



# The Cup of the New Covenant

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

No. 32 - April 2012

## Continuing formation

by Fr. Francesco Bartoloni, C.PPS.

The theme of this issue of *The Cup* is the continuing formation of our members. The general program of formation of our Congregation emphasizes the need and usefulness of this formation, but describes it in just a short article:

“Special support is given to the recently ordained priests and definitively incorporated brothers as they begin their ministries. The on-going formation of all members is essential. Therefore, opportunities are afforded to the membership for continued growth in our Patrimony, in theological study, in spirituality, and in pastoral skills which enrich them as persons and which enhance their ministry” (No. 15).

The major superiors of the Congregation, meeting with the general lead-

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“We are the clay and you the potter, O Lord; we are all the work of your hands” (Isaiah 64:7).

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The ongoing formation of all members is essential. Therefore, opportunities are afforded to the membership for continued growth in our Patrimony, in theological study, in spirituality, and in pastoral skills which enrich them as persons and which enhance their ministry.

As a formation director in the Cincinnati Province I have learned that if you want to watch the candidates' roll their eyes, all you have to do is to say: formation is a life long journey! It is a reality across cultures that all candidates look forward to “getting out” of formation; being ordained a priest or

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incorporated as a brother so that they can “begin” their life and ministry with a little less accompaniment and oversight. Certainly that was my experience of the formation program of my time.

In the 30 or so years since I was ordained and have “escaped” the formation program, I have come to a greater acceptance of the importance of Continued Formation. This appreciation was gained through encountering pastoral situations in which I discovered that I lacked the necessary knowledge or skills to be the type of pas-

ters. It also reflects an approach to formation that is integral or holistic. That is, formation is concerned with the whole person and must encompass elements that promote growth and development in the areas that are human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. This is true during all stages of formation, including Continued Formation.

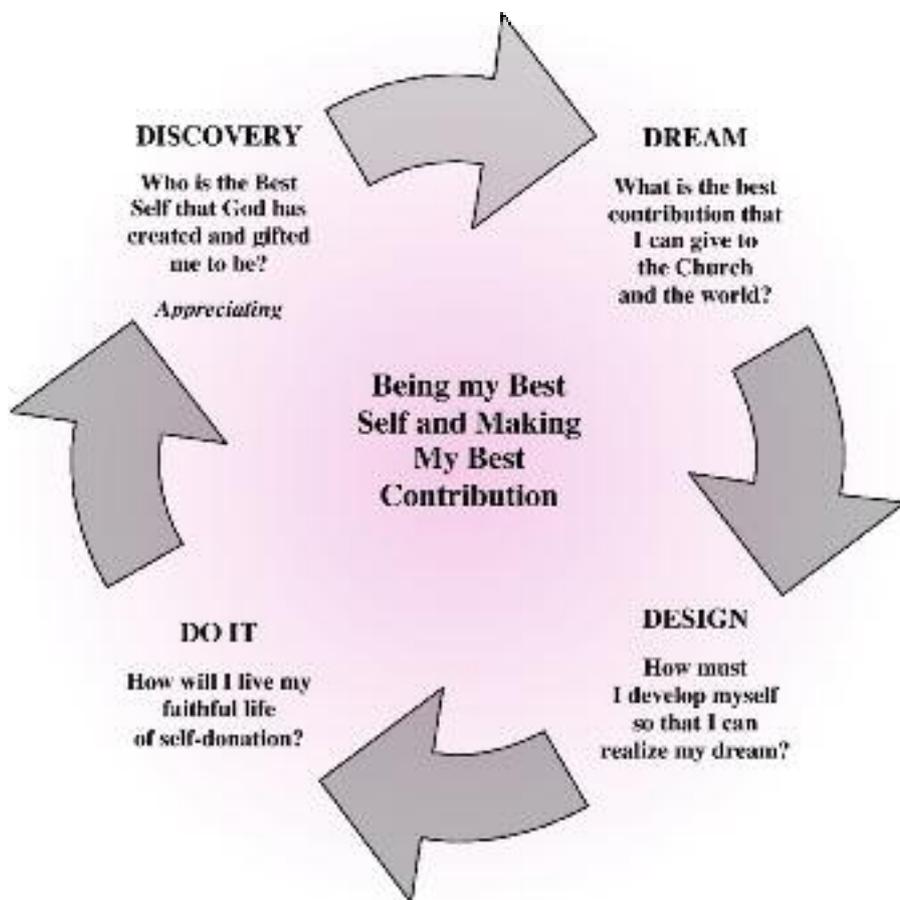
In the formation of candidates today, the emphasis is placed on helping the one in formation to grow and develop. This is a great improvement over past models of formation that began with a singular vision of what a good member

community seeks to provide the community context and support for them to become, to grow and develop as good members and ministers.

For Continued Formation to be an authentic continuation, these principles and elements must remain present: formation is developmental; formation is holistic; and an individual is responsible for his own formation. In this article I want to offer a way to think about Continued Formation that incorporates these three principles or elements. The paradigm I offer has its roots in the organizational dynamics theory of Appreciative Inquiry and follows a pattern of accompaniment that I have used with candidates. It is also a way of approaching Continued Formation that I personally value and continue to utilize.

While my focus and examples will be on my C.P.P.S brothers, I hope that other readers may also find this paradigm useful as they pursue their own journey of personal and ministerial growth.

## A PARADIGM TO GUIDE CONTINUED FORMATION



### A PARADIGM FOR CONTINUED FORMATION

#### 1. Discovering the true identity of our best self

This paradigm of Continued Formation is built upon the foundation of Christian anthropology as revealed in our understanding of creation and the incarnation. The Genesis accounts of creation present a view of humankind as creatures that are in the image and likeness of the divine Creator. This positive view of humanity is affirmed and strengthened through the action of God in the incarnation. In becoming human, God affirms the uniqueness and inherent holiness of all people. In the fully human Jesus, God reveals what it means for any and all of us to be fully human. Through the incarnation, the Son of God brings to us the invitation to know ourselves as beloved children of God.

The affirmation of humankind by the Creator continues in the ongoing relationship of God with us. God’s own Spirit is given to us, to each in a unique and personal way, so that we can live in imitation of Jesus and together be God’s continuing presence in the world and be the continuation of the mission of Jesus.

toral minister that I desired to be. I was faced with the choice of continuing my formation or being ministerial ineffective.

