



The Cup of the New Covenant

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD
No. 29, October 2010

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY

by Fr. Francesco Bartoloni, C.P.P.S.

In the Church there are many religious congregations, born in different periods of her history for reasons of pastoral, spiritual or social animation. These congregations were founded by generous and visionary men and women who had read what we today call “the signs of the times,” interpreting them in the context of their daily experience of the church and society in the light of the great message of Christ. They handed on their charisms to their followers so that they might be extended to the whole Church. Their responses to the signs of the times, generous and visionary, became the heritage of the entire Church and was spread throughout time and space for the benefit of the Church and society. In their time some of these founders

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St. Maria De Mattias, center; clockwise from upper left, Maria Magdalena Guerrero Larrain, Maria Anna Brunner, Abbot Francis Pfanner, Theresa Weber

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MARIA DE MATTIAS, OUR FOUNDRRESS

St. Maria De Mattias’ life, lived in the 19th century in Italy (Vallecorsa, February 4, 1805 – Rome, August 20, 1866) is a clear example of how the searching for and the joyful acceptance of the participation in Christ’s Paschal Mystery leads to holiness.

As a child, Maria was an eye witness to brutal crimes in Vallecorsa (Fro-

sinone), her home town, where the brigands killed and sowed desperation in many families. One morning during the Easter Season, she was struck by the image of the unblemished lamb that the priest had used during the homily. When she later asked her father to explain, he told her that the lamb was a symbol for Jesus who gave his life for us. This event remained in Maria’s subconscious and prepared the way for her future choices.

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Her meeting with St. Gaspar del Bufalo, the founder of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood, was a new launching pad for Maria. She discovered that Christ's Blood was total love given for and to humanity. Feelings of pure and passionate rapture filled her and

the choice of total consecration to Him. The rest of Maria's life, lived in faith and love, just naturally flowed out of this deep experience.

On March 1, 1834 at the age of 29, Maria left Vallecorsa to go to Acuto (Frosinone) a small, isolated town in the mountains. Here she had been sought by the town

Blood of Christ was the central inspiration for Maria's personal life and that of the Congregation.

Maria did not hold back any energy in working for her "dear neighbor." There were so many kinds of poverty: material poverty, sickness, violence, illiteracy, moral degradation, lack of religious instruction, etc. Her daily efforts were to take on the burden of these needs by working especially in the area of the education of girls and women through the school, retreats for young women and married women and in preaching in church.

With the passing of years Maria's frequent travels, hard work and deprivations took a toll on her already delicate health. Aware that she was coming to the end of her life, she joyfully prepared for her encounter with the Lord.

Maria De Mattias died in Rome on August 20, 1866. The news passed

"Maria's love for Jesus, which would color every moment of her daily life, was transformed into an ardent desire to commit herself to Him."

for the first time Maria was aware of being in love with the Crucified and Risen Jesus.

Maria's love for Jesus, which would color every moment of her daily life from then on, was transformed into an ardent desire to commit herself to Jesus through

council as a teacher to open a school for the poor girls. In Acuto on March 4, 1834, she founded the Congregation of the Adorers of the Divine Blood, today known as the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. Soon several young women joined her in this journey of consecration to God. The spirituality of the



Sr. Young Ja Clara Lee, ASC (center) directing a "Catholic Women's Hotline" retreat for her collaborators in Seoul, Korea



Sr. Suela Pepa, ASC, is assisting a handicapped child in Albania

quickly by word of mouth, “The saint has died.”

MARIA'S VISION LIVED IN TODAY'S WORLD

The world in which we live is in a constant process of growth and, therefore, a world of continuous change. But Maria De Mattias' deepest dream and vision cannot change; it is identical to Christ's dream and vision, for which He gave His whole life, shedding His blood on the Cross. Today, 1,550 Adorers of the Blood of Christ are carrying out Maria's dream for humanity and the whole universe in 26 countries.

Christ's whole life and the Blood He shed on the cross speak of God's infinite love for every human being and for all of creation. In accepting God's love and letting it permeate our hearts, we deepen our love relationship with God. Each of us, in feeling loved, is able to love in return with the same love received from Him. This faith experience urges us to share the precious gift we have freely received.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Rot Wie Blut Die Blumen, Ein Bischof zwischen Tod und Leben, Bishop Erwin Kräutler, C.P.P.S., Otto Müller Verlag, Salzburg-Wien, 2009.

La Nostra Ricca Eredità, Il Sangue di Cristo, edited by Nicola Giampaolo, C.P.P.S., Primavera Missionaria, Albano Laziale (RM), 2009.

