

C.PP.S.

NEWSLETTER

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

Ephesians 1: 7a

Parish Lent Garden "Grows" Food, Faith

Fr. Ben Berinti Plans Parish Space that Encourages Giving

Jean Giesige, editor

If Lent is about planting seeds of spiritual enrichment, then Immaculate Conception Parish in Melbourne Beach, Fla., created a whole garden.

The pastor, Fr. Ben Berinti, C.PP.S., likes to invite the parish each year to participate in what he calls "a community alms project, sometimes more than one."

Last year, the focus was on food: specifically, ramping up the parish's ongoing support of two local organizations with food banks. "We do a monthly collection of canned goods and funds for these organizations—it's a longstanding thing in this parish. But the response was growing tepid," Fr. Ben said.

So he envisioned a unique way that people could contribute food and actually see their efforts grow. With the help of volunteers, Fr. Ben created a "garden" in the parish center. Using fencing, straw and artful signs, they made areas where parishioners could "plant" corn, beans, carrots and other canned vegetables.

"We were trying to think of a way to make it more engaging, more fun, more tactile," he said. "We let people know they were welcome to 'plant' their contributions in our community garden. It caught their attention more than just bringing a grocery bag of food and dropping it off at church.""

Soon children, parents and seniors joined in. "Because it was in the parish center, it was something they were seeing all the time. And if they saw it one week, they planned to bring canned goods the next week," he said.

The parish's religious education classes meet there, so students naturally got involved. If parishioners left

donated groceries in the church narthex, students and adult volunteers happily moved the cans into the parish garden. Some people really got into the spirit, and instead of individual cans brought in cases of vegetables bought at warehouse stores. The garden grew and grew.





Volunteers
"plant"
canned
goods
in the
Lenten
vegetable
garden at
Immaculate Conception.

Fr. Ben helped them make the connection between the Eucharistic table, where the parish family shared a meal during Mass, and the table of the world. "The Eucharist is certainly a source of spiritual nourishment. Unfortunately, that can be too much of a (Continued on page 26

Parish Lent Garden "Grows" Food, Faith

(Continued from page 25) focus, and we pretend it does not have anything to do with real hunger and real thirst," he said. "When you receive the Eucharist, you are attempting to imitate the life of Jesus, and his life was about giving food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty. Anything I can do to make that connection tangible to the people, I'm going to do."

Fr. Ben said the parish garden did not take a great deal of time or resources to set up; a similar project in another parish can be as simple or elaborate as organizers want to make it. "I came up with the whole garden idea two weeks before Ash Wednesday 2021. Then I just had to find the supplies and figure out how to engineer

Cincinnati C.PP.S. Newsletter

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what I was seeing in my head," he said.

The "rows" filled up quickly. Fr. Ben made sure that near the parish garden, there were brochures available that explained the ministry of the organizations, so that parishioners could learn more about their efforts and perhaps volunteer in other ways.

The garden grew beyond all expectations—in fact, it grew so much that Fr. Ben began to wonder, "How are we going to get all this stuff back out? How many trips in somebody's SUV is it going to take to get it to the organizations that need it?"

The organizations them-

selves came to the rescue. One graciously agreed to pick up the food, then deliver half of the donations to the other organization.

"They were blown away by the amount," Fr. Ben said. "We collected 2,320 pounds of canned goods, over a ton of food from our parish garden."

Parishioners anticipate and enjoy these annual Lenten projects, he said. This year, the parish will not only plant its canned-goods garden once again, it will also collect a monetary donation to support the nutrition project in La Labor, Guatemala, where Missionaries are in ministry.

(Continued on page 40)



Community Notes

Assignments

Fr. Tony Fortman, C.PP.S., parochial vicar for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Northeast-6 Family of Parishes (Precious Blood, St. Rita, St. Paul, St. Joseph, Emmanuel and Holy Trinity in Dayton), for a one-year term, effective July 1, 2022.

Fr. Mark Hoying, C.PP.S., parochial vicar for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Northwest-8 Family of Parishes (Marion Catholic Community; St. Augustine in Minster, Ohio; St. Joseph in Egypt, Ohio; and Holy Redeemer in New Bremen, Ohio) for a one-year term, effective July 1, 2022.

Fr. Mark Peres, C.PP.S., reappointed pastor of St. John

the Baptist and St. Adalbert Parishes in Whiting, Ind., for a six-year term, effective July 1, 2022.

Fr. Ken Schnipke, C.PP.S., pastor of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Northwest-8 Family of Parishes (Marion Catholic Community; St. Augustine in Minster, Ohio; St. Joseph in Egypt, Ohio; and Holy Redeemer in New Bremen, Ohio) for a six-year term, effective July 1, 2022.

Business

The IRS mileage rate is 58.5 cents per mile, as of January 1, 2022

Gaspar's Life, Revealed Through Letters

St. Gaspar Was Both Energetic And Organized

As the editor and translator of the newest volume of C.PP.S. Resources, The Circular Letters of St. Gaspar del Bufalo, Fr. Jerry Stack, C.PP.S., has a real working knowledge of the writings and hence the traits of our founder. Here, he shares some insights about St. Gaspar.

You have done a lot of research into the life and times of St. Gaspar prior to this project (translating the circular letters). Did you learn anything about the saint that you did not know before?

I did not so much learn anything new about St. Gaspar as gain a deeper appreciation for his gifts and his vision for his Missionaries. In his correspondence he often deals with practical matters related to pastoral ministry. In these letters, he reveals his concern for the members: their personal growth in the spiritual life and in their life in common. I also was impressed by his frequent use of Scripture, especially from the letters of St. Paul and the Song of Songs.

How would you describe him as a person, and as a religious leader?

Gaspar sought to grow in the love of God revealed in the mystery of the Precious Blood. That led him to engage in a ministry of reconciliation and renewal through the preaching of God's word. He was energetic and organized, leaving nothing to chance. He described the typical mission as "a holy machine that runs like a clock." At the same time, the Circular Letters reveal his affection and concern for his brothers in the Congregation. He reminds them they preach by their individual lives as well as by the witness of community life.