In the General Formation Program of the Congregation, the importance of Continued Formation is understated, in that it is mentioned in only the one short paragraph quoted above. However, the document does present a philosophy of formation that embraces the notions that all through our journey of life we must be attentive to our growth as persons and pastoral minis-

or priest would look like and the candidates were encouraged by formators to lose those rough edges which didn’t conform to the model. Along a similar vein, the General Formation Program also addresses the importance of having well-prepared members serve as formators to *accompany* the candidates. I emphasize the task of accompaniment, which implies that the one primarily responsible for his formation is the candidate himself. No longer do we think of formation as something that is “done to” candidates, rather the

This is who we are; this is what some spiritual writers have called our “true selves.” But juxtaposed to this positive anthropology, is the reality that humankind consistently fails to live in that true identity. Too frequently we present a sinful self to the world. Our journey of faithfulness is one of ongoing conversion that seeks to know our true self and to live into the truth of being created in the image of God; to live as God’s beloved, precious and holy child.

For us the journey of faithfulness and continuing formation begins in discovery of the true self that God has created us to be; to become aware of

the potential that is within us. We discover this identity by answering the questions: How has God created me? What was the will and plan of the Creator who knew me first in my mother’s womb? If I can strip away my fears and human shortcomings, what is the “best self” that is revealed? As a baptized member of the Body of Christ, how has the Spirit of God gifted me to participate in the divine plan for all of creation?

These are profound questions and no easy and ready answers are available to any of us. They are questions which remain with us throughout a lifetime of prayerful reflection. They are ques-

tions which are sometimes faced best with the help of a spiritual guide or a counselor who can help us face our personal shortcomings and be healed of those things which have masked our true identity. Sometimes the answer to these questions are revealed only in loving dialogue with trusted friends who care enough for us to speak the truth about us, to us. Sometime we find the answer to these questions in the experiences of our lives, marked by both success and failure.

While the discovery of our true self is not easy, it is a journey that brings us to a place of deep gratitude. When we begin to see ourselves as God sees us,



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#### Week three: Monday, June 25-Thursday, June 28

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For more information: [http://cppsmissionaries.org/2012\\_Reconciliation\\_Intensive.pdf](http://cppsmissionaries.org/2012_Reconciliation_Intensive.pdf)

we are then able to begin the journey of transformation towards living in God's truth.

## II. *Our dream of our best contribution to the Church and the world*

When we have come to know our best self, the question which follows is: For what purpose did God create me and give me God's Spirit? Here the discernment process must engage the imagination—old men must have visions and young men have dreams. We ask ourselves: If I am able to live as my true self and if I am able to make myself completely available to the God who has created me and who continues to dwell within me, what mission am I able to accomplish for the glory of God? How can the gifts of the Spirit that I have received best be used for the work of God?

These are challenging questions and they are questions which will make sense only to those that have consecrated their lives to God. The questions presuppose a commitment to living a life of self-donation; of giving all that we are and being a conduit for bringing the gifts we have received from God to the Church and the world.

A personal vision or dream, of being our true self and making our best contribution to the Church and the world, is a vision that can motivate and sustain us in our vocation. While we may seldom live fully such a life, the vision is an expression of the call to holiness that we have each received. A vision, of our best self making our best contribution, creates a destination for a lifelong journey of growth and formation.

### III. *What can help us to be and to live as our best selves so that we can make our best contribution?*

What can help me be transformed into my vision of my best self that will make my best contribution? How do I live my dream?

I have sometimes asked the candidates as we began a new year of formation: What is your dream for the kind of priest and community member that you want to be? In each of the four areas of formation, what can you do this year to grow towards that dream? What do you need to study and learn? What pastoral skill can you acquire through your ministerial work? Is there a way to become more emotion-

ally healthy and develop skills of relating well with others? Is there a way to deepen your relationship with God? These are the questions I would ask a candidate and they are the questions we must prayerfully ask ourselves as we serve as our own formators.

If your vision of your greatest possible contribution included being an effective and dynamic preacher—then how can you become that kind of preacher? Does it require study to better understand the Scriptures? Do you need to learn a new method of homily preparation? Do you need to “stretch” yourself by preaching in unfamiliar settings or formats? What formation do you need?

This step in the paradigm is to be intentional in designing our own program of Continued Formation. It must be as concrete and specific as possible, while remaining flexible to accommodate the changing realities of our lives. In the formation program of the Cincinnati Province we require the candidates to make a written record of the plan of formation each year. I've never challenged myself in the same

ment. Regularly we must be willing to prayerfully reflect on our lives and an ever-changing current situation with confidence that an abundant and generous God is present. That in the here-and-now of my life I have a vocation to live which expresses my identity as a child of God and disciple of Christ. In community we need to help one another to live this life of discernment with everyday commitment.

## CONCLUSION

In a recent (November 2011) gathering of the Union of Superiors General, the Franciscan Superior José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM delivered a presentation entitled *Formation for Consecrated Life in a Period of Change*. In that presentation he proposed that for the formation of candidates and the ongoing or continued formation of our members, it is necessary to have a program of formation that is “both profoundly human, and at the same time, evangelically demanding.” In this wonderful phrase I again hear the challenge to be my best self and to

**“A personal vision or dream, of being our true self and making our best contribution to the Church and the world, is a vision that can motivate and sustain us in our vocation... (and) creates a destination for a lifelong journey of growth and formation.”**

way to have a written plan of Continued Formation, but perhaps I should. Maybe you also?

### IV. *Living in faith; with an orientation that discerns the need for continued formation*

In the end, it comes down to this: living in faith with commitment and hope each day. It is to have an orientation that is always grateful to God for who we truly are and seeking to respond through a life lived and given for others.

This paradigm can serve as an orientation for living in a spirit of discern-

ment. Regularly we must be willing to prayerfully reflect on our lives and an ever-changing current situation with confidence that an abundant and generous God is present. That in the here-and-now of my life I have a vocation to live which expresses my identity as a child of God and disciple of Christ. In community we need to help one another to live this life of discernment with everyday commitment.

All are created in the image of an Incarnate God and must discover the truth of that identity as we grow and put aside personal weakness or failings to become our best selves. And all are invited by the Word made flesh, by the gospel, to live lives of authentic self-donation in which the Reign of God is revealed in the world. ♦

# GOD GROWS UP IN US

## OUR JOURNEY

A woman told me a story about a conversation she and her grandson had not long before. The two of them were talking about God. She told him that God lives inside of him and that God loves him so much. He was quiet for awhile. Finally, he looked at her and asked: "Will God grow up inside me when I grow up?" Can anything match the wisdom of a child?