Spirituality of the Blood of Christ, Ernest Ranly, C.P.P.S., The Messenger Press, Carthagena, Ohio, 2010.

La Espiritualidad de la Sangre de Cristo, Ernesto Ranly, C.P.P.S., Editorial San Pablo, Bogotá, Colombia, 2010.

St. Gaspar del Bufalo, Apostle of the Blood of Christ, vol. 2, by Beniamino Conti, C.P.P.S., translated and edited by Jerome Stack, C.P.P.S., Cincinnati Province, 2010.

Il Sangue di Cristo Nella Bibbia: Commento dei Padri della Chiesa, IV (Proverbi-Malachia), edited by Tullio Veglianti, C.P.P.S., Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City, 2010.

If you are interested in these publications, please contact the Generalate.

The Adorers of the Blood of Christ try to be faithful to Maria De Mattias' dream. Together with many lay Associates and as a member of VIVAT, an NGO (Non Governmental Organization), we have set some priorities, to which we commit ourselves:

TO DEFEND AND CARE FOR THE VALUE OF LIFE IN ALL ITS DIMENSIONS

Jesus came to bring life, life in abundance from the time of conception to the time of death. Human life and the dignity of persons are becoming more and more perceived as relative goods. The face of this earth itself is increasingly becoming polluted because of the lack of care we have for it. The Blood of Christ calls us to commit ourselves to be responsible and to care for life, wherever it is threatened or destroyed.

TO DEFEND WOMEN'S DIGNITY

In many parts of the world women are considered inferior, property and many limitations are placed upon them. Women are exposed to multiple kinds of violence and death and, in some situations, must risk their lives to escape danger and death.

TO WALK WITH AND ALONGSIDE THE POOR

Poverty is not just an economic disadvantage; it is also a deprivation of fundamental rights to health care, education, housing, food, one's own opinion, etc. Our commitment is that of striving to eliminate all forms of poverty from the face of the earth with the power of Christ's Blood, which is love.

TO BE AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION

The Blood of Christ establishes unity in humanity and calls us to be a presence of reconciliation, to cre-

“Jesus tells us that dialogue and understanding are the only ways to build a world of peace and justice, not racism, opposition and fear.”

ate harmony among the differences. This truth calls us to appreciate multiculturalism and to deepen our knowledge of the variety of nations, people, and various languages that have been made one through the Blood of Christ. Diversity is often perceived as a threat and creates fear. Jesus tells us that dialogue and understanding are the only ways to build a world of peace and justice, not racism, opposition and fear.

TO GIVE MEANING TO SUFFERING AND DEATH

“Our charism as Adorers of the Blood of Christ is deeply rooted in the death-resurrection mystery of Jesus” (Life Charter 22). The spirituality of the Blood of Christ

brings the wisdom and promise of the cross to a culture that has a difficult time giving meaning to suffering and death and often does not even want to talk about any of these realities.

The Blood of Christ reminds us that we are loved by God, created and called to life through God's love. Our life is precious and our presence and activities in the world are indispensable for building a different world order based on love, reconciliation and unity.

Our mission is that of struggling with Christ against every form of evil so as to bring about on earth “that beautiful order of things which Christ came to establish with his Blood.” (St. Maria De Mattias) ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

“Preaching the Good News from a Precious Blood perspective”

An International Workshop for those dedicated to the ministry of preaching the Word through retreats, parish missions, catechesis

May 22-28, 2011

**International Center of Precious Blood Spirituality
Salzburg, Austria**

For more Information, contact Barry Fischer, C.P.P.S.
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SISTERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

Maria Anna Brunner fell in love with God at an early age and spent the rest of her life expressing that love in delightful, as well as difficult, ways. Unfolding her biography reveals incredibly simple, yet subtly profound, events. These began with her birth on October 1, 1764. Her parents, Adam and Elizabeth Probst, welcomed their first daughter into a modest home in the hidden Swiss hamlet of Reckenkein in Canton Solothurn. From her tender years Maria Anna evidenced an extraordinary generosity that characterized her seventy-one years on earth. Her desire to please God prompted a constant *yes* to the Spirit's urgings regardless of personal sacrifice. The motherly care of her family, coupled with her care of the poor who came to the door of her Beibelberg home, and later to the gates of Castle Loewenberg, demonstrated the depth of her generous nature. It was this life-long giving that drew hundreds of mourners to join Mother Brunner's funeral procession winding its way from the Castle to St. Mary's in Sagens on a cold January 15, 1836.