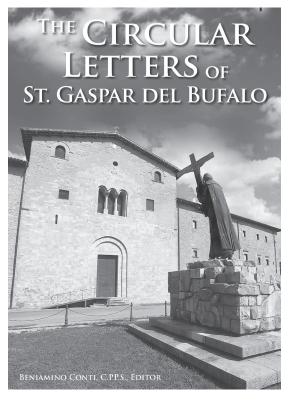
Do you think he would have been enjoyable company?

It seems to me that Gaspar was intense, always focused on the mission and attending to many details. If one were attuned to his zeal, being with him would have been enjoyable, in that one would experience the joy in being in the presence of a holy and devoted person. One could have serious, meaningful conversations with him.

Did he take heed of his own advice when it came to community life?

Gaspar maintained an apartment in Rome, where he lived with his sister-in-law and his niece. This functioned more or less as the mission house in that city, at least in the sense that this is where the Missionaries would stay when in Rome. Of course, he was often on the move and would stay in the various mission houses that he established. He was very clear that women were not to be allowed in the mission houses, but he made an exception for his two female relatives!

Did Gaspar ever chafe



This new translation of St. Gaspar's circular letters, C.PP.S. Resource 38, is available for \$10 plus postage from the C.PP.S. resource center at St. Charles Center. Contact Br. Theophane Woodall, C.PP.S., at btwcpps@gmail.com to order.

against his leadership role? Do you think he ever longed "just to be a priest?" Or was leading the Congregation an integral part of his identity?

Not long ago I came across a surprising statement Gaspar made in a letter to his patron and friend Cardinal Cristaldi. He confessed that he would be happy to be relieved of the burden of leadership of the Congregation, but that he believed that God had called him to that ministry. In another letter, he spoke of wanting to write a (Continued on page 40)

"THE SHEPHERD WILL LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS SHEEP"

The Short Life and Sacrificial Death of Fr. Richard Schwieterman, C.PP.S.

Following is the first installment of the account of the death of Fr. Richard Schwieterman, C.PP.S., whose shocking murder took place in Minster, Ohio, where he had been named pastor of St. Augustine Church shortly before he was killed. His heroic outreach — even at great personal risk—to one who certainly suffering from addiction and mental anguish is marked in this, the 100th anniversary of his death in 1922. This history was written by Fr. David A. Hoying, C.PP.S., who researched and synthesized many newspaper accounts of the day to bring Fr. Schwieterman's story to light. This is the first of four installments.

Part One: The Pastor and the Perpetrator

St. Valentine's Day, 14 February 1922, a Tuesday, would dawn in west-central Ohio as a late-winter day of little note. However, before the day came to a close, a priest, the local pastor, lay dead from a fatal gunshot wound, and another man accused of pulling the trigger of the shotgun. The priest was 38 years old, and the perpetrator 48 years old. The tragic incident shook the populace of the Catholic town of Minster. A tumult of emotions swept upon the citizenry, from sorrow to revenge, but most of all shock. Many raised the unanswerable question, "how could this happen here?"

It is the centenary of this tragedy, but the incident seems forgotten. Even in those first

years after the incident, the account of it was obscured, and for good reason. The perpetrator of the shooting was a man whose familial ties touched many of the well-known families in the village. Understandably, these families sought to quiet the incident, to spare themselves and their offspring embarrassment, derision and notoriety for what their relative had done.

The newspapers of the time carried articles and commentary sensationalizing the crime far and wide. Enthusiastic journalists were derisive of the perpetrator and had convicted the poor man long before the trial began. Also, the alcoholism of the man was understood not as an acuteorganic malady infecting the whole of a man's being: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual—but as a moral failure. The embarrassment, disdain and guilt were tangible for the man's relatives. While obscuring the incident benefitted relatives, it was not a benefit to the remembrance of the priest. His story remained hidden. The courage of Fr. Richard Matthias Schwieterman, C.PP.S., and fidelity to his vocation need to be recovered and acclaimed. Understanding and sympathy must also be afforded to the perpetrator, Charles John Piening.

On February 3, just days before the shooting, Fr. Schwieterman had returned to St. Augustine as pastor, replacing Fr. Eugene Grimm, C.PP.S.,



Fr. Richard Schwieterman

who had died. Fr. Richard was not a stranger to the parish, for he had served as an assistant pastor from 1910–16, his first assignment. Fr. Richard was ordained on October 25, 1910. He was well liked and the parishioners were excited he was returning as their new pastor. Fr. Richard was born on August 11, 1883, to Herman Henry Schwieterman and Anna Maria Bertke. In the family were four sons and seven daughters. The voungest son, Roman Paul, would also become a Missionary of the Precious Blood. He was studying at St. Charles at the time of Fr. Richard's death and would be ordained that spring. This farming family belonged first to St. Sebastian Parish, and then, when it was established, to Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish.

Charles John Piening, nicknamed "Red," was born in Minster, June 13, 1873, to Frank Bernard August Piening and Carolina Catharina Sprehe. The Piening family was a well-respected family in Minster and



Charles Piening

were proprietors of the local tannery. In the family were seven children, with three sons and four daughters.

Charles was the youngest son. An older sister of Charles, Anna, entered the Missionary Servants of the Most Blessed Trinity (MSBT), taking the name Sr. Mary Zita.

At the age of ten, Charles was kicked in the head by a cow, fracturing his skull. Dr. Rudolph Rulmann and Dr. E. H. Wells performed a trephination (or trepanation), making a burr hole in the skull to relieve cranial pressure. It is thought the replacement bone had slipped and pressed upon the brain. (Dr. Rulmann downplayed the seriousness of the injury in his trial testimony, giving the impression it was only a minor injury.)

At age 21, Charles was working in an icehouse when he slipped, and fell a great distance onto a piece of ice, injuring the back of his head. These traumatic accidents, it was thought, negatively impacted his personality, and contributed to his fits of rage.

Charles, besides farming, followed the occupation of horse trader, which includ-

ed buying carcasses of deceased livestock from farmers. Charles' preferred occupational title was "teamster." He lived on East Fourth Street at the outskirts of the village. His dwelling was a two-room hovel, with a back room for sleeping and a front one for daily living. The hovel was equipped with a telephone. There was also a barn, a granary and a small shed. His property was in an unhygienic state, as he piled the livestock carcasses about his property. He stripped the hides from the animals and kept the rest for sale to various renderers. His disposing of such was not in a timely manner. Here, Charles lived alone, and here, Charles raised a fine crop of rats.

