

# THE **New Wine** PRESS

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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 United States Province—incorporated members, covenanted Companions, and candidates—united in prayer, service, and mutual support, characterized by the tradition of its 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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*Participants in a reconciliation circle at PBMR's new healing center*

## You're in the Right Place

*By Fr. Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S., PBMR Executive Director*

In his latest book, “Forgive Everyone Everything,” Fr. Greg Boyle, SJ, writes that scripture scholars contend the original language of the Beatitudes should not be “Blessed are the singlehearted” or “Blessed are the peace workers” or “Blessed are those who struggle for justice.” Instead, he posits, a better translation would be “You’re in the right place if you are single-hearted” or “You’re in the right place if you work for peace.”

As we began to dream and plan for PBMR in 2000, there were a couple of non-negotiable points. First, we had to be in a neighborhood/community that knew first-hand the pains of violence and incarceration. It would have to be a community that allowed us to be proximate to those we served/accompanied.

So, in 2002, when the doors of PBMR opened, we moved into the Back-of-the-Yards community on the south side of Chicago. Beginning in a small janitor’s apartment at St. Michael the Archangel parish, the four of us (Joe Nassal, Bill Nordenbrock, Denny Kinderman, and myself) began our work. Little did we know what exactly would lie ahead. But, committed to the spirituality of the Precious Blood and the gift of the ministry of reconciliation, we set forth to try to be witness to God’s presence and love amid the trauma of incarceration and violence. In addition, we sought to be a resource of renewal for the church.

In 2004, we had the opportunity to move into the second floor of a converted school building that

was once the St. John of God Parish. After the parish closed in the mid-90s, the building was used as a residence for youth in the care of the state. Today, with more staff and community members, we still seek to be that presence of God’s overwhelming and healing love. We have opened several houses that serve as a home for people who are coming home from prison and families who have unstable housing situations.

Early in November of this year, we opened a small center about a block from PBMR’s main building. It had been a well-known neighborhood market selling food and liquor for many years. In recent years, it stood abandoned, a sign of the devastation our neighborhood faces. Because of generous benefactors and supporters, we were able to obtain the building. In a community effort encompassing supporters, staff, and young people, the building that houses the center has been completely rehabbed and restored.

We’ve dedicated this space to become a healing center where families and young people can experience the love and care that is at the heart of the spirituality of the Precious Blood. In this center (yet to be named), we will focus solely on healing: individual, family, and community. It has already become a space where people can build, renew, and repair relationships.

At the very first gathering, even before the building was fully complete, Sr. Donna held a circle for mothers who had lost their sons or daughters to homicide in

the past year. It was a powerful circle from which families could finally speak of their loss and pain among people who were willing to listen without judgment.

Since that first circle, several gatherings have been held in this new space—for young people coming home from jail and detention, men and women previously incarcerated who work to support those returning home, and PBMR staff who rely on strong community relationships to do the work we do.

Sr. Elaine Roulette, the founder of My Mother's House in New York, was asked, "How do you work with the poor?" She answered, "You don't. You share your life with the poor." As we have found so often, it can be as easy as crying together, laughing together, or sharing time with one another.

I remember the very first conversations we had about the creation of a ministry of reconciliation. We asked one another, "What if there was a place in the community where people could experience care and support, a place where we could concentrate on healing and transformation? The "old May Street store" has become such a place. It is solely dedicated to healing and transformation. Perhaps that should be the name—PBMR's "Center for Healing and Transformation."

I am often asked how I have been able to do this work for as long as I have: "With all the heartache and disappointment, how do you keep yourself going?" I genuinely believe I have persevered because I am in the right place. I am where I should be. When you are where God wants you to be, incredible things happen.

As we close out this 20th anniversary of PBMR, know of my deep gratitude for all the encouragement, care, and support for the hospitality, hope, and healing for our youth and families here in Back of the Yards. ✠

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*Evangelization, continued from page 6*

Each person has such a flame. Racism, nationalism, gender bias, language, skin color—anything that is used to lessen the stature of any person—is an affront to the creator. Evangelization must point out the sinfulness of discrimination and replace it with the compassion, mercy, and loving kindness of the creator

of all of us. But first, the preacher, the witness, must discover within the faith to believe God creates all persons equally, deserving of respect and dignity.

God's work in salvation history frees people. Jesus heals to return afflicted ones to community and full participation. Communities must have core values in which all people are respected, welcomed, made safe, and have a role. It is in community—more than in a socio-economic relationship—that the Blood of the Cup provides continually and effectively the medicine and nourishment for healing. And that healing is a dynamic word: Reconciliation.

I believe if we were focused on the three considerations of truth, community, and person, our preaching would welcome those returning for nourishment, for healing, and for engagement in the Will of God. Study, dialogue within assemblies, and intense prayer are essential steps in this New Evangelization. ✠

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*"-ISMS", continued from page 7*

weapons for many years. She has been a member of PeaceWorks KC, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability for more than a decade. She is a follower of the Catholic Worker movement and the Gospel of Nonviolent Love of Friends and Enemies.

We can trace the issues that Dolores, Lora, and Ann work to eradicate back to "isms." So many problems are tied to racism, classism, and sexism. Precious Blood spirituality sends us out to the edges where people are suffering because of discrimination. As members of the Precious Blood community, each of us must commit to coming to terms with our social location and how it relates to systemic racism, poverty, militarism, ecological devastation, and some of the distorted moral narratives that are so prevalent. Do you struggle with seeing assertive women as too aggressive? Are there privileges you need to acknowledge or let go of? Are there commitments you need to reevaluate?

I hope you will check out the documentary on Dolores on PBS. To find out more about Lora or Ann visit More2 at <https://more2.org> or PeaceWorksKC at <https://peaceworkskc.org/>. ✠

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at the  
Table



"For me, life in community  
is everything."  
-Saint Gaspar del Bufalo,  
founder

**Missionaries  
of the  
Precious Blood**

a community of  
priests & brothers

Find out more at  
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