

The Cup of the New Covenant

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD
No. 25, October 2008

The Laity and Religious: of Necessary and Mutual Interest

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

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood. This event might not mean a lot to many of our members, but it does remind us of an important reality: we were founded and nurtured in a community that not only included priests and brothers, but laity as well. This collaboration and mutuality with the laity has been a peculiar and specific fact of our Congregation from the very beginning. In the course of our history, this collaboration and mutuality, as a result of varying reasons, had been relegated to sharing in Precious Blood devotions.

Today, the desire has once again grown to collaborate and share with

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Laity and Religious in Communion

by Giancarlo Penza, Comunità di Sant'Egidio

In his biography, *A Life with Karol*, Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwysz, the longtime secretary and confidant of Pope John Paul II, while revealing fascinating new details about the opinions, hopes, fears, and dramatic life during his pontificate, emphasizes an important point for understanding the ecclesial vision of Wojtyła: “He was a man of the Council. His starting point had always been the Council, to indicate the development of the life and mission of the Church. And moving from there, he introduced progressively in the ecclesial reality the con-

cept of Church-communion or, as he would often say, Church-family, characterized by the equal dignity of all the baptized, and where no one needs to feel marginal or, worse, excluded. In this way, he succeeded in bringing out charismatic, lay, and communal aspects compliant with institutional, clerical, and hierarchical aspects.” There is in this affirmation, all the validation of a dimension of the life of the Church, indispensable for grasping the meaning of the authentic rela-

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tionships between new lay movements, formed in a special way after the Vatican II Council, and the great religious traditions expressed throughout the history of consecrated life.

RELIGIOUS AND LAITY: COMMON ROOTS

John Paul II has been called “The Pope of movements” and, in effect, he was when you consider the particular way in which he gave strong public recognition for them during the 1998 celebration of Pentecost in St. Peter’s square. At the same time, it would be hasty to accord this definition a significance that implicitly places in opposition the old and new forms of spiritual life, thus attributing to the pontiff the desire to close for all time a glorious chapter of the history of the Church, that of the great religious orders, in favor of these movements with their new and

refreshing ecclesial expressions. John Paul II did not proceed in juxtaposition. On the contrary, his vision of a Church that gave room to the charismatic forms of communication of the Gospel, included a multiplicity of experiences, possessing very different characteristics and being formed in equally different times and contexts. Looking back, the birth of these new communal experiences in lay circles could have been considered as a historical product similar to the blossoming of orders and religious congregations, which in the course of the centuries marked the renewal for both the Church and society. Religious and laity, in short, could well claim common roots.

“The fundamental choice for living the gospel as the main priority in life, was the foundation for rediscovery and harmony in oneself.”

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE COMMUNITY OF SANT’EGIDIO

This is the spirit and, one can say, the intuition which the Community of Sant’Egidio has had on the world of the religious. Just when the “institutional” Church was still looking at this myriad of new initiatives with a certain skepticism, some members of monastic and religious orders were sympathetic to and interested in these initiatives.

These new initiatives gained strength with the rediscovery of faith following the Second Vatican Council and the influence of the great student demonstrations of



Meeting of coordinators of the Latin American Spirituality Center, Peru 2007

1968. In experiences like that of Sant'Egidio, these monastic and religious individuals found a refreshing genuineness that had been the foundation of their vocation from which their own experience of the evangelical life had been derived. In a time of such turmoil this relationship became a support and a guiding compass in their everyday lives. Two important individuals in this movement were Anselmo Giabbani, former General Prior of the Benedictine Order (Camaldolesi), and Pedro Arrupe, Superior General of the Jesuits.

The main characteristic that sustained this and other such associations was the recognition that this communal and charismatic aspect, the fundamental choice for living the gospel as the main priority in life, was the foundation for rediscovery and harmony in oneself.

THE THEOLOGICAL VALUE OF FRIENDSHIP

At the end of 1973, an event became a turning point in the life of the Community of Sant'Egidio and its relationship with the secular world. It concerned the acquisition of land, a house, where it could establish itself. This acquisition of the monastery of Sant'Egidio, a former convent of the cloistered nuns of the Carmelite Order, gave its name to the entire ecclesial experience and became the motherhouse for this Community. It also became a point of reference for all the new groups springing up in Rome, other parts of Italy, and the rest of the world. This *stabilitas loci* not only solved many problems, it also became a new stage for the spiritual formation of the Community. From that time on, the evening prayer, open to all, would become a reference point for all those in the city searching for meaning in their life. Cardinal Duvall, Archbishop of Algeria defined it as "*The Sanctuary of the Gospel.*"

United to this prayer was the growth of a dimension of friendship; a place for ecclesial fraternity. Such hospitality was not only a personal enrichment but a true opening to the world as well.