Charles suffered fits of sudden rage, which were most intense when he was drinking. Most villages steered clear of him. They were afraid of crossing this "holy terror," and thus he was never made to rehabilitate his property. His notoriety was known far and wide. With the coming of prohibition, Charles turned to drinking moonshine, particularly "white mule," a highly distilled corn whiskey flavored with fruit. This alcoholic drink was commonly called "hootch," and its purity was often compromised.

With alcohol abuse being a progressive disease, Charles was entering the most critical stage of his disease, chronic alcohol abuse. If left to run its course, excessive drinking led to heart disease, mental disability, and finally death. When not inebriated, Charles took on a sullen disposition, making him an unwanted companion, except for his coterie of drinking buddies. Charles sought hootch from any maker, even making

it himself.

Charles' raging fits caused him to be arrested and incarcerated numerous times. In 1904, he violently assaulted his wife, whom he had married in 1902, choking and battering her, and threatening to kill her. She was granted a divorce because of cruelty. A year later, he was charged with assault and battery against his elderly mother. On that same occasion he assaulted and wounded the town marshal, John B. Ahrns, using brass knuckles. Several years later, he assaulted and threatened to kill Alex Beckman. More recently, when registering for an army census, he became enraged at the registrar for not listing his occupation as he thought it should be listed and pulled out on him a revolver and a knife.

As Charles was feeling most wretched, having been on a bender with hootch for four weeks or more, he swore off drinking, Friday, February 10. At 5 a.m. on Sunday, February 12, Charles presented himself at the rectory to tell Fr. Richard of a family in nearby Anna, Ohio, in need of assistance.

Fr. Richard asked him to return that afternoon, which he failed to do. It was speculated that Charles left in a rage, begrudging Fr. Richard for not helping him, but this speculation was proven false. After the tragedy, many remarked at the precognizant nature of Fr. Richard's sermon on that Sunday, for Father preached on the passage, "the shepherd will lay down his life for his sheep."

Next Installment: "John, I Have Been Shot!"



Can We, or Will We, Listen to Others?

Could We Try to Reach Across A Generational Divide?

Steve Dos Santos, C.PP.S.

(Full disclosure: this probably belongs in the Forum section, but since I have this space and it sort of relates to vocations I decided to use it.)

We regularly talk about how divisive things have become. This is true both in the political sphere and in the Church. We are losing the ability to talk to people with whom we disagree. In the political sphere, it has become a world of one-sided rhetoric and people wanting to exert their side's power, rather than any desire for dialogue and working together



C.PP.S. for Tomorrow

VOCATION MINISTRY

The division in the Church in some ways is marked by generational differences. The older, Vatican II generation has one set of ideas. These are the people who were fighting to put the reforms of Vatican II into practice. The young adults of today are very different, and many are drawn to ideas, practices and devotions that were set aside by the Vatican II generation. They see themselves as trying to build the Church in a way that is relevant to their peers.

Born at the end of 1966, I

am one of the older members of Generation X. I do not fit into either of those categories. I was a child as the changes of Vatican II were happening. The post Vatican II Church is the Church I grew up in and the Church in which I discovered my vocation as a Missionary of the Precious Blood. I vaguely remember receiving Holy Communion at an altar rail, but I also sang in the folk group when I was in high school. As a Gen Xer who currently serves in vocations ministry, I am tasked with connecting men younger than me with a community made up mostly of men who are older than me (105 of the 114 members in the U.S.).

This generational difference often comes up as a topic of conversation. Recently, I was listening to a member talk about the liturgical preferences of some of these younger priests. I wondered, is that what the older priests in the early 1970s sounded like as they were bemoaning the young guys of that time? I wish I had had the courage to ask the question out loud. I imagine the answer would probably be yes.

Another time we were talking about liturgy and my conversation partner commented about a young priest who wears fiddleback chasubles. My comment was, "I'll make you a deal: you don't judge my vestment choices, and I won't judge yours."

He got the point: it makes little sense to judge someone on their preferences when it comes to liturgical vestments. Lord knows there were lots of bad decisions made in this area in the 1970s and 80s.

Generally when these differences come up, my personal preference falls more in line with the reformers of Vatican II than with the young priests of today. I'm not arguing that we need to agree with them, or that they must conform to my point of view. I am suggesting that we need to take a different tack than demonizing and judging one another, as that gets us nowhere.

A few years ago a lay man in his early 20s asked me my opinion of *ad orientum* worship in the Roman Rite. (In case you aren't familiar with this phrase, it is a presiding style that is described as either the priest turns his back to the people or the priest faces God with the people.)

I knew his preferences, as his family attends the Byzantine Church in Dayton. My response to him revealed an understanding of why both priests and people may find it preferable, but it also clearly stated that I don't find it helpful or necessary (in the Roman Rite). I tell you this not to hold myself up as the model to follow, because there are plenty of times when I've complained about the choices of a brother priest, both those younger than me, and those older than me.

What I do want to suggest and encourage as we strive to live in the Church of today is that we listen to others with charity. Fr. Jeff Kirch, C.PP.S., once used the phrase "a hermeneutic of charity." It seems to me that this is a tool that is very much needed in 2022. Whether in politics or the Church, we (Continued on page 40)

All Part of One Messy Human Family

Dave Kelly, C.PP.S.

In honor of our 20th year of PBMR, we have been going through photographs from over the years. Some of those pictures bring back memories of pivotal moments—moments that capture the heart of who we are at PBMR. Reflecting on how far we have come and how we have grown, I believe that a good deal of that is because from the very beginning we embraced the attitude and value of being a learning community. I believe we were able to grow by being open to new ideas without losing sight of our call to be ambassadors of reconciliation.

My work in Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center has been a constant commitment through the years. It has been a cornerstone of learning for me, and for what I am able to bring to PBMR. In fact, it was through the young voices in Cook County Juvenile Detention that Sr. Donna Liette, CPPS, was first called to reach out to the mothers of children who are incarcerated and whose lives were taken by violence.

Last Sunday, as I entered the intake unit of Juvenile Detention (where kids who are new to the facility are housed), I heard my name being called from behind one of the cell doors. As I approached, I recognized the young man immediately. He had been there

a few times before. He had gotten into a bit of trouble, so they had him behind a closed door—confinement. If I was to visit, it had to be through the door. He had a look on his face that demonstrated that he was disappointed in himself for not staying out of detention.