This sharing is about the journey of growing up for each one of us. It is the spiritual journey, the inner journey of growth that happens as we pay attention to who God is and who we are at every stage of our lives. Within each of us there is this sacred space where we seek and thirst for something larger than ourselves and it is a life-long search. We are never too young or too old to grow up and it is the most important journey we will ever make. The prophet Isaiah gives us hope in our journey that we will always hear something new and will find the growing up exciting: "NOW... I am going to reveal new things to you, secrets that you do not know: they have just been created and you did not know them before" (Isaiah 48:7). If that is so, what does it look like to continue the growing up process? I have seen the face of growth in my sisters: in one young woman who dreams what religious life will look like as she grows old: could it be like the early Christian Communities where men and women gather around the table for prayer and sharing to see how ministry is lived out as fruit of their prayer? She wonders. I have seen it in one of my sisters who has lived half of her life as an Adorer and is so eager to share with small children just how God is growing up in them. I have seen it in one of my sisters who will be 100 years in a few months, who wants to have discussions about our documents and what they mean for us today, about the situations of the world and how our charism can impact the wounds of our time. This IS the face of God growing up in each of them and in me. And I know that it has been happening in us since we were as young as

by Sr. Joan Marie Voss, ASC

the grandson of that woman. And I see it never ends; it is from the womb to the tomb.

- Where to you find the face of God growing up in your membership?
- How have you experienced this growth in your life?

## OUR VOCATION

As Adorers of the Blood of Christ, our foundress, St. Maria De Mattias, is our greatest witness to what it means to live a life of "growing up in God." Her dream, her vision was to make God known to all peoples, races and nations. And it was especially for the most abandoned and voiceless. In all her suffering and challenges, she never lost sight of that dream and that vision. She founded this Institute with the conviction that both contemplation and mission are really one. Hence, we receive our title: Adorers of the Blood of Christ. Her words to the founding sisters and to us today continue to reverberate in us: "The spirit of this holy Institute is LOVE: love toward God and toward our dear neighbor," she said, "and we must take time to withdraw ever so often in solitude to speak to and listen to our God of love." "God teaches you along the way of suffering to become more that Divine Image, and so be ready to spend your life for the dear neighbor in whatever way God leads you as you listen." It becomes clear to us that our life, our "growing up in God" is one of service borne out of our "contemplative center". And it is the invitation to grow (up) in our vocation at every stage of our lives. St. Maria was always so concerned for her sisters' growth in God and their aware-

ness of how God worked in them and through them to build God's Kingdom. And we know that she is just as strong in that concern and belief for us today. We are given a confirmation of this way of living in our most recent General Assembly in India.

The emphasis was once again on choosing life by living in a contemplative manner. We are invited to live in a discerning way. We see ourselves, each other, the world, through the eyes of God and we continue to want to make God known to all peoples, races and nations as St. Maria did. The poet



"Will God grow up inside me when I grow up?"

Rumi says: "We must close both eyes that we might see with the other." Only when God grows up in us daily are we able to see more clearly the God who "lives and moves and has dwelling within us"; and we want to spend our lives sharing that with others. The deepening of our vocation, the living quality life together in community, the desire to serve the poor and go where others do not want to go becomes possible reality in our daily contemplation and service. This is on-going formation. It is the process of growing up in God.

- Sit with the words of your own Constitution and documents. Reflect upon the dream and vision of your founder/foundress. How do these speak to you now?
- What is the "something new" that God is speaking to you?

### OUR ENCOURAGEMENT

As members of our formation team, we see our service to be that of offering our members helps and encouragement along the path of transformation in growing up.

This conviction comes from our formation plan which states that: "Formation is a life-long process. It begins with the initial stirrings to live our baptismal call through vowed life as an Adorer of the Blood of Christ. It continues until eventually, trusting in God who is ever faithful, we face the final transformation. Only then will formation be complete."

With that in mind, I share with you some of our endeavors, with the hope that it will spark something in you to offer your own members:

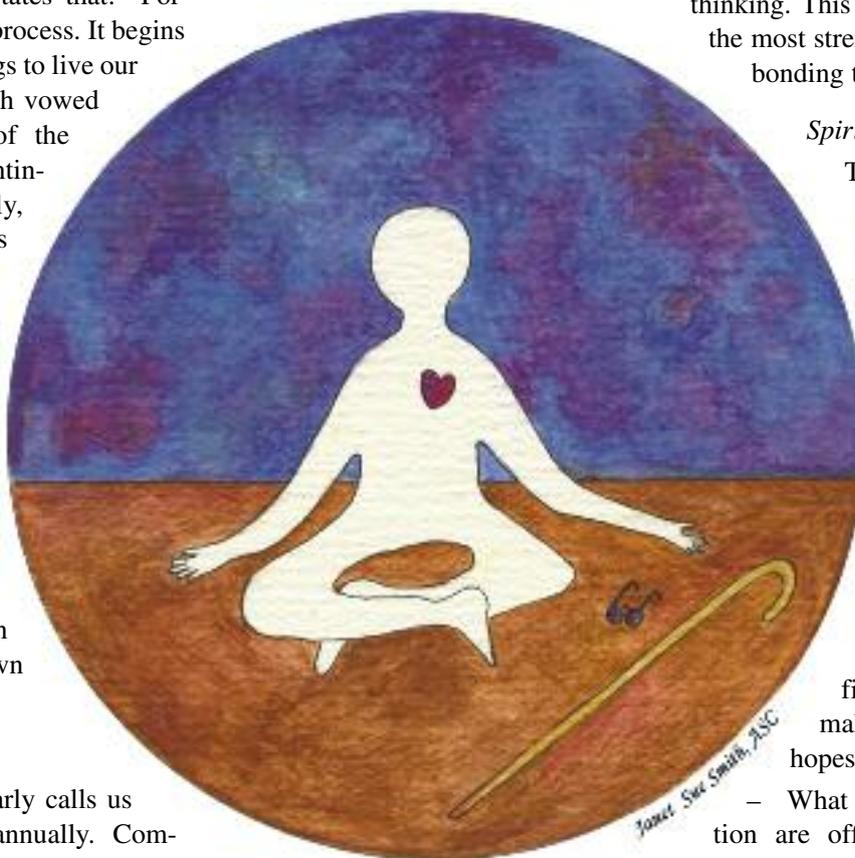
#### Retreats

Our Constitution clearly calls us to a week retreat annually. Community retreats are offered, especially in our three centers where most of our senior sisters and their staff reside. Preached, guided and directed retreats are offered by wisdom women and men both within and outside of the community. Offerings range from Precious Blood spirituality to scripture to human growth and development for both preached and guided retreats. Those who choose a directed retreat are guided personally by their director. We also invite sisters to find retreats in other retreat centers or gather in a small group and design their own retreat. The concern is helping them "grow up" in God at this moment of their lives. St. Maria affirms this as she says: "During this time of retreat

our God wants to open us to every blessing and deep peace. Be open to this invitation."

