

THE New Wine PRESS

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Front cover image: Fr. Timothy Coday, C.PP.S. during Mass celebrating jubilarians, 2019 Kansas City Province Assembly; picture by Sedalia, Missouri Companion Ruth Mather

The Society of the Precious Blood is a fraternal community of priests and brothers founded by St. Gaspar in 1815. Bonded through charity by a promise of fidelity, we are prayerfully motivated by the spirituality of the precious blood of Jesus Christ to serve the needs of the Church as discerned through the signs of the times and in the light of the Gospel.

The Kansas City Province—incorporated members, covenanted companions, and candidates—united in prayer, service and mutual support, characterized by the tradition of its American predecessors, are missionaries of these times with diverse gifts and ministries. In a spirit of joy, we strive to serve all people—especially the poor—with care and compassion, hope and hospitality.

The New Wine Press seeks to remain faithful to the charism of our founder, St. Gaspar, and the spirituality of the Blood of Christ with its emphasis on reconciliation, renewal and refounding. We accept and encourage unsolicited manuscripts and letters to the editor.

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Kansas City Province

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What's it All About?

by Sr. Donna Liette, C.P.P.S., PBMR

Meetings and more meetings, strategic planning, measuring outcomes and reviewing budgets. For those who were into the music of the 60s, you may remember Dionne Warwick singing, “What’s It All About, Alfie?” Last night as I was driving home, I asked myself that question: Donna, what is this PBMR ministry all about—offering radical hospitality and healing from trauma, and living with hope in the midst of suffering and hopelessness?

Then I remembered the mother who called me needing diapers for her grandson. His daddy (her son) was murdered last year and she is now the caretaker. The doorbell rings as I am talking with her and here comes Bill Bright from St. John’s Parish in Western Springs with boxes of diapers. Then I also remembered several weeks ago when a young mother of twin girls came to the door and asked if there were any extra diapers. There was Bill. She gave him a big hug. That’s what it is all about.

On May 1st when we gathered at the Floating World Gallery for our Annual Fundraiser Gala, people came from all areas of Chicago and even as far as Greenville, Ohio. The air was filled with laughter and amazement. It was like a family reunion, old and young, from diverse backgrounds and yet united in a mission that is growing and vital in the Back of the



Yards community and beyond. One of our youth, who helped prepare and serve the hors d’oeuvre, said, “This feels so good!” That’s what it is all about.

PBMR is known as a welcoming place, but



several weeks ago we were reminded of how important it is to be a place of warmth and safety. A youth was encouraged to come to PBMR for services and mentoring. However, Fr. Kelly (known now as the HOPE dealer) started checking for support places closer to the young boy’s home, and very quickly the youth said, “Oh no. I want to come back here. I get such a warm feeling here.” That’s what it is all about.

Women come in and out of the Mother Brunner House. For diapers, yes, but also for a cup of coffee, a big hug, and some laughter; for support, for sharing tears, and for healing; for community and for love. At the end of the day, you know—That’s what it is all about.

Several Sundays ago, a call came to our Precious Blood Center, a woman crying because a youth that she had worked with had been killed and she was at a loss. She knew that we offer many services to youth at our center, and also felt that she lacked the spirituality that we offer—and so at moments like that had to reach out to us at PBMR. I talked with her and assured her that her presence would be all that would be needed and God would show up. “When you walk, let your heart lead the way” is another line from “What’s it all about, Alfie?”

Why do we do what we do? Why do we rehab the boarded-up houses in our neighborhood, mow the grass, plant vegetables, or create a Peace Garden? Why do we delight when we see our youth and families moving forward? Why do we see as precious the

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The Art of KonMari and the New Creation

by Br. Juan Acuna, C.P.P.S., New Creation Commission

I recently stumbled upon a Netflix series titled “Tiding Up with Marie Kondo.” Marie Kondo is a Japanese organizing consultant. She has developed a method called the KonMari method to simplify and organize a home by getting rid of physical items that do not bring joy into your life. In each episode, Marie helps different people struggling with messy homes to declutter and organize them through her method.

It caught my attention in the first episode that her approach to declutter a home was very practical and at the same time very spiritual. I was very moved seeing the change in people’s lives before and after decluttering their homes. The struggle people go through when letting go articles of clothes, books, or other items charged with sentimental value is very real. Since at that time I was thinking about my Lenten practice for this year, I decided trying to apply her method to my own life during Lent.

I began with my clothes. I was shocked to see how many clothes I was holding on to. Stuff that didn’t fit me anymore, or some that had some sentimental, value but really did not bring me real joy today. Some clothes had not been worn in a long time and they were just sitting in my closet. I even found stuff I brought from Chile twelve years ago that had not since seen the light of day.

Letting go of stuff that was once important—because it served me well or was given to me by people in my life I care for—was probably the hardest part of the process. The KonMari method encourages the person to be grateful for the time and joy that a particular item brought them and then let it go. It took me several days to go through all my clothes, and at the end of the process I filled eight big trash bags with clothes that went directly to the donation bin. This process brought me new energy, peace, and much joy.

I think we can also see the New Creation process we are going through as tiding up our home. I am not suggesting the KonMari method can be applied directly to the New Creation, but I think it is valid to

not take things for granted. For example, when revising our statutes and policies, to consider things we are carrying from the past that served us well before but are not “bringing us joy” today, or when thinking about our future ministries to ask “Am I holding on to a particular apostolate just because I have a personal attachment to it or am I really being faithful to our charism in that particular place?” I know it is sometimes hard to look into our own mess, sort out our own feelings about things, and make decisions that could be painful in the moment. The natural temptation to avoid the pain, the fear of letting go keeps the status quo and we look away.

As the New Creation commission has stressed, the driving force of this process is being faithful to our charism and the mission entrusted to us by our founder. So anything that does not serve the purpose of our mission today is cluttering our home. In our ideal, tidied up home, everything we find serves to support and nurture one another, to embrace a life of prayer, to call forth the gifts of the laity and work in collaboration with them, to preach and witness the word of God, to promote conversion and reconciliation, and to pursue justice while mindful of the poor and marginalized.

I envision and pray the end result of this New Creation process will be a home where some things will be old, some things will be new, and everything will fit perfectly, represent exactly who we are, and will bring much joy for everyone. ✠

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blood stains on the pavement upon which we walk? Because we are rooted in the spirituality of the Blood of Christ; we are washed in love, sent by the blood, stained by the blood, we are servants of the blood of Christ.

The many daily interruptions and human encounters remind us to stay focused on the real meaning of our mission—hospitality, hope and healing. Love. That’s what it is all about. ✠