Women participants in MERLAP II in Acuto, birthplace of the ASCs

OUR AUTHORS

Giancarlo Penza, lay person of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome and friend of the C.P.P.S. His special area of mission outreach is Africa.

Marianella Castañeda Díaz, lay associate from Lima, Perú and teacher at San Francisco de Borja school.

Pino and Daniela Capobianchi, a married couple from Rome, Italia. Pino works at the offices of the Unio Sanguis Christi in Rome and he and his wife Daniela participate in the Group of Families from the parish of the Body and Blood of Christ.

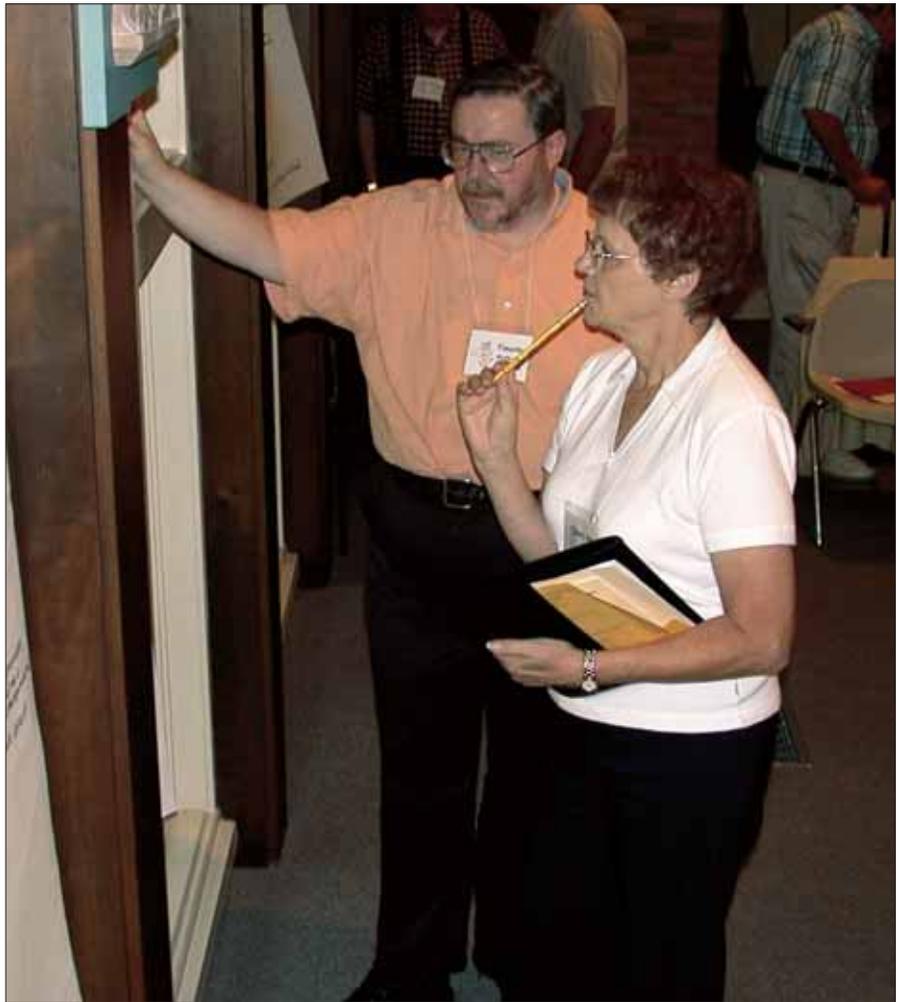
Marie Trout is a Companion of the Kansas City Province. She is the Co-director of the Companions Program for the Province.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**International Workshop
on
MISSION
Sponsored by General
Curia**

**Salzburg, Austria
July 20-24, 2009**

**Presenter:
Fr. Steven Bevens, SVD
*Professor at
Catholic Theological
Union,
Chicago
and author
of several books
on mission***



Fr. Timothy Guthridge and Companion Mary Anne Anas discuss Hopes for the Future at Regional Meeting

This aspect had the effect of strengthening relationships with those in consecrated life. Coming from various experiences, many of these religious found in this prayer and friendship a great sense of family and a true and real spiritual fraternity. Such a characteristic had, in a certain sense, immunized the young and vivacious experience of Sant'Egidio from acquiring a group messianic complex. That has been a recurring temptation for movements throughout the history of the Church. Nevertheless, this aspect of friendship within the Church, more

profound and widespread than one would think, has a theological and ecclesiological value as well. The Byzantine Liturgy sings of the philanthropy of God, that is, that God is the friend of humankind. Sometimes humanity finds it difficult to befriend on another, but for a community that recalls the first apostolic community, it is important to rediscover "the respect for all people" whereby friendship becomes a way of being a Christian in the world. It becomes a way of talking, of sharing, of dialoguing, and also the essence of experiencing charity with

the poor. In a word, it is the experience of communion.

THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNION

No doubt, these new movements are not all equal and each finds its path in the encounters with other forms of evangelical life. The relationship between Sant'Egidio and the religious had developed, in time, through strong mutual support and without confusion. Pastoral help and service that came through many religious, frequently reaffirmed in them a sense of their original vocation, much like the awareness of pluralistic experiences of religious life contributed in defining a new and original identity of the Christian laity.

Today, nevertheless, the challenge is that of communion.

An ecclesiology of communion not only represents a method through which we give a convincing and joy-

"The idea that, even with the cure of illnesses, there are two separate destinies for the North and the South of the world seems intolerable and became the driving force that called for an ambitious and extensive response."

ful Christian testimony in times of global individualism and secularization, but is also a doorway that keeps us from being trapped in our identities and excluding ourselves from history. Andrea Riccardi rightly said in regard to the religious and laity confronted with this challenge: *“Many times we exorcise the challenges for the future, creating programs, repeating methodologies or retreating within ourselves. But there is another question: it is a question of the heart. It is not learned programs that will give us the serenity to perceive the future. It is a question of the heart or, if you prefer, of spirituality.”* To follow one’s own path parallel to that of others and without interaction necessarily leads to a hasty and profound pessimism and a negative judgment on the times. *“In that case it falls back into our institutions. It speaks for itself; it generates its own arguments, that is, from its own institutions; it ends by speaking a language that only we can understand and, maybe, transverses other tongues. It is a great temptation that the Church, religious institutions, and every realty experiences: that of self-validation. Every institution becomes a world with its own problems, sorrows, sadness, and own peculiarities. It is a noble manner to live for oneself, that is, for one’s specific institution. And in every institution there are problems with which one struggles with at length.”* But it is in this manner that the great challenges of history slip by.

A CONCRETE EXAMPLE: DREAM AND THE CURE FOR AIDS IN AFRICA

Undoubtedly it is not easy to work together. Nevertheless, it is possible and these days even necessary. An extraordinary example of this can be that of DREAM, an acronym for Drug Resource Enhancement against AIDS and Malnutrition. Beginning in 2002, DREAM is the response that the Community of Sant’Egidio tried to give to the terrible wound of AIDS in Africa. AIDS in Africa is a tragedy that has already claimed 40 million lives of adults and children, practically eliminating more than

“It is not learned programs that will give us the serenity to perceive the future. It is a question of the heart or, if you prefer, of spirituality.”

two generations. This is a tragedy that the world has preferred to close its eyes to and offer only half-hearted solutions, in spite of the fact that at the beginning of this new century this pandemic situation has been contained, thanks to the success of medicine.

The idea that, even with the cure of illnesses, there are two separate destinies for the North and the South of the world seems intolerable and became the driving force that called for an ambitious and extensive response.

The first country that was experimented with was Mozambique, and soon enough others followed, with extraordinary scientific results.

To entirely realize its plans in all the continents, Sant’Egidio was never, in spite of its resources, self-sufficient.

The greatest network of selfless help and solidarity that could be tapped was that built up through the countless experiences in the field created and

managed through the numerous religious congregations present in Africa.

Today, more than ten institutes of consecrated life form, along with the Community of Sant’Egidio, the operative nucleus of a grand program for treatment that has given hope to entire nations and hundreds of thousands of sick people.

It is a beautiful story, one among the many. But there could also be more if this cult of communion in the Church could become more extensive. From a canon regular of the eleventh century comes a great lesson for the future: *“Love in the other that which you yourself don’t have, in order that the other might love in you that which he himself does not have, because the good done by someone is also the good of the other and will unite in love those who are divided through their occupations (...) If you are not able to have that which someone else possesses, only through loving will you possess it.”* ♦



Village of Hope in Tanzania: home for orphans of AIDS

How does a lay person live his/her commitment in the Peruvian Church today? Actually, the mission of the laity in the Church and in the world is no different than that of any other member. It implies however, a prophetic dimension within the Church community and requires maturity, responsibility and a strong commitment of adherence to the evangelical practices of Jesus.

For those of us who live out our commitment within the spirituality of the Precious Blood, it implies as well, a certain life-style based on presence, hospitality and reconciliation.

Motivated by the instruction of the Holy Father, John Paul II, "to go where no one else wants to go," we imitate St. Gaspar who preached among the marginalized (delinquents, poor, sick). Our missionary task, in great part, is marked by a social and Gospel awareness which makes us sensitive to their needs and committed to the cause of the poor and marginalized.

BURNING LAMPS

by Marianella Castañeda Díaz

We have internalized in our lives and in our actions the spirituality of the Blood of Christ. We recognize this when we express hospitality and welcome to those who come to us. We are rooted in a missionary awareness. In the majority of cases we find ourselves in places marked by violence, creating spaces and meeting points for reconciliation.