As we spoke, we began talking about why he came back. His is a litany of trauma: shot twice, locked up four or five times, mother not in his life—at least not in a good way—and lacking any real male role model. He told me stories of abuse and neglect that made me wonder how he made it as far as he did. He was open and revealing about his life, but soon the words gave way to tears—tears from hurting, tears from being hurt.

I have been thinking of him a lot since that moment. His story is so familiar; a story I hear too frequently.

The following day, I had a meeting with someone who worked for the State of Illinois. She was working on legislation to combat carjacking and gun violence. There is a strong push to transfer children into adult court—it is the call to "get tough on crime."

As she spoke of her desire to understand what was behind the increase in carjackings and gun violence, I told the story of Zabrien. After hearing his story, she began to tell her own story of her child, who needed mental health services. She told

of how she did everything in her power to get her child the help he needed. Thankfully, she had the resources and relationships to ensure her son had what he needed. "I cannot imagine mothers who don't have the resources that I have and how they are able to get the help they need?"

So often, what happens when you sit in these spaces—whether it be around a kitchen table or behind the locked door of a cell—is that we begin to get a glimpse of the complexities of things. We begin to learn and understand that the person is much more than an issue to be tackled. We begin to see our shared humanity in one another.

And what is it to be human? I believe it is to be a part of a family—one that is imperfect, yet so capable of love. All of us have been both (*Continued on page 36*)

PBMR Seeks Early Pictures

This year, the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) celebrates the 20th anniversary of its founding in 2002. The PBMR staff has a multi-faceted, month-by-month celebration planned.

As part of this milestone anniversary, the staff is trying to establish a timeline on how the PBMR grew from its humble beginnings to what it is today. They are particularly interested in any photos or mementos from those early days at PBMR. Did you visit or volunteer there? Do you have any photos that would help tell the story of its early years?

If so, please contact Holly OHara at holly@pbmr.org.



Reconciliation Creates New Narrative

Following is an excerpt from a presentation by Sr. Mikyoung Teresa Hwang, CPPS, entitled A Spirituality of Reconciliation: Robert Schreiter, a Reconciling Presence in Integrity of Heart. It was delivered during a memorial to Fr. Schreiter at Catholic Theological Union on January 23. To view the presentation in its entirety, visit ctu.edu.)

In the reality of conflict and division in the world and shaped by the spirituality of the Blood of Christ, Fr. Robert Schreiter, C.PP.S., summarized Christian reconciliation in five central points:

- Christian reconciliation is the work of God, who initiates and completes reconciliation in us through Christ.
- Christian reconciliation is more a spirituality than a strategy in which God begins with the healing of the victims.
- Christian reconciliation makes of both victim and wrongdoers a new creation.
- The process of reconciliation is to be found in the story of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The reconciliation will be fulfilled only with the complete consummation of the world by God.

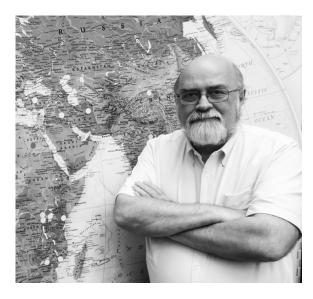
Fr. Schreiter connects these five affirmations of Christian reconciliation in dealing with conflict as more for transformation than resolution. By the first and the last points that God is the source of reconciliation in initiation and completion, we learn to appreciate the complexity of situations, both

in the past and in the present of the whys and hows by allowing the multiple perspective we can't capture. Through this recognition, we can acknowledge the risen Jesus among the living.

The second point, Christian reconciliation is more a spirituality than a strategy, indicates the healing and transformation of victims. The recognition that human beings are created in the image of God must be acknowledged by all who are involved in the reconciliation

process, especially victims. By recognizing their own dignity and discovering how God works in their lives, they can accept the responsibility to collaborate with God for their healing and transformation by telling the truth of their stories. From finding their own voice in telling the stories, the gradual change of the stories toward a new narrative as well as the healing of memories can be revealed. In this sense, they become active agents of reconciliation.

The third point, the process of Christian reconciliation makes both victim and wrongdoer a new creation, leads us to reflect on the mysteries of identity that frequently come into play in division and conflict. ... Fr. Schreiter observes that the resistance to change comes out of fear of losing something related with self-identity. The fear of losing self leads to a dialogue stalemate. However, the ultimate value of the Christian is that we are created by God in God's image. This urges the



Fr. Robert Schreiter, C.PP.S., who served as ambassador of reconciliation.

agents of reconciliation from both sides to change, to grow, and to be transformed by God in dialogue.

The fourth affirmation that the process of reconciliation is found in the paschal mystery of Jesus draws us to attending to the suffering and the wound. By attending the wounds, it teaches us something about our past and ourselves. . . . In this sense, our wound is a locus/place where we can meet Jesus in the stories of the Passover. Through the personal experience of meeting Jesus, we share our own suffering and death in our wounds with him. In our wound, our suffering can be reframed and the wound become the redemptive space to recognize the risen Jesus. We also experience the healing and redemption in the Passover narrative of Jesus (1 Peter 2:24).

In the final affirmation that it is God who will bring reconciliation to its completion, it leads us to see time from the perspective of God. It also (Continued on page 39)

How Will We Respond to Laudato Si?

Maureen Lahiff, Companion

On September 1, 2021, Pope Francis; Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury; and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew issued a joint statement in advance of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), pleading with everyone to "listen to the cry of the Earth . . . examining their behavior and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us." The heat waves, devastating drought and fires in the West, and terrible storms and floods in the Southeast demonstrate that the effects of climate change are here now.

The "cry of the Earth" reminds me of our language about listening to "the cry of the Blood." Pope Francis reminds us that the major burdens of climate change disruptions are falling most heavily on people who are poor and marginalized.

How can we respond, as individuals, families, parish communities, as people committed to living the spirituality of the Precious Blood? Thanks to Pope Francis, we have the entire Catholic faith community supporting our efforts.

Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'* ("Praise Be to You") is the most comprehensive Vatican document to date on environmentalism, ethics and Christian faith. It is addressed to the entire human family. Now, six years later, the Church offers us a formal action plan based on *Laudato Si.'* The *Laudato Si'* Platform offers us a way to make a formal commitment, but the most important thing

is that each of us is called to take action at home, in our neighborhoods, in our parish communities and local organizations.