#### Days of Reflection

During the year, we try to offer days of reflection for the whole region of the United States by using a kind of technology (Interactive Technology-ITV) that permits us to use computers and sound systems so that all members can see one another and talk together. We provide a presenter and spend the day together in listening and reflecting on important topics of interest that affect



Our "growing up in God" is one of service borne out of our "contemplative center"

our lives today. Topics this past year have included religious life in the Church, Scripture that calls us to growth in our charism and a review of a study done on formation in religious life which involves EVERY VOWED MEMBER. These have been well received by our membership.

#### Seasonal Offerings

During the seasons of Advent and Lent, programs are offered at the centers and information is provided on programs that are offered locally where our sisters live and minister:

#### Reading and Faith Sharing

Book titles, magazine articles, and tapes and DVD programs are suggested. In many cases, sisters have formed book studies, using this material and it provides some quality faith sharing among them.

#### Leadership Helps

Our community leaders do much to encourage a number of our local communities to gather together for discussion and sharing on materials that speak to our growth as a region and our growth individually. We need one another to listen and challenge our thinking. This has been for us one of the most strengthening means of our bonding together.

#### Spiritual Companionship

The vows we said "yes" to years ago are lived at every stage of our lives. Because the growth of God happens in our everyday living, we are encouraged to seek a spiritual director, a companion, a guide who helps us identify and trust our God experiences; who listens as we discern difficult choices we must make; and who shares our hopes, struggles and losses.

- What helps for transformation are offered in your congregation?
- What more would you hope for?

#### Conclusion

The Scriptures call us always to see that God indeed "is making all things new." We are invited to "choose life so that you and your descendants may live, by loving your God, obeying that voice and holding fast" (Deuteronomy 30: 15-20). And we are invited to this every day. I strongly believe that where one member grows, all of us grow. And that it is the responsibility of each member to be faithful to both contemplation and service as we live out that "beautiful order of things that the great God came to establish in His Blood" - words of St. Maria De Mattias. ♦

# Helping Missionaries Minister far from Home

## CINCINNATI PROVINCE SPONSORS ACCULTURATION WORKSHOPS

In the rural Ohio area where I grew up and where I now minister, the people have a gentle way to let others know they do not care for a new dish at dinner, a new piece of music at church, or a new way of doing things. "That's different," they say, politely but completely without enthusiasm.

Yet how those things that are different can enrich our lives! If we can open ourselves up to new ways, new people and their culture, which are new to us, we will invariably learn so much.

Most of us enjoy our daily routine and resent the disruptions that pull us from our familiar path. But imagine if everything in your life—the people around you, the food you eat, the music you hear, the landscape you see—looks and feels strange and different all at once. That is the experience of the missionary who goes to a new country to minister.

Since their beginnings, our Church and our congregation have been blessed with brave souls who travel half-way around the world, leaving behind everything that is familiar to experience all that is different.

For the past seven years, I have been blessed with working with our international Missionaries of the Precious Blood coming from Tanzania and India to serve in the United States through the Cincinnati Province.

Through these experiences, and also the experiences of welcoming candidates from other cultures who feel called to serve in the United States, we have learned so much about the international Church, the missionary spirit of our congregation, and the human heart.

## AN EXCHANGE OF GIFTS

*"Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes. For the place we are approaching is holy. Else we find ourselves treading on another's dream. More serious still, we may forget that God was present before our arrival."*

by Fr. Kenneth Schnipke, C.P.P.S.

(John Taylor, *The Primal Vision*, London, SCM Press, 1963)

We respect and reverence the unique gifts of each person and culture. We are blessed by the wonderful missionaries who have come to serve in the United States, and we hope and pray that they also grow from having come to know our province and our country. We have blessings to share with the world such as our material and financial resources and leadership skills which have been shaped by many years of experience. Recently our province has been utilizing a new way of discerning leadership and envisioning the future through the appreciative inquiry method. These resources may be helpful to other units. Our foreign missionaries offer the gifts of youthfulness, personnel resources and the unique blessings of their cultures.

Our culture places a high value on independence; other cultures can teach us how to be more relational and dependent upon one another and God. We tend to live in a very structured and fast-paced environment; perhaps

our international friends can help us learn to slow down, and enjoy life—*hakuna matata* (no worries).

## CLARIFYING THE CONTRACT

The process of selecting missionaries to send and welcoming them into our province began several years before the missionaries ever first set foot in the US in July 2006. The General Curia and Major Superiors had encouraged units to reach across international boundaries to explore new missions and ministries. Both the sending unit and our province held discussions and district meetings among the leadership and members to inform, seek input and garner support. Leadership teams of both units agreed upon the expectations of the international exchange, clarified the rights and responsibilities of the missionaries and formalized this in a contract.

While concerns and issues beyond the scope of the contract sometimes arise, the initial and ongoing communications among the units help us resolve any issues.

Once we had clarified our expectations about the exchange, the sending unit discerned missionaries to send



Fr. Benedict and Fr. Alfons enjoying their first experience of cold and snow

and we developed a process to welcome them. Acculturation is the process whereby one learns to adapt to another culture. Culture refers to the basic values, ways of life, societal roles, traditions and customs that are unique to specific groups of people.

One might assume that it is up to the missionary to adapt to a new culture. It is just as important for the receiving unit to be aware of its own cultural background, how that may be different from the missionary's, and how to be more sensitive to cultural differences. We identified five groups that needed to be addressed in the acculturation process: the missionaries, the local receiving C.P.P.S. community, the province at large, the parish staff, and the parish at large. With the help of Sr. Kathryn Pierce, IHM, and Intercultural Consultation Services, we set up a series of workshops to assist our acculturation process at every level. Sr. Kathryn brought 30 years of experience working with Maryknoll missionaries.

