cannot know. But we know the joy and the new hope of life of these children suffering from AIDS. We know of those who are born healthy in the project of safe maternity. And we know a small wave of AIDS sufferers that everyday find a welcome and a new hope in life in the medical clinics of the Village of Hope. This makes us think that maybe a seed of justice has been planted. ♦



Fr. Vincenzo, CPSS lifting up hope for renewed life

CHOICES FOR LIFE IN VIOLENT PLACES

by Kris Schrader, ASC
Dani Brought, ASC

Ottie is a soft-spoken 24 year old who graduated from Maria De Mattias Institute (secondary school) and has worked with the Sangre de Cristo Healthcare Project for the last 5 years. She continues her studies in psychology in the evenings at the national university. Or she has until recently. She was an “accidental” victim of a bus shooting, a far too common occurrence in Guatemala. Her recovery process will be long. The out-of-control violence against bus drivers and owners who refuse to pay the local extortion fees has catapulted Guatemala to the United Nation’s #3 spot for current violations of human rights.

Dina is a wife and mother of two. She has worked with the Healthcare Project for 10 years and brings great enthusiasm and compassion as a nurse. The patients love her. But she and her family were forced to move out of our sector to an undisclosed location, in the middle of the night. Her husband owns a bus and has now been targeted for “safety” payments. Phone threats made it clear that they know his family, where his wife works, where his children go to school.

Ana Lucia is a 13 year old from a family of 6 children. She is the first to be able to study beyond grade school and has a “scholarship” from a parish in the States to attend our Institute. Neither mother nor

father can read, but they are so proud of their daughter. They own a small store in a very populated barrio area near us. Two months ago the entire family moved out, leaving home, store and a future

And we are women religious who are marked and called by the spirituality of the Blood of Christ. How appropriate that the family of the Precious Blood is present in Guatemala at this time.

Every morning in our prayer sharing we are questioned by the reali-



Oti and children from the dental health education program

full of hope. They had not been making the payments to area extortionists and when an entire family two blocks down was murdered in their own home, they knew they had to leave.

ty around us, the desire within us and the power of the Spirit calling us forth.

How are we affected? Anyone who lives within a culture of violence and death can probably identify with the overwhelming feelings of powerlessness, sadness and anger. When the phone rings at an unusual hour, you hold your breath for just a moment, trying not to run ahead and anticipate bad news. When driving in the city at dark,

“ Anyone who lives within a culture of violence and death can probably identify with the overwhelming feelings of powerlessness.”



Sr. Dani, ASC conversing with women from the health clinic

we are constantly monitoring pedestrians, other cars with tinted windows, debating whether to remain in place at stop lights. We have both been victims of armed robberies, up close and personal, with big guns in our faces and doubts about the stability of the attackers. It wasn't what we expected would be the Guatemalan reality when we came years ago. At that time it was a wounded land trying to recover from a horrendous civil war that had claimed over 50,000 lives and devastated the native peoples. But the scars of violence run deep and when not addressed in a healthy way have a tendency to fester and infect the whole body. Guatemala is an infected country and signs of it are all around.

This is our reality. And yet, it is not the entire reality. Guatemala is a land of great beauty as well, pri-

marily found in its people and wealth of natural resources. It is the place where we have worked alongside others who desire to be about life, about new opportunities and helping to bring about what our foundress Maria De Mattias calls "the beautiful order of things." The healthcare project and the education initiative are two projects which speak most to people where they are and where they live. The fact that the projects have grown and impacted the entire region so significantly, speak to the truth of that.

As a local community of Precious Blood women, Adorers of the Blood of Christ, we have been very intentional in identifying the reality in which we live and from that base developing our statement of mission and community life plan. And there are four integral components that call to us and at the same time nurture us as we walk in this land. *We acknowledge the grace and blessing of our spirituality and the unfailing support of our ASC community, family, friends and lay communities.* We pray we might always begin from a stance

"We consciously look for ways to promote a culture of hope and reconciliation in Guatemala."

of gratitude. *We recognize the gift-
edness of those with whom we are
privileged to work, and pray that
our way of being with might
encourage initiative-taking in
designing and guiding the health
care and education projects.* We
know we bring gifts to the work we
do. *We consciously look for ways
to promote a culture of hope and
reconciliation in Guatemala,*
beginning with these two projects,
projects which both exist as con-
crete expressions of the healing
power of the Blood of Christ at
work in the world. *We pray that we
are an expression of the hospital-
ity of God in the ways in which we
open ourselves and our home to
all, encouraging each person to
know they are a part of this min-
istry.* Those, of course, are the
broad statements of our desire and
what we believe to be God's desire
for us. They are translated into spe-
cific actions that we know to be at
the heart of what sustains us in the
midst of this reality.

We choose to share prayer each
morning for about an hour, con-
scious of God's word, our congrega-
tional words and the word of
Guatemala's unfolding story.
Drawing upon the graces of our
morning reflections, with each
experience we continue to support
one another and come to know
even more the grace of connection
and walking in solidarity with the
other. Once a week we bring to our
prayer news articles and informa-
tion about the national reality.
Once a month we try to condense it
all into a one page informational
letter which we share with our ASC
family, friends, acquaintances and



Sr. Kris, ASC assisting children in the library

anyone who might be interested.
[You can request a copy at [sister-
adorer@gmail.com](mailto:sister-adorer@gmail.com)] Our desire is
to look at the big picture of
Guatemala and the local reality
through the lens of our spirituality
and our mission statement.

Once a week our morning prayer
time is dedicated to deepening our
own understanding of non-vio-
lence so that we are able to make
choices for life and not succumb to
the numbing darkness of these
times. We have intentionally cho-

sen to have opportunities for both
projects (and at times together) to
go deeper in our common under-
standing of the spirituality of the
Blood and to flesh out what that
means in concrete choices. It is
imperative that we foster a culture
of hope and take the necessary
steps, however small they may be,
to see it become more a reality.