The Laudato Si' Action Platform

This initiative, formally launched on November 14, 2021, is a multi-year program from the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. There are several categories

of participants; the ones relevant to us are individuals and families; parishes and dioceses; educational institutions; and religious orders, provinces and communities.

The *Laudatio Si'* Action Platform website offers an array of resources that any of us can use. There are stories of people taking action, guides for discerning and implementing action, and ways to connect with other participants.

The enrollment period for the first cohort ends on April 22, Earth Day. I call on all members of our Precious Blood family, all our ministry sites, and the provincial councils of the Kansas City and Cincinnati Provinces to join the action platform.

Some possible first steps: The actions we can take right now depend on where we live—cities, suburbs, rural areas—and our housing—free-standing homes with yards or multiple-family dwellings.

If your household needs more than one car, the next time you need to replace one, consider an electric vehicle.



The "cry of the Earth" reminds me of our language about listening to "the cry of the Blood."

Their ranges are getting longer, and the infrastructure to recharge them is getting built out, but some trips still need gasoline-powered cars. If you need a car that uses gas, get one that gets great mileage and take good care of it.

Do you have the choice to get your electricity from renewable sources? Can you switch your heating, hot water and cooking to electric? Natural gas is methane, a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Gas pipelines leak and gas appliances leak methane into your home, which is harmful to human health.

Do you have space for a garden? Growing your own food leads to healthier eating and reduced shipping costs. Plan your menus around local produce that is in season, rather than shipped long distances. Eating lower on the food chain is kind to the planet. Meat from ruminants (cattle and sheep) requires costly inputs of energy, water and chemicals and these animals emit climate-harming methane. (Continued on page 37)

Is Community Our First Apostolate?

Second of Two Parts

William O'Donnell, C.PP.S.

The message of the XX General Assembly should help direct our efforts to identify new ministries that we can embrace with competence, ever mindful of our commitment to the poor and marginalized. Now more than ever, any choice we make needs to be transparently faithful to our mission. This could mean reexamining our traditional and present ministries to determine our effectiveness and their place in our vision as we go forward.

If we are serious in exploring new ministerial opportunities faithful to our mission and

We offer *The Forum* for *Newsletter* readers to share their views on topics related to faith. The opinions printed here are those of individuals and are not necessarily shared by the province. We invite others to respond to these essays, or write on topics of their own. All submissions must share a tone of respect for the Church, for our Community, and for each other. Submissions should be limited to 1,000 words.

Send submissions to cppscommunications@gmail. com or to Editor Jean Giesige, 431 E. Second St., Dayton, OH 45402-1764.

needed by the Church, we need to recognize and accept that we will need to let go of some ministries we do now in order to make room for the Spirit's guidance and our new choices.

In Richard Rohr's book *Eager to Love*, he begins with these poetic words from Neal Donald Walsch:

"Yearning for a new way will not produce it. Only ending the old way can do that. You cannot hold onto the old all the while declaring that you want something new. The old will defy the new; the old will decry the new. There is only one way to bring in the new. You must make room for it."

As we hopefully grow forward, it will be important to identify those who are willing to explore new possibilities. These possibilities will be exciting for some; a nice idea for some. Others will feel a strong call to maintain some of our historical ministries and some will push against any change. This is the reality we face. We need to stop wasting time trying to convince some who will never be convinced. I think that these dynamics are not unique to us but are part of almost every organization. One thing is for sure. We need to respect and listen to one another.

Justin Bibb, the new mayor of Cleveland, made two other comments in a 2021 interview that I believe are relevant to our conversation and ongoing planning as a new province.

"Good leadership is all about good relationships," and "Well done is far better than well said."

The recent General Assembly made a statement that is a little confusing to me, given our common life experience: "Community is our first apostolate." I am not sure how this is worked out in reality or what the definition of community means in this statement. However, this is not a new concern. The question of community life has lingered over our history from the beginning.

Our history makes it clear that Gaspar's understanding of community was far different than that of Fr. Brunner. And Brunner's understanding influenced our life in America due to his role in bringing us to America. It is only in recent years that we have turned again to what St. Gaspar has to teach us about his vision of community.

The meaning of Justin Bibb's last statement is obvious. It is time to not only keep talking but also to start doing. This means that we lean forward and make informed choices, ever mindful that there are no guarantees. We cannot move forward unless we are willing to take risks. In our time, maintaining the status quo as our strategic plan is a failure in faith and creativity at best.

One of the conclusions one can reach from my observa-(Continued on page 36)

Evangelization, or Merely Administration?

Carol and Dennis Keller, Amici

The weekend of the Twenty-Ninth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Carol and I visited my sisters and brother in the northern part of the Cincinnati Archdiocese. It was our first time going home from North Carolina since before the pandemic.

The region had changed. Some of those changes were very personal. The three rows of brick in the walls of my birth home had been backhoed and carted away. The hickory-beamed barn was salvaged as were the oak beams of the garage. The silo was scrapped and the apple trees behind the house were brush pile fuel. I lived there for 13 years before Brunnerdale. It was the place I saw every day from the porch at St. Charles just two miles across fields.

The area is known for its "cross-tipped steeples." No longer the center of towns, the brick and stone buildings are sad testimony to the faithful residing now in nearby cemeteries. The homilist at St. Denis at Versailles, Ohio, that Sunday read a letter from the archbishop announcing the Beacons of Light project. More parishes would be lumped together, served by one or two priests. The faithful buried nearby must have shed tears realizing their sacrifices and dollars failed to endure changes in culture. Attendance was down, baptisms were down, marriages in church were down.

Farms in the area had merged. One farmer handles tilling, cultivating and harvesting a whole section of land. New larger equipment

makes up for the absence of neighborly help harvesting. My sister told me most farmers hold day jobs during the week, farming on weekends. Fences disappeared because cattle and hogs wandered in loafing sheds and on slatted floors that collect manure into lagoons for application to fields. Chicken houses were quarter-mile buildings of two floors all automated, including collection of eggs. Those changes apparently justified combines raising harvesting dust on this particular Sunday. There were no impending storms encouraging pastors dispensing from a day of rest. Perhaps that explained the low attendance at Mass?