We are willing to go to places where others either don't want to go or cannot go: to the mining centers; to jails; to reach out to the elderly and to domestic servants. We have created a spirituality center in Peru. We promote health care through clinics. We

have formation programs and organizations for young people and pre-adolescents. We have founded a youth association of the Precious Blood within the Latin American context. And much more would need to be said to describe the pastoral work we engage in. These are the challenges we face now and in the future.

In Peru the laity of the Precious Blood is called to respond to the cries of the blood in the diverse zones where we live and work, as we read and respond to the signs of the times. To that end, in our pastoral activities we count on the support and spiritual accompaniment of the priests and religious brothers of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. They animate us as we participate with them in the parishes that they serve: the parishes of Yauli and La Oroya; Our Lady of the Light (Santa Luzmila), and in the parish of St. Francis de Borja.

The mission we realize with the priests and brothers of the Precious



Laity and C.P.P.S. mission together in Cajamarca, Peru

Blood is principally missionary, not necessarily going out to other places outside of our communities, but rather working first of all with the laity who participate in each pastoral activity, so that they become the best means of evangelization and of recognizing the true sense of the cries of the blood of Christ.

Mission must be a dream which motivates and frees us to go out, willing to leave behind our securities and existing programs, while being open and sensitive to new pastoral horizons and to the formation of new members, those committed lay women and men who are firm in their Christian vocation.

The missionary activity is a heart-to-heart communication. The “kerygma” is not transmitted as an idea but as a life experience which flows from the heart. It is necessary to pray so that the Holy Spirit opens the heart to the receiver of the word, just as she opened the heart of Lidia (Acts 16:14) and who would receive the Word of God witnessed by the missionary disciple.

When there are so many empty churches, so many abandoned sanctuaries, so much lukewarmness in religious practice and discipline, the Lord calls us so that, like the wise virgins of the Gospel, we might remain always attentive, proclaiming the word and announcing to the world that the Reign of God is near. Jesus calls us to push the plough and not to look back. He will take care of sowing the seeds, of bringing the rains, of calming the winds and of gathering the harvest.

As lay people committed with our faith and with our church, we raise up our lamps and we have taken them up so that they can be a ray of light that projects outward its spark in a word blinded by materialism. With it we will follow Jesus, holding Mary’s hand, walking to the house of the Father.

During recent years we have been participating in popular missions organized by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. We go to mission territories in Cajamarca, Ayacucho, Tarma, La Oroya and La Paz

“Our missionary task, in great part, is marked by a social and Gospel awareness which makes us sensitive to their needs and committed to the cause of the poor and marginalized.”

(Bolivia). We form teams with the priests and brothers of the CPPS, with professional lay women and men, with young students and married couples. This permits us to respond to the cries of the Blood in the most unprotected zones of our country, in an interdisciplinary manner.

In the missions I have had a marvelous experience of the Lord Jesus and I can reaffirm once more that I receive much more than I am able to give. I have discovered the presence of God in the smile of a child, in the daily efforts of each brother and sister in community and in the beauty of creation found in Peru. God has given us the opportunity to be grateful for his great love encountered within our Precious Blood family, which with all our limits and diverse characters, responds to our missionary vocation. ◆

CONCLUSION

How do we live the spirituality of the Blood in our everyday life? This is the great question which we ask ourselves in the midst of the poverty and the riches which we daily observe. It is the question that demands that we use freely our creativity in order to respond to the many challenges that we encounter daily.

This is why we ask ourselves if we are able to “get off our donkeys” in order to go to meet our brother/sister who suffers and who is in need. We willingly ask ourselves: Who is my neighbor? Has my encounter with Christ truly changed my life style? What is my commitment, my expression of our covenant with God? For, it is the Blood of Christ which is the master key that opens the heart of people. ◆

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Loretta Gegen, ASC, *The Life and Ministry of Rev. John Merlini, C.P.P.S. Adorers of the Blood of Christ, United States Region, Wichita Center. August, 2008*

Acta of the XIX General Assembly. C.P.P.S. Resources-30, The Messenger Press, Carthage, Ohio, 2008

Regula Fundatoris und Missionsmethode, C.P.P.S.-Studien Series, Missionare vom Kostbaren Blut, Salzburg, 2008. Translations by Willi Klein, C.P.P.S.

Über das Kostbare Blut Jesu Christi. C.P.P.S.-Studien Series, Missionare vom Kostbaren Blut, Salzburg, 2008. Translation from Italian by Willi Klein, C.P.P.S.