Biographical highlights attest to Maria Anna's self-giving nature. When she was twelve Maria Anna willingly left the security of her home to assist the ailing Mrs. Nicholas Brunner. After seventeen years of impeccable service, Maria Anna fell in love and married John Brunner, the oldest son of her employer. The two became parents of six children. Sorrow wrenched their hearts when (a daughter, Anna Maria) their first baby girl died before her second birthday. At forty-nine, Maria Anna lost her husband in death. She had been his sole caregiver through six months of a debilitating illness. Widowed, she bore the responsibility for her five offspring, ages four to eighteen.

by Sr. Maryann Bremke, C.P.P.S.

As a single parent Maria Anna dutifully attended to the education of her three boys and two girls identifying their individual needs and giving them counsel. She was sixty-six years old before her youngest left home. It was then that Maria Anna put her affairs in order, sold her Beibelberg estate, and went to live with Anna Maria Fluri, her married daughter. Maria Anna could have slipped quietly into eternity from this vantage, but the Spirit had other plans for this valiant Swiss woman.

A restless spirit urged Maria Anna to go on a pilgrimage to Mary's Shrine at Einsiedeln. Such devotional journeys periodically had nourished Maria Anna's soul. This late-life pilgrimage to Einsiedeln

led Maria Anna to Castle Loewenberg where she joined her son, Father Francis DeSales Brunner, in an endeavor that eventually led to the founding of an extended family – the Sisters of the Precious Blood. The last four years of her life were wrapped in the gentle leadership of those women who drew their strength not from the force of her commands, but from the authentic nature of her generous presence.

Reviewing Maria Anna Brunner's life invites our reflection on the meaning of Precious Blood spirituality. At its very essence Precious Blood spirituality is a consuming passion – a life force that encompasses our prayer and energizes our ministries. It is the fountain of life-giving water that spills into our relationship with God, with the



Sr. Nancy Wolf, teacher at Immaculate Conception in Celina, Ohio inspires the little ones with her unique teaching style

marginalized, and with all of creation. Being grounded in Eucharistic adoration of the Precious Blood sustains within us a power that sensitizes us to the least ones who shadow our ever-changing steps on our life journeys. We see Jesus in the myriad needy ones daily present among us, and this awareness makes real the sacrifice of the Lover who shed the last drop of his Precious Blood so that all may have life, and have that life in abundance. Precious Blood spirituality generates the deepest yearning within our womanly beings to be bearers and givers of life.

Today, 175 years after Maria Anna

graced this earth, we religious “Urged by the redeeming love of God, and rooted in Eucharistic prayer, we Sisters of the Precious Blood proclaim God’s love by being a life-giving reconciling presence in our fractured world.” It is our passion to find in the Precious Blood of Jesus the deep well from which we daily draw the refreshing water of life, to be personally sustained, and then to share that life-giving water with the thirsty.

The poor still find their way to our Beibelberg homes and Loewenberg castles as they seek and find our modern convent doors. In our commitment to be a life-giving presence we reach out in creative responses. The monetary grants of

ing on eternity’s edge—all experience the surge of life, that quietly inundates and soothes their affliction, through our presence. Our Mother Earth breathes more relaxed from our purposeful care and conscious preservation of her treasured resources. Where we see the world fractured through violence, hunger, hatred, greed, abuse of power, natural disaster and other devastating causes, we respond with a generous womanly instinct to nurture and to protect life. The redeeming love of Jesus pulses through the fiber of our beings as we keep our ever-prayerful vigils, proclaiming that love in our fractured world.

Inspired by a visionary Swiss woman, whose life expressed a chain of endless responses to the Holy Spirit, through which she found constant ways of praising and adoring the Precious Blood, we, Maria Anna’s twenty-first century followers, remain restless in that same Spirit as we seek new ways to re-stylize her generosity.

Maria Anna Brunner was Scripture’s valiant woman. As daughter, sister, wife and mother her value was far beyond pearls. She put her hand to the distaff and her fingers plied the spindle. She extended her hand to the poor and reached out her arms to the needy. As widow and single parent her charges were doubly clothed and she opened her mouth in wisdom and spoke kindly counsel. Her children rose up and praised her. Godmother and grandmother saw her clothed with strength and dignity. She excelled above all women. As Foundress she picked out a field to purchase and out of her earnings planted a vineyard. She enjoyed the success of her dealings and her lamp was undimmed. She is valiant woman of the Precious Blood, whose works praise her as she continues in heaven the good work that she began on earth—work continued now in the generous, life-giving presence of her Sisters of the Precious Blood. ♦



