



**Missionaries of the  
Precious Blood**  
United States Province

# C.P.P.S.

## NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2023

*In Christ, through the  
shedding of his blood,  
we have redemption and  
forgiveness of our sins.*

*Ephesians 1: 7a*

## US Province Acquires Its Official Seal

### Seal is Used for Official Letters And Documents

*Jean Giesige, editor*

In the 1850s, a craftsman named Henry Rice of Massachusetts decided he would do better as a stencil-maker in Ohio, and so, legend has it, he walked all the way from his home state to Dayton. He brought his stencil-carving tools with him. In Dayton, he pitched a tent and went to work, making stencils that were used to mark whiskey and beer barrels.

"At the time, Dayton was a distillery town. That's the reason our downtown streets are so wide, so that whiskey wagons could make U-turns," said Mike Bertke, whose identity we'll explain momentarily.

Rice did well, moving his business from a tent to a storefront. His business exists to this day, Dayton Stencil Works Co., at 113 E. Second Street, a few blocks from the Missionaries' Dayton office. And last month, Dayton Stencil made a new seal for the United States Province of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Seals "have been used as a

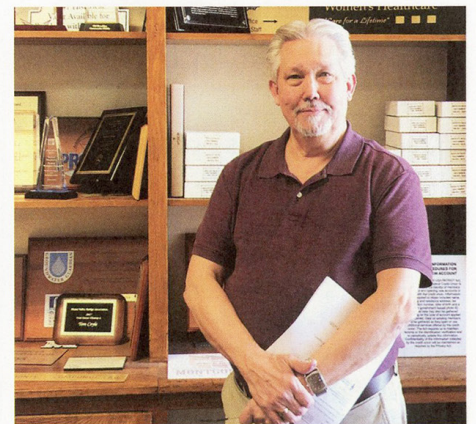


*The seal of the  
United States  
Province.*

means of communication, identification and authentication since the beginning of recorded history, and in fact are some of our earliest records. Seal impressions from Mesopotamia date back as far as 7,500 years ago," according to the Imprint Project, a British organization that studies medieval seals. Sealing was widely practiced in the Ancient Near East, Egypt and China.

The Missionaries use their embossing seal for corporate documents as well as canonical documents, such as requests for ordinations, or any official correspondence with the Vatican or General Curia, said Fr. Jeffrey Kirch, C.P.P.S., the provincial director.

An embossing seal makes



**Mike Bertke of Dayton Stencil.**  
*(Photos by Cara Keller)*

its imprint in paper; other seals make an impression in wax. A seal is different from a stamp, which requires accompanying ink.

We wish that Fr. Tom  
*(Continued on page two)*

# Retreat Refreshes, Refocuses PBMR Staff

## Fr. Joe Nassal Brings A Message of Belonging, Hope

Dave Kelly, C.PP.S.

It was the first of two circles for the day. It was the smaller of the two but carried the pain and emotions of the world. I wasn't planning on sitting in on this circle but was asked by a young man who has more than his share of trauma. Circles offer us a space to let down some of the well-fortified walls, those protective shields that keep the demons at bay.

Tyreese is a quiet young man and never asks for much of anything. In fact, you might not even notice him at our center. In circle, he spoke hesitantly, but with a firm grip on the talking piece. It wasn't that he didn't want to talk; he just was trying to find the words that would convey what he was feeling. As we concluded the circle, he shared his appreciation for the space, for the love, for the acceptance. The space was sacred—a sacramental encounter of love.

These circles are a deep part of our work and our way of life here at PBMR—creating spaces for people to rest and restore in community. And it's important for those of us doing this work to make sure we also rest in these healing, restorative and nourishing spaces

ourselves from time to time—to rejuvenate and nourish our spirits along the way.

On March 14, the PBMR staff gathered at The Well Spirituality Center for a time of reflection and renewal. Fr. Joe Nassal, C.PP.S., spent the day with us and helped us to better understand and experience the gift of Precious Blood spirituality.

Fr. Joe was part of the founding of PBMR 20 years ago and over the years has been a constant source of support and encouragement. His willingness to lead us for the day was a true gift. With a growing staff and aging (including me) C.PP.S. here at PBMR, we know we need to ensure that PBMR is firmly rooted in the spirituality.