The first workshop was held shortly after arrival with the missionaries and the C.P.P.S. members in the US they would be working and living with. It gave an overview of culture, explored the similarities and differences of our cultural backgrounds and provided resources for building intercultural relationships and communication. A second workshop with the same focus was held later with the parish staff and key representatives from the parish at large. Both workshops provided safe environments to probe the values we hold dear, the beliefs that shape our lives, the perceptions we have about others and the assumptions we make. They helped us look at the attitudes we have, the unwritten rules that are part of everyday life and our image of self. Exploring all these aspects together helped us learn more about one another and to reverence the gift of each other.

### EXPLORING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

There are many ways to worship the Lord. In Tanzania people may walk several hours to be part of a congregation that moves to the music and expects a homily that is at least 30 minutes or more. In most US parishes, the congregation is more stoic and homilies over 10 or 15 minutes raise concerns. A homilectic and preaching



Sr. Kathryn Pierce, IHM, with newly arrived Missionaries and C.P.P.S. members in US

workshop by Fr. Dick Bayuk, C.P.P.S., of the Kansas City Province provided practical skills and tips for developing homilies in the US culture as well as advice for presiding. The missionaries were also encouraged to share aspects of their culture in their preaching.

Sometimes the concern in American parishes is being able to understand foreign priests with an unfamiliar accent. In these cases language specialists, accent acquisition classes or even making printed copies of the homily available for parishioners have been helpful.

A final five-day workshop was held three months after arrival for the international missionaries. This workshop provided further input on culture and opportunities for missionaries to discuss what they have been experiencing. Speakers talked about our C.P.P.S. history in America, province identity, policies regarding community life, finances, child protection and other diocesan concerns. Each evening there were opportunities for missionaries to share culture, i.e. history, customs, music, poetry, food, etc with local C.P.P.S. members.

The process of welcoming missionaries in the US included several articles in the province newsletter, visits to our primary ministry sites and community houses and getting together with

members at district meetings. We wrote articles for parish bulletins and news releases for local newspapers to help introduce the missionary to the community.

### A MIXING OF CULTURES

An important aspect of this mutual exchange is that our C.P.P.S. international priests will one day return home, for the need there is also great. They have families, friends and local community members they leave behind when they come to the US and it is important for them to reconnect. They also possess gifts and talents, and a deep faith that will enrich their home church.

Acculturation is not one sided, but presumes there is dialogue and a mixing of cultures. Being part of the process has not only broadened my vision of our global church and world, but also made me aware of my own cultural background and the many factors that have shaped my life. Through their close contact with priests, brothers and candidates from other units, members in our province have learned so much, and have truly come to appreciate the international nature of the C.P.P.S. I know that I am a better person for having shared with our international C.P.P.S. missionaries and I know the same is true for many parishioners served by them. ♦

# Sabbaticals Encourage Personal Growth

When a C.P.P.S. priest or brother takes a sabbatical, it is expected that he gain knowledge or acquire new insights. But Br. Nick Renner, C.P.P.S., came back with much more than that: he found a new family, a new tribe, and even discovered a new talent.

"I found out I was pretty good at watercolor," he said, with some amazement.

Br. Nick took his sabbatical in the spring of 2006 at the Sangre de Cristo Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, administered by the De La Salle Christian Brothers.

The desert and mountains of New Mexico are nearly the complete opposite of the flat, green Ohio farmland where Br. Nick had been born and raised, and had done most of his ministry. Professed in 1964, Br. Nick worked for years on the Community's farm at St. Charles Center, the motherhouse of the Cincinnati Province.

In 2006, the Community made the painful decision that it could no longer operate its farm at St. Charles. Br. Nick, who had invested so much of his life in those acres, said that he felt overwhelmed and set adrift.

It was definitely time for a change of scenery. "I knew I needed a sabbatical," he said. "Often, they happen during a time of transition from one ministry to another."

## SABBATICALS FROM BIBLICAL TRADITION

In the Cincinnati Province, priests and brother members are encouraged to take sabbaticals. According to the province's statutes, "any priest or brother with at least seven years of active, full-time service in ministry is eligible to apply for a sabbatical."

The province believes that sabbaticals come from a biblical tradition; God rested on the seventh day, and commanded all of creation to do the same. Sabbaticals also help counter the cultural feeling, prevalent in the United States, that human worth can be measured by how much people produce.

The province's statutes are quite clear that a sabbatical is different from a vacation or even a retreat. A sabbatical is also different from studies toward an advanced degree or special training for a particular ministry or

by Jean Giesige

the province's regular continuing education efforts.

"A sabbatical is a time for a member to grow spiritually and intellectually," said Fr. Larry Hemmelgarn, C.P.P.S., provincial director of the Cincinnati Province. "We recognize that ministry is difficult and demanding work. We have learned that our priests and brothers are better ministers when they can step out of that role from time to time to examine their lives, renew and refresh themselves in different surroundings, and learn something new."

Sabbaticals are important to members' continuing formation, he added. "We hope that all our members will continue to learn and grow in their faith throughout their lives," Fr. Hemmelgarn said. "That can be difficult to do when our days are crowded with meetings, phone calls and ministerial obligations. A sabbatical



Br. Nick Renner stretching abilities and horizons during his sabbatical

gives them the chance to dedicate time to contemplation and learning. We hope that sabbaticals strengthen them in their lives of service.

"On-going professional development and learning are required by law for many professions in the United States," he added. "While it is not a legal obligation for a religious congregation, it is a moral one." The member chooses a sabbatical from one of many such programs offered in the United States, or devises one of his own. Members can also use a sabbatical to pursue other interests or talents, such as music, writing or the

arts. Sabbaticals, which are funded by the province, typically last from three months to a year.

### A TIME OF REBIRTH

Br. Nick was in New Mexico from February through May 2006. He spent the time with 40 other men and women from religious congregations, people who became like family to him.

They all shared in the chores of daily life at the center and took classes in various subjects during the day (that's when Br. Nick was surprised to learn he had a talent for watercolor). They visited nearby Native American villages, where Br. Nick felt drawn to the Pueblo people. "They still hold on to many old traditions and stay closely connected to the Earth," he said. "They taught me more about farming and caring for the Earth than all the classes I had taken back home."

He was mesmerized and energized by his new surroundings, where he also hiked and biked on mountain trails. Listening to the coyotes howl in the mountains at night, he felt strangely at home—and at peace. It was difficult for him to leave, but driving the 1,400 miles back to Ohio, he knew that he was a new creation.