Sister Arlene Hirsch assists a client in the food pantry at Dayton Catholic Social Services, Dayton, Ohio

women who are her extended family, mirror the passion of this valiant woman. We live a Precious Blood spirituality that reflects, and makes present again, the multifaceted giving of our nineteenth-century Foundress. She loved her God without reprieve because she loved God unconditionally in the people whose lives daily touched hers. We women, who profess to be imbued with Maria Anna’s spirit, express our spirituality in a mission statement that encapsulates the compelling force of our lives:

the Maria Anna Brunner Fund offer substantial financial support to those who endeavor to improve the lives of the poor. As we strive to live a Eucharistic presence we find countless ways to impart life anew. Through our ministries we birth vibrant life in the abused woman and the frightened immigrant; we communicate life to the illiterate and homeless; we sustain life in those who hurt physically, emotionally or spiritually; we rejuvenate life in the downtrodden and companion fragile life linger-

Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood

Not only the principle of *ora et labora* [pray and work], but also the title Abbot Francis Pfanner (1825-1909) gave the sisters shows their rootedness in the Gospel. They were to find their example and strength in the Precious Blood of Jesus. Dedicated to this Blood, their title is both their legacy and their mandate.



OUR ORIGINS

Each congregation has its own unique history which reflects the spirit of the founder or foundress; each has its own charism. The Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood have received a rich and valuable legacy from Abbot Francis Pfanner, whom God shaped to be a committed priest and devout Trappist monk, a tireless missionary and their founder.

Born in 1825 in Langen, Vorarlberg, Austria, Wendelin Pfanner studied in Padua and Brixen. He received his priestly ordination in 1850 and served for nine years as a parish priest. He was appointed sisters' confessor and prison chaplain. At age 38, because of ill health and "to prepare for death", Wendelin Pfanner entered the Trappist monastery at Mariawald, Germany, taking the name of Father Francis. His superiors sent him later to Bosnia, where he founded the Trappist Monastery of Mariastern. In 1882 he established a Trappist Monastery near Durban, South Africa. This was to be Mary-Ann-Hill or Mariannahill. In 1885, Francis Pfanner Abbot of Mariannahill, founded the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood.

The sisters began at *Kirchherten* in Germany in 1889. It was a place to train and form the new vocations. It was a difficult beginning, because of the *Kulturkampf* in Germany. On the advice of their founder the sisters moved to Helden-Panningen in the Netherlands and in 1903 to *Aarle-Rixtel, Helmond*. The new convent was named "*Missieklooster Heilig Bloed*." In July 1907, Sr. M. Paula Emunds was unanimously elected first canonical

by Sr. Walburga Ballhausen, CPS

superior general. Born in 1865 in Schleiden, Germany, Josephine Emunds joined the Missionary Sisters in 1886. Imbued with the spirit of the founder, she is regarded as the co-foundress of the congregation. Her treatise *The Inner Spirit and Virtues of the Missionary Sister of the Precious Blood*, written in 1908, mirrors not only the Founder's spirit but also the sum total of his spiritual teaching which is expressed in his day-to-day life.

In 1887 Abbot Francis expressed his vision for the 'Red Sisters' [a popular name given to the sisters on account of the initial red dress]: *the sisters were to honour the Precious Blood of Christ for the life of the world*. In other words, as

women of the Paschal Mystery they were to live lives *poured out for many*.

HOW WE EXPRESS THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

To witness to the Redeeming Love of Christ is at the heart of being a Missionary Sister of the Precious Blood. The essence of our religious life is an encounter with Christ in the mystery of his death and resurrection which leads to an ever-deepening union of life and love with God.

Our Precious Blood Spirituality centers around the celebration of the Eucharist. This must become evident in our daily lives. We bring the concerns and needs of the Church and the entire world into the Eucharistic celebration. Eucha-



The Missionary Sisters' lives are a witness to the redeeming love of Christ

ristic Adoration also holds a place of prominence in our spirituality.

The Coat of Arms of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood bears the image of the Standing Lamb. It depicts the Lamb of God, standing in readiness to answer God's call, with the chalice and the banner of victory. It symbolizes the total, self-sacrificing love of Jesus Christ whose life, suffering, death, and resurrection proclaim God's great love for us.

Precious Blood spirituality involves reflection on the Paschal Mystery and witnessing to God's redeeming love extended to all. It means to follow Jesus' example of loving surrender to God's will, a willingness to carry one's own cross and to help others carry theirs, working towards reconciliation in our world, respecting the gift of life, and proclaiming the new life found in Christ Jesus, to be people inflamed with the fire of compassion and solidarity, impelled to walk with the wounded and marginalized, and to discover with them the redemptive power of the Blood of Christ.