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



INTERNATIONALITY OF PRECIOUS BLOOD

Recognizing the importance of deepening the spirituality of the Blood of Christ, the XVIII General Assembly approved the following proposal and named Fr. Barry Fischer as Moderator General and his Council:

That there be established an internationality of the Precious Blood, which shall utilize the resources of the various units of the Society to promote spiritual formation by means of:

1. Facilitating activities at local centers and parishes
2. Disseminating and sharing of Precious Blood spirituality
3. Offering workshops and symposiums

Fr. Francesco Bartoloni, Moderator General, was named by the Council and approved by the General Curia for the duration of their term. Fr. Barry Fischer, to the position of Director of the General Curia for the duration of their term.

Special thanks to the TCI for providing a beautiful location for the assembly.





INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR PROMOTING THE SACRAMENT OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST FOR GOOD SPIRITUALITY

Opening ourselves still more in the spirit of the XV General Assembly (Rome, 2004) and mandated that it be carried out by the following:

International center for promoting the sacrament of the Blood of Christ which will coordinate and disseminate the sacrament of the Blood of Christ in the various provinces of the Congregation. This center will have the following means of:

1. Promoting and serving as a resource for them. 2. Providing precious Blood resource materials. 3. Organizing seminars for various groups.

The General, and his Council officially appointed the Director of the Center and member of the Council for their term of office (2007-2013).

The Director of the Center is the Superior General of the Teutonic Province of the Order of the Most Holy Blood of Christ, based in Salzburg, Austria.



HAND IN HAND WE WALK

by Pino and Daniela Capobianchi

It all began many years ago when my husband and I accompanied our daughter to her catechism classes in preparation for her First Communion. At that time we lived in the parish of the Body and Blood of Christ, located in Rome and staffed by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

We were quite fascinated with these people, so naturally we wanted to learn more about them. Thus begins our story with the Missionaries. It is now more than twenty years since we have become their friends and friends also with St. Gaspar del Bufalo, founder of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. Although over ten years ago we moved from the parish, our affection for them has continued to grow.

What made us fall in love with St. Gaspar was, first of all, his spiritual children and heirs, the Missionaries.

Individuals who, in their daily journeys, try to follow Christ and are committed to mirroring the life of Jesus. They are people who show daily the presence of Jesus in the world in which we live. They give up their personal lives so that they can totally dedicate themselves to others. Little by little we have come to know St. Gaspar, our great apostle, whose entire life was lived and ded-

icated to the spreading of the love of the Blood of Jesus. The love that St. Gaspar has toward the Son of God is a total love that not only has shaped his own life, but is still today an attraction for those who follow him. Like many other families, we try to follow God with the guidance of his Spirit and the path we use is that of the Precious Blood.

For many years we have been members in a *Group of Families*, a branch of the Union of the Blood of Christ

“In order to live this spirituality on a daily basis, we must draw from the word of God. We commit ourselves to a greater understanding of Jesus in order to appreciate even more the gifts of his Blood that forgives and saves.”



(USC); a lay association of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. It is for those who are devoted to the Precious Blood and who are committed to fostering and living the spirituality of the Blood of Christ.

In our gatherings, always under the guidance of the Missionaries, we share the experiences of our Christian life, listen to the word and pray together. In the years we have been together we have closely examined many themes. We have learned from them and, most of all, we have learned to be witnesses to Jesus' love for us by placing our trust in the Holy Spirit who is our guide and our helper.

Each summer this group organizes a week of fellowship. It is an opportunity to live moments of relaxation, recreation, sharing of experiences, fun, and most of all, to continue to grow in our friendship.

In order to live this spirituality on a daily basis, we must draw from the word of God. We commit ourselves to a greater understanding of Jesus in order to appreciate even more the gifts of his Blood that forgives and saves. To grow with the love of the Precious Blood of Jesus we need to be nourished with every word of the Bible, especially those texts that deal with this theme.

Prayer is a necessity because through prayer we enter into communion with God and with our brothers and sisters. In this communion we force ourselves to recognize and accept God's presence in our lives and in the lives of those around us. It is an opportunity for gathering. It gives us the ability to see with our hearts.

We experience this communion even more evidently when given the opportunity to receive Eucharist under both species. We believe that a Christian family, a communion of people, must protect, reveal and communicate love. Communion is a



Altar of the Crucifix in the Church of San Nicola in Carcere where St. Gaspar preached for the opening of the Archconfraternity of the Precious Blood (Dec 8, 1808)

requirement in a Church saved by the Blood of Jesus.

We are called to pass on the love of Jesus even in our inadequacies. In reality, our family tries to teach through the example of our lives, giving witness to the love of Jesus crucified; the source of all that is good. It is in our lives, the meeting place with God, that we encourage ourselves to take the road of fidelity toward Jesus' love. We seek to serve the Church there where we have been called, beginning in our home and in our parish and giving of our time to teach catechism to the children along with all its related activities.