We doubt that we are unusual in
the choices we make. Many of you
are doing the same thing, and that
is a great source of comfort and
support for us. As we recognize
and embrace the truth that we are
part of one human community we
know that each of us and all of us
together can stand with sure hope
that the power of God's love,
revealed in the total gift of Jesus
sustains us and animates our desire
to go forward. ♦

**“We choose to share prayer each morning
for about an hour, conscious of God's
word, our congregational words and the
word of Guatemala's unfolding story.”**

☛ *Continued from front page*

members of this committee are a reference point for those superiors general who want to animate all the members of their Congregations on this issue.

Fr. Mushobozi actively participates in the activities and commitments of this committee. From the very beginning, we have been committed to helping all our members understand that the theme of Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation is an essential part of the spirituality of the blood of Christ. This effort includes initiatives and strategies that enable us to reach all members. Although many understand that this theme is an important and increasingly an essential part of our spirituality, they do not know how to put it into practice, given the complexity and difficulty of the challenges that they face in their lives and ministries.

The first article in this edition of *The Cup* is written by Fr. Mushobozi. He writes about the motivation of our commitment to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. It is not just that JPIC has become a popular area of concern; we find our motivation in the spirituality of Christ's blood, which is the root of our charism. The three images, which I would call the classical symbols of expression for our spirituality – the covenant, the cross and the cup – are revisited by Fr. Felix and relocated within the social reality which cries out for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. The covenant stresses the new and dynamic need for relationship, no longer just with humanity in general, but above all with those who are most excluded from every relationship and marginalized. It is for these that Christ's blood was shed and for whom he died "outside the walls."

Joseph Grilliot, in his article on Ecology and Spirituality adds to this concept of our covenant with humanity the idea of a covenant with all creatures and all creation. He highlights the example of the covenant which God made with Noah and all creatures and creation

saved from the flood. This is an aspect of our spirituality that is perhaps new to many. It is part of an increasingly new and dynamic understanding of our spirituality of the blood of Christ. It expresses an almost cosmic vision. The cosmos becomes the altar upon which the blood of Christ is offered as a sign of covenant and redemption. The recent symposium held in Lima (Peru), *Ecology and Spirituality of the Most Precious Blood in Defense of the Earth, our Common Home*, highlighted this aspect of our cosmic spirituality.

The covenant and redemption are offered to humanity in our environment. And it is humanity who must be committed to seeing that this environment is respected and defended. The cross and the cup are the symbols of suffering and mission. By participating in Christ's suffering we fulfill his mission of sharing the suffering of humanity and its redemption. The Eucharist which we celebrate in Church continues with us being sent out into the world to achieve that 'justice' for which Christ gave his life and shed his blood.

Fr. Daniel Anthony, who carries out his ministry in the slums of Mumbai

(India); Fr. Vincenzo Boselli, who every day fights his battle to alleviate the suffering of children suffering from AIDS in Dodoma (Tanzania); and ASC Sisters Kris Schrader and Dani Brought, who live in one of the most violent quarters of one of the most violent cities in Latin America, Guatemala City – each have given us articles which describe how they give witness to life.

The spirituality of Christ's blood is both the source and well spring of their missionary commitment to create a society where peace and justice are equally important objectives of development. Sisters Kris and Dani openly say that living in the most violent quarter of Guatemala City, bearing witness to reconciliation and social progress through education and health care, is "appropriate" for those who have this spirituality as a charism.

I visited the slums of Mumbai where Fr Daniel and his fellow missionaries carry out their ministry. The people in these slums live an unimaginable life in an environment which I cannot find words to describe. Fr. Daniel was offered accommodations outside the slum. From there, it was thought, he could go to exercise his



The blood of the covenant: a call to recognize the interconnectedness of peoples and all of creation

ministry for a few days a week. Instead, he and the other priests of the Vicariate of India wanted to live in the unimaginable environment of the slums, in the midst of its people, the vast majority of whom are not Catholic or Christian. He wanted to build his house there. For him and his companions the charism of the spirituality of Christ's blood was "appropriate" for making such a radical choice. It was as appropriate as the choice of Fr. Vincenzo Boselli and the ASC sisters in Tanzania who dedicate their lives to children affected by AIDS.

I remember a phrase by Mother Teresa of Calcutta: "All the works of justice are works of love." These projects are a dynamic expression of our spirituality and shows the truth of Mother Teresa's words. They are a response to a reading of the times and responding in light of our charism and spirituality. To quote the words of Sisters Kris and Dani, it is "appropriate" for us to work for JPIC. By doing so, we find new methods and new ways of sharing and extending to all the "merits" of the blood of reconciliation and redemption. (Saint Gaspar) ♦

OUR AUTHORS



Fr. Felix Mushoboshi, C.P.P.S. of the Vicariate of Tanzania serves on the CPPS General Council. He is responsible for the area of Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation.



Joseph Grilliot, C.P.P.S. is a definitively incorporated member of the Cincinnati Province. He is currently in his fourth year of theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.



Fr. Anthony Daniel, C.P.P.S. is a priest of the Vicariate of India. Along with other CPPS Missionaries he exercises his ministry in the slums of Mumbai.



Fr. Vincenzo Boselli, C.P.P.S. completed his theological studies in Tanzania and has exercised a variety of ministries and leadership roles there for the past thirty-three years.



Sr. Daniel Brought and Sr. Kris Shrader ASC are Adorers of the Blood of Christ from the US Region. They serve in varied ministries in La Labor, Guatemala.



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