Rugged individualism is a lived philosophy. It plays out in political leanings, fueling belief the pandemic is merely a hoax. Vaccination rates were low. Carol and I attended Mass and were embarrassed as the only persons wearing masks. Many farmsteads and village homes displayed yard signs saying, "Pray to end abortion." Yet the connection between the common-good goal of vaccination was lost. The vaccination rate was in the low thirties. On the farms, nearly all livestock, swine, chickens and cats and dogs are vaccinated.

Rugged individualism is distrustful of politics and politicians. However, a second yard sign indicated support for Trump and Pence. The apparent connection between the two signs states those politicians are pro-life. Even though their political efforts, executive and legislative, focus little to nothing supporting life after birth—especially life socially,

educationally and economically challenged. A logical deduction could lead discerning persons to believe "pro-life" allegiances are for show and for votes not life.

The Beacons of Light announcement bothers Carol and me. It sounded more like an accounting function, a balance sheet response to current issues. New evangelization has been around since St. John Paul II. I recall being invited to speak to the clergy of the Brighton Deanery in Michigan when that effort was first presented. Some condemn the world for the fall-off of faith communities and participation. They claim the faithful are surrendering to consumerism, to secularism, or even to the now dying modernism. Really?

The Beacons of Light announcement seems a lot like the "new creation" of the Community in which Carol and I were formed. We are troubled that this opportunity to rethink evangelization is just a merger, a matter of accountancy and consolidation of leadership. Coming together, or perhaps as some would picture it, a return of prodigal sons, is about assets, not mission.

There has been talk about the "signs of the times" ever since Vatican II. The signs of the times, not only in our Church, not only in our country, but globally as well are forebodingly dark. Within politics and within the Roman Church there is a diatribe identified as a culture war. That easy conspiracy thinking robs the Gospel of its vitality. In these times of scarce resources, (Continued on page 37)

Is Community Our First Apostolate?

(Continued from page 34) tions is that we need to take the focus off individual candidates and on to the needed skills that leadership in our time requires. However, this does not eliminate the fact that in choosing leadership we need to marry the required skills with individual members.

Nearly 20 years ago, I was invited to facilitate a conversation among the house superiors, principals and the provincial council of the Felician Sisters of Chicago as they prepared for provincial elections and the change of leadership. The conversation for most of the day was uneventful until the last half hour of the third session.

At that point one of the school principals spoke with some emotion of having two sisters who were not doing their job and were not on board in supporting the school's mission and vision as articulated by the faculty. "I should not renew their contracts but I find that difficult."

One of the younger sisters grew impatient and said, "Why can't you do it? It's your job."

Sister Principal looked directly at the younger sister and said, "Because I have to live with them." Her answer opened my eyes to the overlapping nature of our responsibilities and the complexity of our relationships. They all create boundaries that define us and direct our daily decisions both personally and professionally.

The director of the sisters' infirmary shared the last comment made that day. She had remained noticeably quiet during the other sessions. If

Her answer opened my eyes to the overlapping nature of our responsibilities and the complexity of our relationships.

Sister had made her comment during the first session, we could have saved a great deal of time and left early. Her observation was, in my opinion, the most important of the day. Sister said, "God spare us from a superior who has not suffered." A provincial spends a significant amount of time with those who are struggling for whatever reason. The capacity to be compassionate is possible when we tap into our

own suffering as a source of wisdom as we move forward and seek to serve others, especially our own.

One final word: difficult to say but necessary. One of the many challenges we face as we move forward is possibly facing our mortality with courage and faith. As St. Paul says so beautifully, "God will bring to completion the good work he has begun in us."

All Part of One Messy

(Continued from page 31) victim and offender in this human family, yet neither our wrongdoings nor our wounds can define us. I cannot put on the mantel of being a victim as though that is who I am now-I do not deny my suffering and hurt, but I am more than my pain and loss. Equally, I cannot allow any singular act to define who I am as a person. One who steals is not a thief, one who kills is not a murderer. It doesn't discount the harm done; it demands accountability, but in the end, are we not still members of this family?

Our Christian theology gives us the language and imagery we need to hold this tension. In Genesis 1:26, we hear that we were all created in the image of God, an identity that remains even after the fall of creation. No matter how bruised we get or how far we stray, God never stops calling us beloved children.

In the New Testament, Paul writes that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). None of us is above the need for mercy, healing, and forgiveness. None of us is above or below the other—we are equals—sinners and saints alike. One messy human family deeply loved by God.

We are not as different from one another as we so often think. Wherever we are, whatever we are carrying, we can learn to see a bit of ourselves in one another, and remember that we belong to each other. And slowly but surely, we can recognize the goodness in one another and offer the mercy, forgiveness and healing that we all require.

Evangelization, or Merely Administration?

(Continued from page 35) we should be looking less at logistics and more about the need for evangelization. Ministry often easily and corruptly morphs into administrative restructuring.

There is a clear lesson for all this in Fr. Dennis Chriszt's reflection for the Thirty-First Sunday of Ordinary Time. He wrote of St. Gaspar's evangelization to the bandits of Sonnino. The menfolk had gathered into mountain caves with their collected weapons. Clear and certain bloodshed, disruption of families, and destruction of homes, businesses and livelihoods were imminent. Rape and pillage were certain. Gaspar went to the dark mouths of those caves without regard for his life. He preached Christ, the living presence of God, forgiveness, and reconciliation. A blood bath was averted.

Fr. Dennis noted that even now, the people recognize the Missionaries' mission cross with gratitude. Is the efficacy of the Blood no longer available to the sons of Gaspar? The signs of the time are here. Violence, distrust of leadership, rampant poverty amidst Midas-like wealth, unlimited education for those with resources, tremendous improvement in health care for those with insurance. The quality and variety of food was unthinkable less than 50 years ago. Yet starvation is a constant cause of death even in the wealthiest nation.

Is there not sufficient darkness in the land, in the Church, in the world to demand a new evangelization, to implement what St. John Paul II encouraged? Even a small band can create the dialogue that leads to truth in the face of lies, hope in the face of despair, and a peace and justice in the face of violence and division. We would like to hear more about mission and less about consolidation!