Fr. Joe's stories and how he breaks open the Scripture to make it speak to our work really engaged the staff; it was exactly what we needed. His words of support for the work being done by the staff of PBMR offered ointment for our own wounds and the wounds of our participants.

Fr. Joe said that we are living witnesses of what is possible even in the midst of so many barriers and disappointments. He reminded us that each of us



Above, PBMR staffers Nick Schaefer, left, and Pamela Purdie, right, with Fr. Joe Nassal, who led a staff retreat. Below, Srs. Donna Liette and Carolyn Hoying and Fr. Denny Kinderman with PBMR staff members.

is a child of God—perhaps a broken child, a wounded child, but nonetheless a child of God. “We do not need a blood test” to be sure of that!

There were countless stories and powerful examples, but I was most touched by what he sees as the four qualities of reconciliation: gratitude, witnessing fidelity, finding joy, and living with hope.

**Gratitude:** “The eyes of hope are grateful,” he said. And he encouraged us to find gratitude in the smallest  
*(Continued on page 12)*



**Precious Blood**  
*Ministry of Reconciliation*

# Retreat Refreshes, Refocuses PBMR Staff

*(Continued from page four)*

of things, to be awake, to be surprised at the endless beauty and unlimited possibilities that surround us. You could feel the appreciation of that simple reminder—be grateful, be awake, be surprised!

**Witnessing fidelity:** In a world that counts numbers and demands proof of impact, he said that our goal is to be faithful, not successful. He called us to be faithful to the call/purpose and to avoid cynicism, which is like a virus that attacks our souls. “It is creativity,” Fr. Joe said, “that kills cynicism.”

**Finding joy:** Fr. Joe urged us to find joy in our work, in our relationships, even in our sufferings, in our vocation to hear the cry of the blood. Joy can hold the world’s greatest suffering with a deep abiding love.

**Living with hope:** Finally, he said, we must remain hopeful. “Without hope,” he said, “we die.” The people who are hopeful are most alive, most creative—they show up!

After each session, Fr. Joe invited us to sit in smaller

circles and offered us some guiding questions for our time together. I can say that in the circle in which I sat, we laughed and cried as we shared our wounds, our joys, our hopes, our hearts.

I know Fr. Joe definitely grounded us as a staff in our Precious Blood spirituality.

Staff member after staff member came up to me and said how powerful the day was for them and how much they needed the time and the sharing. The space was sacred—the sharing, sacramental. It was a time of deep communion and nourishment in our work and mission.



## Provincial Director’s Calendar

**April 13:** Mary Lay board meeting, Sorrowful Mother Shrine, Bellevue, Ohio.

**April 21:** Trustees Gala, Calumet College of St. Joseph, Whiting, Ind.

**April 25–26:** Provincial council

meeting, Chicago.

**April 26:** Peacemakers Dinner, Catholic Theological Union (CTU), Chicago.

**April 27:** CTU corporation meeting, Chicago.



## Community Calendar

**April 14–16:** Artistry Under the Dome returns to St. Charles Center, Carthage, Ohio.

**April 25–26:** Provincial council meeting, Chicago.

**June 5–9:** The United States

Province Assembly, Marriott East, Indianapolis.

**July 15:** The ordination of Gregory Evers, C.P.P.S., St. John the Baptist Church, Maria Stein, Ohio.

## Shrine

*(Continued from page 11)*

wild land, led by the Holy Spirit (not some wild creature), and collaborate to make the Sorrowful Mother Shrine’s 175th anniversary a celebration of honor and thanksgiving to Our Lady for graces received by so many throughout the years.

I am sure there are many stories out there about the shrine!

## “All-In” B’Dale Reunion Set for 2024

You are invited to the first-ever “All In” Brunnerdale Reunion on July 19–21, 2024, at Glenmoor Country Club (formerly Brunnerdale Seminary) in Canton, Ohio.

This special reunion is open to anyone who ever attended Brunnerdale and their families, all former Brunnerdale faculty/staff, and any member of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood or Trinity Missions.

Schedule details will be announced at a later date.

For more information, email [BrunnerdaleReunion@gmail.com](mailto:BrunnerdaleReunion@gmail.com).