Sacred Scripture is the basis of our lives. Following the Benedictine motto *Pray and Work – Ora et Labora* – we strive to make our entire life an incessant worship of God.

The Precious Blood – our gift, our name, our mandate – places us at the center of the Paschal Mystery. It calls us to be women of Life, women of the Eucharist, women of Reconciliation, women bound to the Initiative of God's passage in our lives. It calls us to be prophetic women who commit ourselves to listen and respond to the *I thirst* in our world that implies *to dare the utmost* (Mother Paula).

OUR CORPORATE IDENTITY AND MISSION

We witness joyfully and prophetically to God's redeeming Love where Christ and where Christ and his Gospel are not yet or no longer known; where social, educational

and pastoral services are needed to make God's redemptive plan visible and tangible; where the implanting and living out of Gospel values such as forgiveness and reconciliation are needed, and solutions to peace, justice and environmental issues must be found and especially where women and children are concerned; where help is still needed for Christian communities to become viable, independent and missionary.

The awareness of our own personal redemption and that of our com-



The Sisters are called to be prophetic women committed to listen and respond to the "I thirst" in our world

munity urges us to carry out our missionary mandate and promote a culture of life. As members of a multi-cultural congregation we strive:

- to foster respect for the dignity of every person especially for the poor and oppressed;
- to hear the cry for dialogue in our communities;
- to examine our attitudes and missionary approach and strive to serve in humility;
- to be open to respond to new challenges by daring to dream and to risk;
- to be available and flexible;
- we listen to the needs of the time in order to clarify our goal and mandate;

- we live and listen to Gospel values wherever we are through a process of inculturation;
- we are open to changing situations so that we can discern our apostolic response.
- we are ready to enter into interreligious dialogue;
- we give special attention to women and children whose plight is worsened by the general threat to life, e.g. abortion, abuse, HIV/AIDS, etc.;
- we become involved in Justice and Peace, global and environmental issues, both locally and world-wide;

- we maintain a joyful readiness for Mission.

The call for an international community challenges us to uphold and to bear witness to communion between peoples and cultures in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania.

As members of a missionary congregation the fulfillment of mission is essential, i.e. witnessing to the redeeming love of Christ, in whose service the Missionary Sisters are for over 125 years.

Jesus' whole life on earth had the one goal to bring people into the love of God. This is also the prime goal of the CPS missionary activities. ♦

SISTERS OF THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD

The theme of our 2010 General Chapter was THE STORY UNFOLDS: “Let us go forward on the path that has brought us to where we are” (Philippians 3:16). As we look at who we are today as Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, we realize how our story has unfolded in light of those who came before us. Like them, we make a path by walking in faith.

Among those who walked before us are the young women from Baden, Germany, who came together on September 8, 1845, in Steinerberg, Switzerland, to live a life of prayer and sacrifice. Settling in across the street from St. Anne’s Church in what had been a public inn and tavern, they wanted to devote their lives to reparation for sin through perpetual adoration. Drawn together by the desire to contemplate the mystery of God’s love through the Blood of Christ, they prayed in the church during the day. At night they knelt at the window of their convent to gaze at the light of the sanctuary lamp in the church of St. Anne. Their time of adoration ended with this prayer, “Eternal Father, we offer you the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ in satisfaction for our sins... and for the needs of the Church.”

Theresa Weber, a young German woman, is revered as our foun-

by Sr. Mary Whited, C.P.P.S.

dress. Even as a child, she saw the Blood of Christ as a sign of God’s love. “Each person is precious,” she would later say, “as precious as the Blood of Christ.” After serving as superior of our growing community for three years, Mother Theresa died at the age of twenty-

“Even as a child, Theresa Weber saw that ‘Each person is precious, as precious as the Blood of Christ.’”

six. True to who she was, she accomplished her mission in life quite simply as she accompanied our community in the initial steps of our journey.

Under the guidance of Father Karl Rolfus, a priest from Baden, Germany, the Sisters searched for a spirituality that might counteract the growing secularization of southern Germany. Rolfus came upon devotion to the Precious Blood, and he shared his spirituality with his many directees, including Magdalene Weber, who was destined to become our foundress. Because German convents were not allowed to accept new

candidates, the German women journeyed to Switzerland where the pastor of St. Anne’s Church was supportive of their desire to found a new community. On his way to Steinerberg, Father Rolfus stopped to get advice from the Precious Blood Missionaries in Drei Aehren near Colmar, the prior of Maria Stein near Basel, and the Benedictine monks at Our Lady of

Einsiedeln. This began our connections with other Precious Blood communities.