How Will We Respond

(Continued from page 33)

Reduce food waste, which is admittedly a challenge for small households. Landfills release large amount of methane, so reducing what we send to landfills can make a big difference. Does your community pick up yard clippings and organic food waste for community composting? Soda and fizzy water in plastic bottles may taste better than the same products in aluminum cans, but aluminum can be recycled over and over again, while plastic containers, which are made from oil, can be recycled at most once.

Think about where the things you purchase come from, and try to minimize shipping. When COVID wanes, resuming local shopping instead of ordering online will reduce our fossil fuel footprint. What sort of companies and funds hold your retirement savings?

Travel mindfully: Airline flights produce almost 10 percent of greenhouse gases. One of the results of COVID shutdowns is the reduction in fossil use and climate-harming emissions. I am not among those who say we should give up flying entirely. Travel for family visits and restorative vacations can make an important contribution to our well-being and human community. Many of us will fly to the C.PP.S. as-

sembly in June, which I consider a good use of resources. In general, we should all reassess our travel.

Use public transit when you can.

In your community: Look for ways to save energy and resources as a parish. We can set examples by having solar panels on parish buildings and by the way we serve food at our gatherings. The Diocese of San Bernardino in southern California is one of the poorest in the country, yet under the leadership of Bishop Gerald Barnes, it installed solar panels at its pastoral center. The Cincinnati Province is seeking a conservation easement on some of its land near St. Charles Center.

Get involved in local efforts to switch to renewable energy resources and advocate for tax benefits and subsidies for homeowners and landlords to do this. Let legislators and administrators know that you support efforts to reduce climate-harming pollution.

Companion Maureen Lahiff (Alameda, Calif.) is a member of the Kansas City Province's Justice and Peace Committee.



Missionaries Report

NEWS FROM OUR MINISTRY SITES

CCSJ Celebrates Black History Month

Benjamin Basile, C.PP.S.

Winter weather took a while to set in, but when it did, at the beginning of February, we took notice. The campus was closed February 2–3. Relying on the experience gained over the past two years (thank you, COVID?) classes did not have to be canceled, but were held virtually.



CCSJ athletics have continued, with some cancelations. Basketball, volleyball and wrestling contests have been held. Senior Day for men's and women's basketball was February 12.

In honor of Black History Month, CCSJ Student Life and the Black Student Union conducted a donation drive in support of Sojourner Truth House (STH) in Gary. STH, founded by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ (PHJC), serves homeless and at-risk women and their children. This project is the latest in many involving students and staff of CCSJ in support of STH. It is named after Sojourner Truth, an abolitionist and women's rights activist.

An opening reception for "The Hero Project" was held on February 10. The display features posters created by

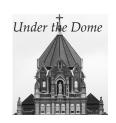
students in the graphic design class taught by Tyler Bush. Students were challenged to create a poster depicting their version of a hero, and through the process learned how to use tools in PhotoShop to bring their ideas to life. Professor Bush challenged students to think outside the usual connotation of the word "hero." One of the students designed a poster centered around an

original character with Native American origins. Another honored her cat Mittens. A number used sports figures as subjects. The show will run until May 15.

Members Participate In Synod Discussion

Jerry Stack, C.PP.S.

We began the month of February by marking the World Day for Consecrated Life on the February 2 with the screening of the movie *Of Gods and Men*. This French film



from 2010 tells the story of the Trappist Monks of Our Lady of the Atlas in Algeria who were martyred

during the tragic civil war in that country in 1996. The film, which portrays the mutual love of the monks and their Muslim neighbors, is a power-



Dr. Amy McCormack, CCSJ president, and Fr. Tim McFarland view students' posters in "The Hero Project" exhibit.

ful meditation on commitment, dialogue and forgiveness.

This is the first of a planned series of films in the Dwenger film series, which will screen movies with similar religious themes.

In late January, we were saddened by the death of a longtime employee and friend, Nick Rammel. He and his wife, Cindy, worked at St. Charles with great dedication for many years. Their daughter Lori works in food service. As a bit of historical interest, the Rammels lived in one of the houses on the novitiate property for 25 years.

Fr. Fred Nietfeld, a priest of the diocese of Toledo, also passed away at the age of 101, after a rich and varied ministry in his 75 years of priesthood. He spent the last several years of his life in our infirmary. He had retired to St. Charles in 2017.

Well done, Nick and Fred, good and faithful servants. Enter into the joy of the Lord!

In late January, six C.PP.S.

members participated in the local deanery meeting on synodality. This is particularly relevant for the faithful of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati as we move forward to the reconfiguration of parishes and staffing in the Beacons of Light program. The new clusters of parishes will be effective on July 1, and the priest assignments were announced mid February.

Our district meeting in February was devoted to the topic of synodality, following the materials we received from the provincial office. Given his emphasis on honest communication in the mission houses, St. Gaspar would surely welcome the synodal process.

February began with some mild weather followed by plunging temperatures and then enough snow to make travel difficult. Anticipating the snowy and slippery roads, several members of our infirmary and food service staffs elected to stay in Brunner Hall for a couple of days so that they could be here to feed us and attend to nursing tasks. We are certainly grateful for all that they do for us, especially when it means such sacrifices.

Our members in the infirmary continue to receive loving care from the staff. Just the other day, one of those members talked about his appreciation for the care and he and others in Merlini Hall (the infirmary) have experienced. Three members in particular have experienced some more serious health issues: Br. Tim Hemm, Fr. Juan González and Fr. Jim Dugal. The outpouring of care for them from members, residents and others has been a great witness to us, as has their patient endurance in suffering.

I am writing this column on the World Day of the Sick, February 11.

In his message for the day, Pope Francis said, "I turn a grateful thought to all those who in their life and work are close to the sick every day. . . . I assure all these people of my remembrance in prayer, so that the Lord may grant them the capacity to listen to the sick,

to be patient with them, to take care of them integrally, in body, spirit and relationships. And I pray in a special way for all the sick, in every corner of the world."

We can certainly take
Francis's words to heart and be
grateful to all caregivers and to the sick for
their example of compassion and patience.

Reconciliation Creates

(Continued from page 32) implies that there is no way to skip the process to gain the goal on our own. The work of God in reconciliation is an ongoing process throughout our lives or sometimes, even beyond, to the next generation. This allows us to be present and patient in the process of God's time.

While conflict resolution focuses more on the problem that needs to be fixed, Christian reconciliation as conflict transformation pays more attention to the participants who are agents of the work for transformation in God....