The passion and death of Jesus are the final events in the pouring out of his Blood.

They lead us to the resurrection where we are given hope and in which we become sources of hope. Like Jesus we want to be sowers of goodness, serenity, peace and joy everywhere. From the starting point of our family, we seek to spread hope to those we meet in our daily lives, within our neighborhood and in our city.

We can be "missionaries" in our lives while still remaining within our own country. The *new humanity* desired by Jesus begins with us. We are conscious of the fact that hope for a better world lies in our hands and in our hearts. Our strength comes from the Risen One who still walks with us. ♦

"We are called to pass on the love of Jesus even in our inadequacies."



Marie Trout with Lay Associates from Tanzania during MERLAP II in Rome

Stained by the Blood of Christ

by Marie Trout

As I begin to write this article it is Earth Day in the United States. This is a day to honor our earth and look at ways to be better stewards of God's creation. When our daughters were younger they were always involved in special projects at their school for Earth Day. One of our daughters came home after helping with a painting project with red paint on her clothes and skin. She proclaimed she thought she would be stained for life. Being a good mother I assured her I could get out the stains. Many mothers take pride in the challenge of ridding items of dreaded stains. Stains to me then were not good things. I look at stains in a much different way now. In the prayer entitled "Psalm of Liberation," written by Fr. Joe Nassal, CPPS, the refrain shares we are "sent by the blood, stained by the blood; we are servants of the blood of Christ." I feel this line describes me best as a Companion of the Precious Blood. I have been stained by the blood of Christ and it is a stain

I do not try to remove. It is a stain I hope continually colors my being.

I started my journey with the Precious Blood in the late 1980's when the idea of lay people being associated with the community first came to fruition in the Kansas City Province. After several years of formation I became a Companion and made my first Covenant with the community. Covenants are written statements that are to reflect three things: ministry, spirituality and relationship with the community. At the time of my first covenant I worked in the parish and was responsible for faith formation for young children preparing for sacraments to adults journeying through the RCIA process. I had shared in my first covenant that I

would attempt to learn more about the Word and share that with those I was ministering to and with. I found that learning and growing in this spirituality was forming who I was and how I journeyed with people. As I learned about Gaspar's life and how important the Word was for him, it became more important for me. When I heard or read scripture I was challenged to see it through a lens of the Precious Blood. It became important to understand as a person of the blood the call of that scripture. How was I to respond as a Precious Blood Companion to God's Word? How was I called to share that with others? Those were questions I tried to ask myself regularly.

Being stained by the blood affects how I live my life. As a wife and mother I strive to be more compas-

"Sent by the blood, stained by the blood; we are servants of the blood of Christ."

sionate. I try to listen and not judge; to be open to where my family is in their lives and treat their decisions with respect. Striving to live as a person of reconciliation and hospitality affects how you treat all people, beginning with yourself and your family. I remember being at Mass one Sunday and I had left our home frustrated with my husband and a little angry with him. As we entered the pew I purposely put children between us so I did not have to sit next to him. When it came time for the sign of peace, before receiving the blood of Christ, I knew as a person of the Precious Blood I could not continue to hold those feelings against him. I had to offer a sign of peace that was sincere and truly be at peace with who I was with him. I had been stained by the blood.

After living in a rural community for 21 years our family was going to move to a new area. We began looking at new job opportunities for my husband. I only had one criteria; that we would be close enough to a Precious Blood Companion group so I could continue to learn and grow in this spirituality. I was concerned how I would continue my relationship with the Precious Blood community if we moved. I had become close to my Companion group in Iowa. We were a very diverse group of people, but had become family to each other.

We challenged and supported one another. We prayed and learned together and grew in Precious Blood spirituality. We found new job opportunities in a large urban area. I really struggled with this move even though I knew it was what our family needed to do. I was sharing my struggles with a member of the community and they told me I would now have a better sense of what it means to be a missionary. I was a little surprised by that remark, but after taking that to prayer it became a source of comfort and strength for me. I recalled Fr. Barry Fischer sharing once that a true missionary should only have their feet planted in God. I took that to heart and looked at this move with new eyes, with the eyes of a missionary. One who would be open to where God was calling me. Very quickly after our move I was contacted by Fr. Mark

Miller who invited me to gather with the Companions who met at Gaspar Mission house in Kansas City. I soon found out that even though this was a new group we were bound by that stain of the blood. We were all on different journeys, but traveled on those journeys striving to live as St. Gaspar invited us to live.