Government hostility eventually forced the fledgling community to establish a home in Ottmarsheim in the French Alsace. Moving on to Gurtweil, Germany, we served by teaching young girls and stitching church vestments in addition to contemplation; these ministries continue even to this day. In 1870 the first group of nine Sisters arrived in Belle Prairie, Illinois. The rest of the congregation was to follow over the next three years. When it was time to move on, some Sisters chose to stay in Belle Prairie and maintain an affiliation as Adorers of the Blood of Christ with the Precious Blood Congregation of Maria de Mattias. Under the leadership of Mother Augusta Volk, the other Sisters, who were unable to accept the conditions of the Bishop for remaining in the Illinois diocese,

“While we live the paschal mystery in the suffering and death of Christ, His resurrection is most at the heart of who we are and how we choose to live.”



C.P.P.S. sisters continue to sew liturgical vestments, one of the community's early ministries

moved on to O'Fallon, Missouri, and continued the journey as Sisters of the Most Precious Blood.

For many years the primary ministries of our community focused on education and ecclesiastical art. The liturgical movement, which grew in the first half of the twentieth century, greatly influenced our spirituality. The rhythm of the Church year found expression in music and art. Active participation in the liturgy was a basis out of which our spirituality developed. And while we live the paschal mystery in the suffering and death of Christ, His resurrection is most

at the heart of who we are and how we choose to live.

Vatican Council II alerted us to new needs, and our ministries expanded to include parish work, hospital chaplaincy, prison ministry, retreat ministry, spiritual direction and counseling, education of women and children, serving immigrants and persons in poverty, and care of persons who are elderly. Today elders minister through prayerful presence and are a visible witness to our contemplative roots and active involvement in church and world.

As we have journeyed together as a community, we have been

stretched to be Christ's reconciling presence in other parts of the world beyond the United States. In 1939, at the invitation of the bishop of Finland, we sent Sisters to establish an English school in Helsinki and eventually extended our presence to Tampere. In 1957, Sisters were missioned to Peru and, in 1959, to Bolivia. We continue to serve in these countries as well as Estonia and Italy. Within the U.S. our presence and service is concentrated in the Midwest with Sisters also serving as far north as Alaska, as far south and west as New Mexico, and as far east as West Virginia.

We speak of our charism being Christ's reconciling presence in our Church and world. Our mission, which was once expressed as "reparation," is now expressed as "reconciliation." In our *Constitutions* we say "faithful to our heritage and rooted in prayer, we seek

"Our mission, once expressed as 'reparation,' is now expressed as 'reconciliation.'"

to carry forward our mission of reconciliation through the Precious Blood of Jesus as He continues to reconcile all creation” to God. Like our early Sisters, we believe we are sent “to carry on the redemptive work of Christ in the world.” We are sent to be an expression of His love and worship of God and of His loving service to others.

At our 2010 General Chapter we reaffirmed our desire to be Christ’s reconciling presence, which is so much needed in our Church and world today. Our consciousness is stretched as we seek to live out our preference for the poor in many new ways, including supporting micro financing in Africa, opening a Sanguis Christi spirituality center in a neighborhood where the number of immigrants are increasing and where poverty is present, working toward systemic change with an NGO Partnership for Global Justice. We seek to distrib-

“We continue to make the path by walking in faith, trusting the mysterious God who drew us together as a community long ago and far away.”

ute resources and care for creation in ways that promote the common good. Our motherhouse, now Villa Theresa (named after Theresa Weber) is becoming a continuum of care facility for our own Sisters as well as other seniors.

We believe that collaborating with others, especially men and women whose spiritualities are rooted in the Precious Blood, is essential to our mission of reconciliation. We are present in situations where reconciliation is so needed around issues related to healthcare for all, U.S. immigration, violence and war, and polarization in our Church today. We seek to be Christ’s rec-

onciling presence in all that we do each and every day.

We realize that all of our planning and the directions we set at our Chapter won’t guarantee the unfolding of our future. Yet we continue to make the path by walking in faith, trusting the Mysterious God who drew us together as a community long ago and far away. As we walk this journey, we seek to live in the integrity of who we have become and how the Spirit seems to be leading us forward. The theme of our Chapter is a reality in our lives. Our story is unfolding. We move forward together on the road that has led us to where we are. ♦



The sisters “seek to be Christ’s reconciling presence in all that we do each and every day”

CONGREGATION OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD (CHILE)

by Sr. Anabella Parra Muñoz, CPS

Maria Magdalena Guerrero Larraín, was born in Santiago, Chile, on January 20, 1846. Her parents, Calixto Guerrero Varas and Javiera Larraín Moxó, consecrated her to the Lord in baptism and named her María Dolores. She became a visionary woman of

The origin of the Congregation in Chile lies in the spirituality of St. Gaspar, the Apostle of the Precious Blood. This strong devotion came to America, and was embodied in

On June 2, 1890, Mother Magdalena obtained permission to be considered a religious of the new Congregation. On July 1 she wore for the first time the new Congregation's habit.