Reconciliation as a process implies a gradual formation of rebuilding relationships. It begins with knowing where we are in this process and where we need to go. . . . For Fr. Schreiter, Christian reconciliation as spirituality is understood as a liminal space that links spiritual and social formation toward transformation and integration for the participants, who are agents and actors of reconciliation.

Condolences from the C.PP.S.

The prayers and sympathy of the Precious Blood family are extended to:

The family of **Dr. Merrill Raye**, who died on January 12. He was the father and fatherin-law of Companions Mary Ellen and Tim Lehman (Putnam County, Ohio).

The family of **Companion Fran Brackman** (Dayton), who died on January 17.

The Sisters of the Precious Blood of Dayton and the family of **Sr. Jeannine Kloecker**, **CPPS**, who died January 23.

The family of **Companion Madeline Belzer** (Albia, Iowa),

who died January 27.

The family of **Amicus Peter Pio Zammit**, who died January 29.

The family of of **Nick Rammel**, who died on January
28. Nick, his wife, Cindy, and
daughter Lori have been part
of the St. Charles Center family
for decades. Lori currently is
a staff member at St. Charles
Center.

The family of **Suzy Nash**, who died on January 31. Suzy was the mother of Companion Mary Hyslope (Albia, Iowa).

Can We

(Continued from page 30) can begin with the assumption that this person with whom we disagree is trying to achieve some good. As we listen, we can do so from this position of charity and strive to understand and be understood. We may never agree on the particulars, but we may discover that we have more in common than we think.

It seems to me that this is a particular embodiment of our charism that the Church and the world needs today. Can it begin with us? Can we be more charitable to our brothers in the diocesan ranks? Can we be more hospitable to those with whom we disagree? Our charism, I think, would say yes.

Garden

(Continued from page 26)

"We are a small parish by Diocese of Orlando standards. about 850 families," he said. "But the people are generous, and when presented with a project, they step up. And these projects are also about faith formation, in this case, illustrating the direct relationship between Eucharist and mission, particularly mission to the poor. At times as Catholics, we overspiritualize and individualize the Eucharist so that it becomes devotional, just about me and Jesus. To me, at the heart, the Eucharist is always connected to mission—it's about real food and real drink, not just spiritual food and drink. For me as a pastor, it's important that I do anything I can to support this kind of outreach in the parish."

Gaspar's Life, Revealed

(Continued from page 27) treatise on the Precious Blood, but that he simply did not have the time, given his responsibilities.

How do you think St. Gaspar would have advised the Cincinnati and Kansas City Provinces as they look forward to becoming the new United States Province?

I believe Gaspar would want us to focus on the two areas he emphasizes in the Circular Letters: growth in personal holiness and in community living. Sometimes I think we have become too focused on the practical details involved in the new creation process. Gaspar would say that the new creation begins in the heart of each Missionary and in the witness of our community life. For Gaspar, missions were not only what took place during the two weeks of preaching and prayer in the formal missions. He described the mission houses as "open missions" or "ongoing missions." In other words, the Missionaries preached by example what they would proclaim in their oral preaching.



Provincial Director's Calendar

March 1: Local superiors meeting, Cincinnati.

March 6: Catholic Theological Union presidential inauguration, Chicago.

March 16: Superiors meeting with Archbishop Dennis Schnurr, Cincinnati.

March 17–18: Meeting of the C.PP.S. Major Superiors, via Zoom.

March 31: CMSM meeting, via Zoom.

March 31: Mary Lay board meeting, Sorrowful Mother Shrine, Bellevue, Ohio.



Community Calendar

March 12: Companion day of reflection, Park Falls/Butternut, Wisc.

March 19–20: Companion retreat, St. Charles Center, Carthagena, Ohio.

April 9: Lenten Day of Reflection led by Fr. Andy O'Reilly, C.PP.S., for the *Missionary Hearts* Mission and Ministry Society, St. Charles Center.

The 2022 Joint Provincial Assembly will be held June 13–16 in Indianapolis.

Days of Praise

Celebrating Special Days With C.PP.S. Members

Celebrating Birthdays In April

- 1 Fr. James Seibert
- 4 Fr. Mark Peres
- 8 Fr. Vincent Wirtner
- 27 Fr. Dennis Chriszt

Celebrating Anniversaries In April

- 9 Fr. Bill Nordenbrock
- 30 Fr. James Seibert

The C.PP.S. major superiors request that all members and lay associates pray each month for a different unit of the Congregation.

March:
Atlantic Province



Happy birthday, Fr. Dennis Chriszt



Happy birthday, Fr. Mark Peres

Please Pray Every Day for a Missionary of the Precious Blood

Missionaries of the Precious Blood of the Cincinnati Province are in ministries of prayer, preaching, teaching, parish work and other apostolates, following their call to serve God's people. Please support them in prayer each day, lifting them up for God's blessing.

Prayer suggestion: O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name), act in him, speak in him and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own dispositions and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving, pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always. Amen.

APRIL PRAYER LIST

- 1. Fr. Mark Peres
- 2. Fr. Kenneth Pleiman
- 3. Pray for vocations
- 4. Fr. Frankline Rayappa
- 5. Br. Nicholas Renner
- 6. Br. Robert Reuter
- 7. Fr. Joseph Rodak
- 8. Fr. Kevin Scalf
- 9. Br. Matthew Schaefer
- 10. For living and deceased C.PP.S. members
- 11. Fr. Louis Schmit
- 12. Fr. Eugene Schnipke
- 13. Fr. Kenneth Schnipke
- 14. Fr. Kenneth Schroeder
- 15. Br. Jerome Schulte

- 16. Br. Jerry Schwieterman
- 17. Pray for those in formation
- 18. Fr. James Seibert
- 19. Br. Antonio Sison
- 20. Fr. James Smith
- 21. Fr. Jerome Stack
- 22. Fr. William Stang
- 23. Fr. Jerome Steinbrunner
- 24. For living and deceased Companions & Amici
- 25. Fr. Donald Thieman
- 26. Fr. Clarence Williams
- 27. Fr. Vincent Wirtner
- 28. Fr. Paul Wohlwend
- 29. Br. Theophane Woodall
- 30. Br. Juan Acuna González



Journey with us through the 40 days of Lent.

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