Over the years I have read many writings of the worldwide Precious Blood

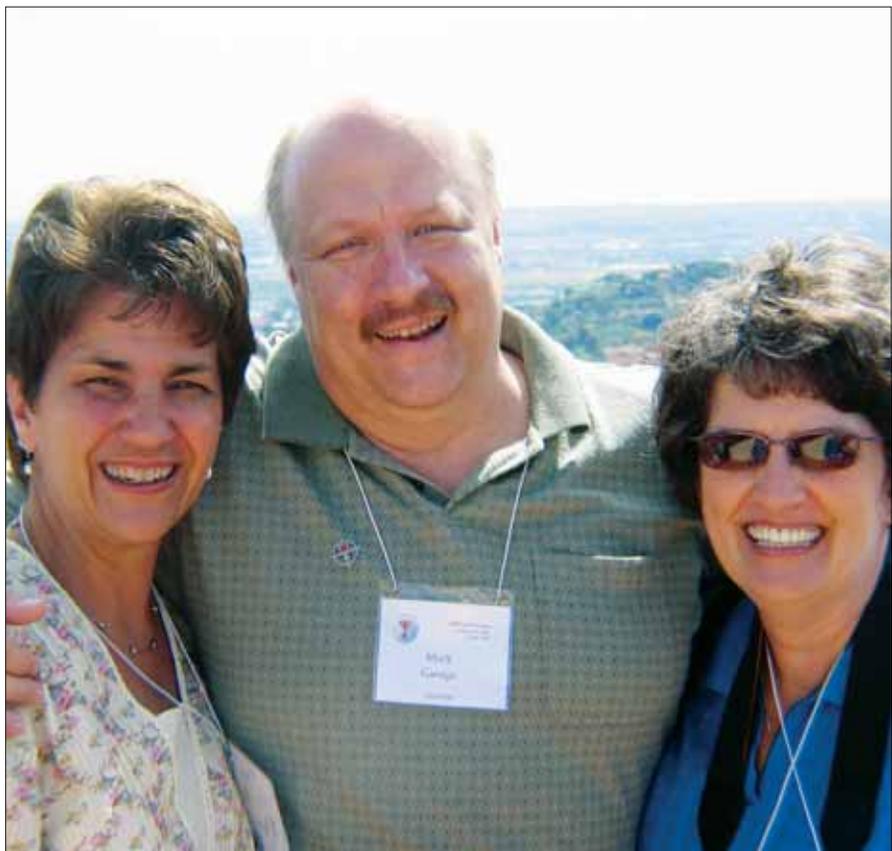
My covenant has changed over the years as I have grown and learned more about Precious Blood. I try to be open to new directions and open to where the blood calls me to be.

I have ministered in the vocation and companion offices of the Kansas City Province and journey with people as they discern how God is calling them and if that call is to the Precious Blood. Most recently I

“The stain of the blood continues to change me and challenge me. It invites me to grow and see life through the lens of precious blood spirituality.”

community. I have learned much and been very enriched by them. But, I must share that I have been most enriched by getting to know the many people who call themselves part of this precious blood family. As people share their stories and journeys and how they have been stained by the blood, I am stained even deeper. I am stretched, challenged, humbled and strengthened as I learn how and why others continue to follow this call to precious blood.

have been serving on a gay and lesbian task force. With this new area of ministry I was seeing a great need to reach out to this marginalized part of our church and society. The stain of the blood continues to change me and challenge me. It invites me to grow and see life through the lens of precious blood spirituality. I am not sure where this call will lead me in the future, as the stain penetrates deeper and deeper. ♦



US Companions Jean and Mark Giesege and Marie Trout

How I live the spirituality of the Precious Blood

For me to live the spirituality of the Precious Blood as a member of the USC in Poland means to live the Eucharist. I have been a member of the Union of the Blood of Christ (USC) for 20 years. My vocation to the Union was born together with a deep desire to collaborate with God and other people against the evil present in the world. At first I was just going to a church for a Mass. After some time I became more aware what participation in the Eucharist should be. At the same time I felt I desire to care for other people, beginning with my relatives and friends. I also feel a deep sorrow when I look on people who make themselves unhappy and cannot enjoy the beautiful world created for them by God.

In the USC, I got to know the great love of God, who gave us his living Son to be present in us and among us. This happens through Eucharist – the true sacrifice of Christ. I began to live deeply this great mystery of our faith by taking part in the sacrifice of Jesus. I understood that through opening my heart for Jesus, I become his Blood, his instrument and I can make his sacrifice present in the world.

I strive to do every little thing in my life with love and to serve with joy in my family and in the USC community. Now I cannot just pass by when I see a man laying on a street – I come closer; I help him to stand; I ask about the need of medical assistance. I try to be kind to everybody – in a shop, on a train, waiting in a line to see the doctor, etc. These are small things, but they are where one can really be of help to others, doing it voluntarily and with a smile. It is a gift of the Precious Blood – a gift for everyone. This Blood gives me strength for every day and brings me to eternal life. ♦



Missionaries with youth in Czestochowa, Poland



A meeting of youth at the C.P.P.S. Mission House in Zagreb, Croatia

➤ *Continued from front page*

the laity as we seek to develop the three pillars of our charism: mission, community, and spirituality. As Fr. Grzegorz Ruchniewicz said in the last issue of this newsletter: *“The laity is like a sleeping giant. A giant, however, that is beginning to awaken and become aware of its involvement and responsibility in the mission and witness of the Church in the world.”*

Our Congregation, fully aware of this development, makes it possible for the laity to participate through the aspects of salvation, liberation, and reconciliation that Christ has given to us.