In 1903 she drew up the Constitutions that specify the apostolic goal of the Congregation: namely, education and health care.

Important works include the construction of the church dedicated to the Precious Blood, whose structure and décor reflects the ardent love for Jesus in the mystery of his Blood.

Their first apostolic works included the founding of a school for girls, focusing on evangelization and catechesis of the family. She was a pioneer in Chile, with the creation of a psychiatric clinic for women, which included a facility for religious women with psychological difficulties.

She also founded a Confraternity of the Precious Blood. She wished to include males in it, but this was not authorized by the Holy See. So she continued only with women.

Her health became weak, and internal divisions within the community lead her to request her departure from the Congregation, which was granted on October 5, 1906. She continued to live near the Central House accompanied by her maid. She died of a heart attack on August 24, 1907.



The Church of the Precious Blood in Santiago where the foundress is buried

great character and determination. She was a deeply Christian woman of great moral and spiritual values.

In 1866, she entered the Congregation of the Good Shepherd and made her first vows in 1868. At that time she changed her name to Sr. Maria Magdalena de Jesús. She gave up a wealthy lifestyle, for a life in community, of prayer and apostolic work.

On May 8, 1886, the Archbishop of Santiago, Bishop Joaquín Larraín Gandarillas, named her as Overseer of the Pious Association, known as the Beaterio of Santa Ana. Under her leadership it was established as a canonical religious Congregation.

this religious of the Good Shepherd, María Magdalena, who founded a new community. On October 2, 1887 she obtained the canonical approval to form a new Congregation of the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, while preserving the purposes of the Beaterio. The first sisters received their habit on November 7 of the same year.

“Among the sisters’ first apostolic works was the founding of a school for girls that focused on evangelization and catechesis of the family.”

In 1966, thanks to Vatican Council II, the Congregation rediscovered Mother Magdalena as the founder. She is buried in the Church of the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“We take up the needs of the world and empty its misery and suffering in the chalice of the Blood of Christ.”

LIVING THE SPIRITUALITY TODAY

As a congregation we express the Spirituality of the Precious Blood in three dimensions: Contemplative, Oblative and Apostolic.

CONTEMPLATIVE

Its center is in the Eucharist, liturgy and the constant meditation of the Scriptures, writings of the Church fathers, the congregation’s own prayers and the mystical presence of the Blood of Christ in the suffering of humanity.

OBLATIVE

In the constant offering of our lives with our joys, hopes, and limitations, each of the sisters must be a living chalice, able to live our own concerns, but above all the difficulties of those who have been entrusted to our service and for whom we offer ourselves. We take up the needs of the world and empty its misery and suffering in the chalice of the Blood of Christ.

APOSTOLIC

We are open to discern the signs of the times. We embrace our apostolates in education, health and mission with love, devotion, humility and generosity. Although Christ is the center of our community, we are not complete *only* in the personal encounter with the Beloved. The signs on our emblem – namely, the heart, thorns, the cross and the drops of blood – find their meaning only when we are able to



Sr. Raquel in a therapy session in the Home for the Aged in Viña del Mar, Chile

“Just as the world changes, so the Church must be renewed and our Congregation must breathe new air.”

share our experience and joy of faith with the world.

Our apostolate in every sense is a service in love, following the example of Jesus, who redeemed us by love in the shedding his Precious Blood.

OUR MISSION TODAY

The Sisters of our Congregation live our mission in the manner of Christ, who generously gave Himself on the cross, and has opened for us the possibility of living a full life in Him. We defend first of all life as we share the faith in the risen Christ. In living in community we show that unity is possible in spite of the logical dif-

ferences. We practice solidarity and love of others, especially in the faces of so many suffering Christs that we find along the way. We adapt ourselves to the needs of the times. We don't forget the Congregation's past and we value our history, but in turn we work with future vision. Just as the world changes, so the Church must be renewed and our Congregation must breathe new airs for the greater glory of God and for the benefit of our brothers and sisters.