"When you work for the Church, you can get hurt," he said. "Everybody carries hurts with them, which can be a roadblock to growth. I know I needed that sabbatical. It changed my self-image. I learned a lot about myself, and I don't think I will ever forget it."

### LEARNING ABOUT ANOTHER CULTURE

On his sabbatical, which is going on right now, Fr. Alphonse Spilly, C.P.P.S., is hoping to learn more about a different culture. Fr. Spilly left northwest Indiana, near Chicago, for San Antonio, Texas, 1,300 miles away, on

Antonio will help him gain a better understanding of these people who celebrate their Catholicism in a very different way than the Eastern European immigrants who settled in the Whiting area many years ago.

"The issue is how to blend the faith communities" when people from a different culture move into an existing parish, he said. "My impression is they do this really well in San Antonio."

### A TIME TO REFLECT

This will be Fr. Spilly's second sabbatical. Ordained in 1967, he spent many years as a college professor and later as an assistant and confidant to Cardinal Bernardin. When the cardinal died in 1996, Fr. Spilly administered a center in Chicago that was named for him and published two volumes of the cardinal's selected works.

Fr. Spilly had also been caring for his elderly mother, with whom he made his home, for many years. He reached a point where he was mentally and physically exhausted. "A priest for 34 years already, I was nearly burned out," he said. "I was having physical symptoms as well. I took a good look at myself, and asked for a full year's sabbatical."

He used the time to care for his mother and himself, and he studied music, something that he had not had time to do for many years. Near the end of his sabbatical, his mother died unexpectedly. The sabbatical had given him time to spend those last few precious months with her. "It also gave me time to take a breather and reflect on what I should do next," he said. He was then offered a teaching position with Calumet College of St. Joseph, which is sponsored by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, where he has taught happily ever since.

**"We recognize that ministry is difficult and demanding work. We have learned that our priests and brothers are better ministers when they can step out of that role from time to time to examine their lives, renew and refresh themselves in different surroundings, and learn something new." (Fr. Larry Hemmelgarn, C.P.P.S.)**

New Year's Eve, to begin a six-month sabbatical during which he is serving the archbishop of San Antonio, Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, M.S.Sp.

Fr. Spilly has known the archbishop, who formerly served in Chicago, for many years. In San Antonio, he is assisting the archbishop with his communications (a role that Fr. Spilly also held with the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin for many years in Chicago) while also learning more about the Mexican-American culture.

Fr. Spilly sees more and more Mexican-American families at his home parish, St. John the Baptist, in Whiting, Indiana, and at nearby Calumet College of St. Joseph, where he has taught courses on Scripture for the past ten years. He is hoping that his time in San

Antonio will help him gain a better understanding of these people who celebrate their Catholicism in a very different way than the Eastern European immigrants who settled in the Whiting area many years ago.

During his current sabbatical, Fr. Spilly will be spending many hours with Archbishop García-Siller as he travels about his huge archdiocese, meeting with and ministering to the people he serves. Fr. Spilly hopes to help him with his many important responsibilities and assist him in keeping his spiritual focus during long days of work and ministry.

They can learn much from each other, he said. "It's so important to keep learning," Fr. Spilly said. "I'm still learning all the time. Even though I have a doctorate in biblical studies, I am still learning things about Scripture that I never knew before, even after all these years. That is something we try to instill in our students, that learning is a lifetime process." ♦

# INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR PRECIOUS BLOOD SPIRITUALITY



The International Center for Precious Blood Spirituality in beautiful Salzburg offers the space and the place for prayer and personal reflection. C.P.P.S. priests, brothers and Companions/lay associates are welcomed here to make a retreat or short sabbatical, deepening their understanding of Precious Blood Spirituality. Fr. Barry Fischer, C.P.P.S., who directs the center, will help you plan this very spiritual experience.

Contact information:

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# SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOPS IN THE IBERIAN PROVINCE

by Fr. Paulino Hernández, C.PPS.

Since 1995, the Iberian Province has been hosting a weekend workshop to reflect on the spirituality of the Precious Blood. These yearly gatherings, open to Missionaries, Adorers of the Blood of Christ, and lay people, have been a source of great joy to our Precious Blood family, giving them the opportunity to share their dreams and hopes within the framework of Precious Blood spirituality.

The themes are generally not of great theological, biblical or doctrinal scope. But they reflect the daily life and witness of the diverse people and communities who join together to share their experiences. The Iberian Province launched the annual workshops as a way to create space to reflect on the spirituality of the Blood of Christ.

Over the years, we have reflected on the following themes:

**To Love without limits.** This is our commitment in response to the love of God who gives himself, hands himself over for us, for us, and who shares himself.

**To be in solidarity with others,** sharing their joys and sorrows, accepting others as they are and sharing our life with them.

**Community.** We are a family of the Precious Blood, characterized by the way that we communicate and share our dreams in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.

**To be reconciled with all,** even with those who have betrayed us, saying that “you are still worthy of my trust and of my love,” so as to repair the rights of the persons who have been wounded.

**To be a Living Eucharist,** sharing ourselves, giving of ourselves, and sharing everything with others.

**The abundant mercy of God,** who as the Good Shepherd carries us in his arms to the green pastures of his Kingdom and who searches for us along the road where we have been lost.

**To be witnesses** of the blood of Christ, shed for the salvation of the world.

**Our apostolates.** We explored the manner in which our spirituality influences our apostolates and mission.

**To be persons of Hope.** In our world in which there are many lonely and abandoned persons, especially the elderly, and who may see on the horizon of their life only a room where they will end their days in loneliness; and the youth, often disillusioned as they do not find a place in society, and of so many people who live without hope of any kind.

**Hospitality,** which implies listening to the one who needs to speak and to encourage the disenchanted by saying to them “you are of a priceless value,” nothing more or less, made so by the blood of Christ.

**The denunciation of injustices perpetrated by the powerful,** demanding justice and freedom.

**Respect for mother earth,** collaborating with God in this world, which he has entrusted to us, with the commitment to better it for future generations.

**The meaning of the Cross, Covenant, and Chalice of the Lord and for living the bond of charity.**

## WHAT HAVE THESE WORKSHOPS MEANT FOR YOU?

Several Missionaries and laypersons shared what the workshops have meant for them. Their responses are found on the next page.