This edition of *The Cup* speaks of the laity in the Church and their relationship with the religious, while also considering their specific and unique role in the mission of the Church. It is true that this theme has been dealt with many times. Here we would like to consider it from the point of view of the experience that our confreres in several units have had in their relationship with the laity in the development of their ministry, spirituality,

and communal life. It is for this reason our authors in this issue are lay people and associates that we know and with whom our confreres work.

The first individual is Giancarlo Penza. He is an active member of the Community of S. Egidio. He writes of the significance of the lay movement of S. Egidio. It is a movement that was born soon after the Second Vatican Council, through the faith of certain young people who desired that their “revolution” should be marked “with a charismatic and communitarian aspect or, if possible, a fundamental choice to live the gospel as a priority in one’s life.” Giancarlo describes the human and spiritual growth of this first group: the acquisition of a house, friendship that has become the place for ecclesial fraternity, prayer, hospitality, relationship with consecrated individuals, service, and finally, the pivotal point of one’s identity: communion ecclesiology. The Community of S. Egidio is a community of laity with thousands of followers who are present in the most poor and needy areas of our globalized world. Their

work and service is fully recognized by the Church and State.

The author notes the temptation of self-validation which every institution faces. He writes: “In every institution there are problems, which are discussed at length, but if we focus too much on our own problems, then the great challenges of history escape us.” One of the great challenges of history is the AIDS epidemic. The Community of S. Egidio with its DREAM project (Drug Resource Enhancement against Aids and Malnutrition) has given hope to whole countries and hundreds of thousands of affected people. An example is Mozambique. In this nation in Africa, the Community has helped to reconcile the warring factions in the civil war of the 1980s. Today Mozambique is one of the most politically stable and economically prosperous countries of Africa. The General Curia of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood has remained close to the S. Egidio Community for many years and participates in its life through involvement with their various programs and projects.

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Marie Trout is a Companion of the Missionaries of the Kansas City Province. Her article is a witness that comes from within, one can say, because her life of collaboration and mutuality is constant and total. She describes this reality in terms of mutuality, rather than collaboration. She speaks of “covenant” with the missionaries; a covenant based on the spirituality of the Blood of Christ. Like the Old and New Testaments, the covenant has the distinctive sign of the blood. Marie claims to have been “stained” with the Blood of Christ. It has made her a different person, one who pursues reconciliation, justice, and service.

Husband and wife, Pino and Daniela are people with whom the Missionaries have shared their lives. That which is of interest, in the witness of Marie and of Pino and Daniela, is that they have all felt drawn to the needs of the Church and collaboration after having come to know and experience the Missionaries. I would consider this witness to be fundamental. It is in the witness of the life and work of the missionaries, and in relationship with them, that these associates have discovered their vocation and were motivated to respond to the needs of the Church.

When speaking of relationship and mutuality with the laity from our perspective, we can never exclude

our own witness. It is true that the lay vocation is specific and unique but it is experienced in relationship with others. Sharing a vocation also means sharing life.

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“The word “communion” is a word that encompasses much. Collaboration is grounded in communion, which is the foundation for the relationship between laity and religious.”

Marianella Castañeda Díaz, the author of the last article speaks not so much about her relationship with the missionaries as she does about the spirituality of the Precious Blood that the missionaries have shared with her. I am touched by what she shares in her reflection.

The spirituality of the Precious Blood is a powerful spirituality that has a profound effect on the person and changes one’s life. It makes you see the world in a different manner. Marianella’s reflection on the spirituality is situated in the reality of a lay

person, but it can help us to consider with optimism our own ministry and to believe that it is capable of touching the hearts and lives of those around us.

This constant flow of people who are alongside the Missionaries were many times in the past “behind” them. Today they are alongside us and maybe even ahead of us. They collaborate and share in communion, both ministry and mis-

sion giving a new and dynamic form to community life and to the understanding of spirituality. The Archconfraternity that was the source of our birth and included both missionaries and laity, can become a source of profound understanding for the missionaries, not only of the role and specific vocation of the laity in the Church, but also of the laity’s contribution to our understanding of our charism in the three pillars of mission, community, and spirituality. To ignore the laity would run the risk of not being able to fully understand the significance of our mission, communal life and spirituality. ♦

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