We live our mission in the apostolates of education, health and missions in Chile and Colombia. We witness to the Spirituality of the Blood in the following places:

- the **educational apostolate** in Santiago, Rancagua, Pichilemu and Purranque, Chile;
- **health care services** in the Psychiatric Clinic for women in Santiago and in nursing homes for elderly women in Viña Mar and Puente Alto, Chile;
- **missionary activity** in Iquique (popular religiosity), Mulchén (in parish and in a boarding school), and in Cali, Colombia.

The spirituality of the blood of Jesus is a reflection of God's love towards people. We cannot live our apostolate without witnessing to the risen Christ. Placing the name of the Spirituality of the Blood on our banner is a great responsibility.

It is likewise a beautiful task that makes the dream of our foundress a reality from day to day. Thus the perfection of the soul consists not merely in doing great things, but rather in the exact fulfillment of God's Will. ♦



The Family of the Precious Blood finds its sustenance and nourishment in the Eucharist

Continued from front page

became particular “signs” within the Church. For this reason in the course of time other persons were attracted by their charism or intuition, reinterpreting and bringing to light new signs of the times, because Christ is always offering new signs to his Church. Thus from the charism of Francis, Dominic, Ignatius, John Bosco, Angela Merici, Vincent de Paul and Marisa de Marillac and others were born what we call “families.”

This issue of *The Cup* deals with the Precious Blood Family. How did the Precious Blood family come to be? Did it originate with a single person who knew how to attract others to his or her insight over the course of time? In this case I would say no. There are diverse institutes with the name of Precious Blood in the Church. The great majority of these are congregations of women; many are institutes of the active life and others are contemplative. Some originated in the Catholic Church while others began within churches of the reformed or Anglican traditions. These institutes were not born out of the insight and charism of one initial founder who knew how to attract other founders over time. Rather they were born for service and ministry in the Church, saved and redeemed together with all humankind by the saving and reconciling Blood of Christ.

Until a few years ago there was no contact among these institutes of the same name, or at least the contact was only among some of them on a regional level. In Europe the Missionaries had contact with the Adorers of the Blood of Christ; in the United States, with the Sisters of the Precious Blood of O’Fallon



A panel discussion during the Precious Blood Convocation in St. Louis, Missouri in July

or Dayton, or in Chile with the sisters of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood. To recall a personal experience, when I was in Tanzania and said that I was a Missionary of the Precious Blood, the people would think of us as the masculine counterpart of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood. They had carried out their missionary ministry in Tanzania for a hundred years prior to our arrival. I did not even know that this congregation existed!

How did the Precious Blood Family come to be? I think it came about when our Congregation sought what I call a “refounding” of the spirituality of the Blood of Christ. The refounding was carried out by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood when we researched the biblical, social and spiritual significance of the Blood of Christ in the life of Christians today. But we were not the only ones pursuing our own refounding; other congre-

gations dedicated to the Blood of Christ were going through the same process of discovery. Indeed, the first inquiry was precisely to become acquainted with the diverse congregations of the Blood of Christ. From this came mutual recognition and a better and more profound sharing of the great riches that unite us — the spirituality of the Blood of Christ. In this issue of *The Cup* different institutes dedicated to the Blood of Christ speak for themselves about their founding and history, their ongoing development and present reality. Limitations of space did not permit the inclusion of all the congregations of the Precious Blood. I would like to mention here the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood of Monza (Italy), the Daughters of Charity of the Most Precious Blood, and the Daughters of Mary of the Lutheran tradition. Their foundress, Mother Basilea Schlink, sought to bring together women for a life of love for God and neighbor in poverty, virginity and contemplation in the spirituality of the Precious Blood and in the spirit of a biblical ecumenism. Finally, I would like to mention the Society of the Precious Blood of Burnham Abbey, of the Anglican tradition.

“The Precious Blood family did not originate with a single person. There are many institutes with the name of the Precious Blood in the Church.”

Together with these religious institutions many lay associates form part of this “family.” This is the beautiful new reality, fruit of the signs of the times. The Blood of Christ, source and fountain of life for every person, who is worth “every drop” of this Blood, is the “voice” that has called diverse persons, in various contexts and with different histories, to found institutes that would be dedicated in mission or in contemplation to the human person, in his or her totality. These institutes work to re-create that world of justice and fairness, founded on reconciliation. It is the Blood of reconciliation (Col 1: 20-23) which re-creates all humanity and the entire universe.

It is the commitment of all that this family always seek more and better cooperation at all levels, especially on the regional level, always in the dimension of their unique charism and mission, for the service of the whole Church and of all those whom Christ has placed beside us to spread his reign and for his pastoral and spiritual service for all humanity. How good it is that this reign be extended ever more and in all those places where women and men dedicated to the Blood of Christ are at work. ♦

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“Venerable John Merlini”

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