Summing it up, these annual gatherings of the Iberian Province have helped us:

- to get in touch with our reality, animating us to work for the Reign of God
- to learn to live with and relate to other members of the family of the Precious Blood
- to listen to others outside of the family of the Precious Blood, to discover what our spirituality says to them, and to be thus mutually enriched
- to experience intense moments of prayer and adoration of the blood of Christ, to thank God for the great gift which he gave to humanity through the love of his Son Jesus Christ. ♦



*"Just as a book is composed of many pages, the family of the Precious Blood is formed by many people: Missionaries, religious and laity all of whom need order and harmony, and some bonds of union ... This is what the yearly Workshops offer. We achieve all this when we see and embrace one another, when we chat together, pray and reflect and when we drink from the same Chalice."*

(Manuel González, layman from Cáceres)

*"The Workshops have offered me the occasion to deepen my understanding of the basic contents of our spirituality through the conferences and round table discussions. When I was asked to give one of the presentations, it allowed me to deepen my understanding and to discover new aspects of that which we call 'ours'.*

*"It is also a good occasion to meet with others who each year participate in the workshops and who are becoming all the while more members of our family of the Precious Blood. The workshops afford me each year the opportunity to get to know each other better, to pray together and to reflect around our spirituality."*

(Fr. José María Borreguero Fernández, C.P.P.S.,  
of the Iberian Province)



*"It is important to realize that the Spirituality of the Blood of Christ is not something exclusive to the group which shares this faith in my city. I need to reconnect with all those persons whom I see only once a year but who feel and live the same faith. After so many workshops and so many experiences that we have shared, they have become persons very dear to me, members of my spiritual family who contribute to a mutual enrichment."*

(Naty Castaño González,  
laywoman from Cáceres)

*"The workshops are formative moments because they help us to know better the spirituality of the Precious Blood and because they prepare us to give a resounding answer to the needs which we encounter daily. They provide necessary moments of reflection as we pause from our everyday activities, in order to stand before the most Precious Blood and to recognize our defects and to assure ourselves that the road which we travel is the right one, in order to commit ourselves more as Christians and to grow in our faith.*

*"They are opportunities to share because the Missionaries and the laity of the Precious Blood navigate in the same boat and we need to row in unison, in order to know one another each day better, so as to love one another more and to better serve the ideals of St. Gaspar.*

*"And they help to deepen our commitment, since they awaken our conscience and our heart, so as to be more attentive to the poor, to the forgotten ones, to those that St. Gaspar loved and wished that his followers would do the same. We need to go forth with renewed strength in order to commit ourselves in building a more just, balanced, and compassionate society."*

(Damián Niso, layman from Cáceres)

*"I believe that the workshops above all have served to provide us with our own materials in Spanish in the light of our spirituality. Another positive point is that it has been and is an occasion to get to know persons from other places where our missionaries are working. As a proposal for the future, we need to explore the possibility of having gatherings such as these with the people who are close to us in our spirituality, in order to work more concretely with it and with more intensity, within our possibilities, and so to share in our spirituality and common mission."*

(Fr. Juan Pedro Ruiz, C.P.P.S.,  
of the Iberian Province)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MERLAP III

*(Meeting of Representatives from Lay Associate Programs)*

*July 23-27, 2012 - Rome*

The representatives for this meeting will be chosen by the unit superiors

## *New Blood: A conversation with today's youth*

**June 22 - July 1, 2012 - Salzburg, Austria**

Missionaries, seminarians and young adults from C.P.P.S. units around the world will meet to exchange ideas on communicating the spirituality of the Blood of Christ with young people today. Together, we will discuss the issues facing young people, and how the spirituality of the Blood of Christ can give them the answers that they seek. We'll also talk about the language and methods that best reach young people.



More information on the celebration will be forthcoming in upcoming editions of The Cup as well as in your local C.P.P.S. publications.

**BICENTENNIAL  
C.P.P.S. FOUNDATION  
1815 - 2015**

Continued from front page

ership in Fatima, Portugal, in September 2010, have asked the General Curia to prepare a guide for the continuing formation of our members to be presented for consideration to all the units of the Congregation. The motive for this request does not stem from a lack of such ongoing formation in the various areas of the Congregation but rather from a desire to have a common vision of how this can be accomplished and how to encourage all members to consider this essential for their human and spiritual growth and for the effectiveness and updating of their ministry.

All of the documents of the Church pertaining to the formation of priests and religious brothers recommend and emphasize continuing formation. With justification this has come to be considered an integral part of the way of life that every person committed to the service of his/her brothers and sisters in the Church should carry out in order to keep in top form as well as to keep current in the dynamics of the changing times and integration of cultures.

The articles of this issue were written by five authors. Each one brings his/her experience and commitment to animate the continuing formation of the members of their provinces and of the Congregation, each in his/her field and in his/her capacity.

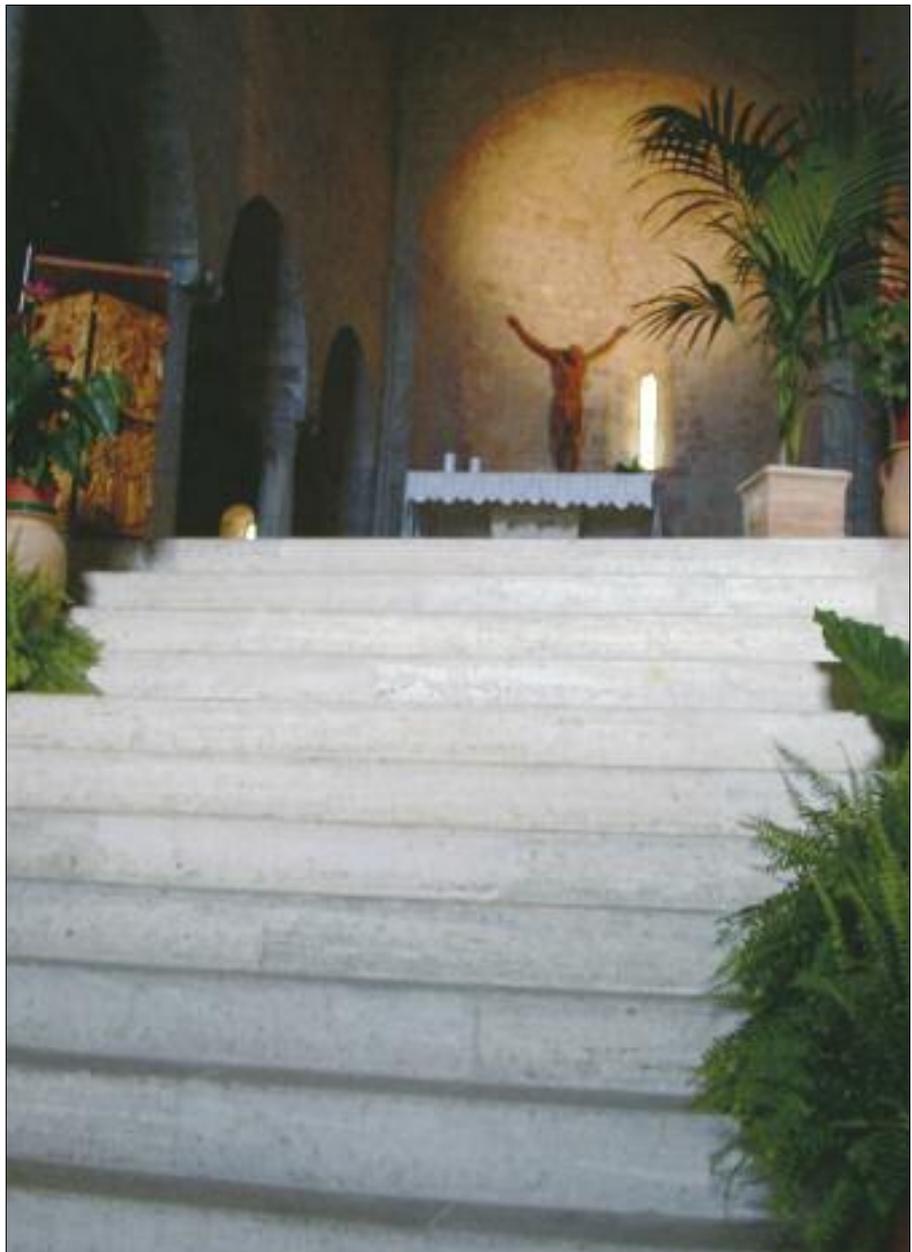
Formation is a process that has no end, because everyone who is in service of another must be committed to being whole, especially so that he/she can always be new: Christ gives himself and is ever a new reality and is always understood in a new way. The authors emphasize that the motive for ongoing formation is to grasp within themselves this ever new reality of Christ and of the other. Fr. Nordenbrock shows us a way of rediscovering this newness by means of the methodology of appreciative discernment, by which people accept what is beautiful in themselves and in others and from that point of departure rediscover the dream and make it a reality. Fr. Schnipke shows us concretely how this can happen through the experience of a journey to a new world and of the encounter of persons and the

new cultures of those persons. He describes the journey of two members of the Tanzanian Vicariate of the Congregation who went to the United States in order to provide pastoral ministry in service to and in communion with the Cincinnati Province.

Sr. Joan Marie Voss is a formator in her community of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. She speaks of the journey of growth and of the need to return to one's self at times in order to put the contemplation of the One whom we announce at the center of this growth. Contemplation and action, journey and growth are inseparable combinations for those who are to proclaim the mystery. They must live the mystery within themselves in order to reveal it ever new to others. Companion Jean

Giesige interviewed two members of the Congregation who have requested a sabbatical year at a certain moment of their ministerial life, when they moved from a ministry that they had carried out for many years to another ministry. Their experience was that they discovered not only other dreams but that they also underwent an interior renewal that rendered them ready to follow other roads. Fr. Paulino Hernández of the Iberian Province describes his involvement with lay people who with him live the spirituality of the Precious Blood and in the light of this mystery carry out their mission in the Church and in society.

Ongoing formation, which arose mainly as a demand to update one's self with respect to the *res novae* of the Church, of culture, etc., has been



"The path of discipleship is always upward and headed toward a peak that is never truly reached"

## OUR AUTHORS



**Jean Giesige**, an award-winning journalist and essayist, is a lay associate (Companion) of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. She is the director of communications for the Cincinnati Province. She lives with her husband, Mark, and their children in Celina, Ohio.



**Fr. Paulino Hernández, C.P.P.S.**, a former Provincial of the Iberian Province, currently lives in the “House of the Sun” in Caceres, Spain and is the pastor of St. Matthew Church. He is the initiator of the yearly spirituality workshops and has overseen many publications of the Province.



**Fr. William Nordenbrock, C.P.P.S.**, is a member of the General Council, of the Congregation. In addition, he is the Provincial Director of Formation for the Cincinnati Province and is on the staff of the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago.



**Fr. Ken Schnipke, C.P.P.S.**, serves as a member of the Cincinnati provincial council and director of personnel which includes ministry with international members. Fr. Schnipke is the pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Celina, Ohio, and St. Teresa Parish in Rockford, Ohio.



**Sr. Joan Marie Voss, ASC**, is an Adorer of the Blood of Christ of the USA Region. She served in leadership at the Regional and Congregational levels. Presently, she is serving full time as a spiritual director and also doing the ongoing formation for the US Region.

the initial phase. Due to human limitations, the consecrated person can never claim to have completely brought to life the “new creature” who, in every circumstance of life, reflects the very mind of Christ. *Initial* formation, then, should be closely connected with *continuing* formation, thereby creating a readiness on everyone’s part to let themselves be formed every day of their lives... At no stage of life can people feel so secure and committed that they do not need to give careful attention to ensuring perseverance in faithfulness; just as there is no age at which a person has completely achieved maturity” (*Vita consecrata*, 69).

In conclusion, I would like to express myself with an image. In the past the only formation known was initial formation. It was perceived, in my opinion, as traveling an upward path which led to a plateau. There the height of maturity was substantially reached; then it was enough to proceed along paths more or less level. We have come to understand, on the other hand, that the path of discipleship is always upward and headed toward a peak that is never truly reached. This upward path is sometimes more pleasant and sometimes more difficult. As one ascends a mountain, there is the possibility of contemplating visions that are always different, panoramas that are always new and drawing nearer. The decisive vision is that of the Lord, ever more and better known and to be made known, ever more intensely loved and to be loved. ♦

transformed into the necessity of never considering one’s self formed once for all time, of experiencing one’s self as always involved in the task of the patient construction of one’s own life, understood as faithful and ever new response to the call. “None are exempt from the obligation to grow humanly and as Religious; by the same token, no one can be over-confident and live in self-sufficient isolation” (*Vita consecrata*, 69). This clear assertion

expresses well the “why” and “what” of continuing formation:

“Continuing formation ... is an intrinsic requirement of religious consecration. As mentioned above, the formation process is not limited to

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*“Companions/Lay Associates”*

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## The Cup of the New Covenant

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