

WINTER 2017

C P P S T O D A Y

MISSIONARIES OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD



Fr. Kevin Scalf,
C.P.P.S., seeks
excellence from
his students

COACH IN THE CLASSROOM

In this issue of *C.P.P.S. Today*



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C.P.P.S. is an abbreviation of the Latin name of the Congregation, Congregatio Pretiosissimi Sanguinis, Congregation of the Most Precious Blood.

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Bringing Out the Best in People

We're happy to share stories in this issue about the ministry going on at our Calumet College of St. Joseph (CCSJ) in Whiting, Ind. The Missionaries of the Precious Blood founded Calumet College in 1951 to serve the working-class people of Northwest Indiana, just east of Chicago. It's not easy to create a college from scratch! But through many years of struggle and growth, CCSJ continues to be faithful to its original mission: to serve people who may be the first from their family ever to attend college.

A college is successful not because of its buildings but because of its people. At both of our colleges, CCSJ and Saint Joseph's College, we've been blessed with both C.P.P.S. priests and brothers and the lay people who work alongside them to advance our mission. In this issue you'll be introduced to some of the people who help the college offer a quality education while living out their Catholic faith.

One of them is Dr. Daniel Lowery, CCSJ's current president. Dr. Lowery served as the college's vice president of academic affairs before he became president in 2011. He is also a permanent deacon, and is enthusiastic about sharing his faith life with CCSJ students.

Dr. Lowery will retire as CCSJ president in June. A born teacher, he will return to the college classroom after a sabbatical.

In the meantime, we've been searching for his replacement and have met several good prospects and a couple of great ones. Much of my job in leadership for the Congregation has to do with helping the right people into the right situations, matching them with places and tasks that will bring out the best of their talents and efforts.

Bringing out the best in everyone has also been a core principal in the ministry of Br. Jim Ballmann, C.P.P.S. Another born teacher, Br. Jim can see beyond a student's difficulties or disabilities into his or her potential. Whether he's teaching swimming classes to children and adults at the YMCA or computer courses at CCSJ, he gets to know every student by name and learns a little about his or her background. This helps him understand their struggles, celebrate their triumphs, and give them an extra boost when necessary.

Seeing each person as an individual who is loved and valued by God is part of our Precious Blood spirituality. Each of us is a gift from God and is called to return that gift to God through our work and prayers and service to others. In this, we all find our place in the world, and have faith that the work we do is advancing the mission of Jesus.

**Between
the Lines
by Fr. Larry
Hemmelgarn,
C.P.P.S.**





COACH IN THE CLASSROOM

Fr. Kevin Scalf, C.P.P.S., treats his students with respect, talking to them, not at them. He serves up high expectations—and students work hard to meet them.

It's that moment in class that many college students dread: when they are expected to talk about their innermost beliefs and feelings, plus what they have learned from the required reading.

But something strange happened in Fr. Kevin Scalf's classroom on a crystal clear afternoon in the middle of the fall term at Calumet College of St. Joseph in Whiting, Ind., just east of Chicago. With little prompting, with no hesitation, nearly everybody jumped in, and not just in, but into the deep end.

The class was Theological Foundations. The topic of the day was the soul. Students were trying to get their minds around that elusive yet eternal entity. They'd moved beyond general definitions into specifics.

Fr. Scalf, a Missionary of the Precious Blood who has been special assistant to the president for mission and ministry and chair of CCSJ's theology program for two years, was trying to plumb the students' understanding. "What is a soul? What are some of its characteristics, and where is it?" he asked.

"Inside of you," one student answered.

"Where? Your right earlobe?" Fr. Scalf responded.

"I've always imagined it right here," said another student,

gesturing in the direction of his chest, his heart.

Fr. Scalf pursued the point: "Let's say it's in the heart. If you have a heart attack, then what happens?"

"Your soul would survive! You can't destroy the soul," another student answered. "The soul is an image of God. It's indestructible, an all-powerful thing for us."

"That's right," said Fr. Scalf. "It's part of the mystery, but I can say with some theological certainty that the soul is redolent throughout the body, in the heart as much as the brain and the liver. Some have described it as consciousness, some as energy and light—but it is the animating principle that is within us. It's the core of you, our fundamental DNA on the most spiritual level. It comes from God and nobody can diminish it, nobody can destroy it. That soul is God's unconditional love planted deep inside to show us who we are and whose we are."

An Amazing Group

In an academic world, Fr. Scalf teaches fundamental religious truths that the students—or any of us—may never fully understand. "I want the students to have an increased awareness of God's love for them, and their love for God," he said

after class, during a short break before he would depart campus to teach the same fundamental truths to a class of 27 seniors in a dual-credit theology class at nearby Bishop Noll High School in Hammond, Ind.

At the college, he's very aware that he is teaching a group that may not yet have had much formal religious education. If they have, it's likely not to have happened in a Catholic church; Calumet College consistently attracts a diverse student body, many of whom are the first in their family to attend college.

That diversity inevitably brings about some interesting discussions in the classroom. "It's an amazing group to live, love and learn with," Fr. Scalf said.

He's trying to get the students to see that they are cherished by their Creator—and also that that fact does not get them off the hook. He is a demanding instructor, reminding the students often that he has strict attendance rules. "If you're on time, you're late," he said. He does not talk down to them, even though some face challenges as they try to conquer their academic work.

"I give them far less work than some of my colleagues, but what I ask them to do is really think about their work outside of class. I expect nothing less than excellence—but excellence does

not imply perfection," he said.

Be the Best You Can Be

His hope is that the rigorous work in his class, the exploration of fact and feelings, of theology and thought, will lead them to the conclusion that their lives have value and that they owe God their best effort.

"I tell them that there's a danger in picking and choosing your truths," he said. "Sometimes in that, you lose the challenge of religion. You lose the invitation to go within yourself and look at the sin and brokenness you might find. It's too easy to live in a land of denial and collude with that. I say to them, 'If you're going to be a Buddhist, be the best Buddhist you can be. Be the best Muslim you can be. But don't pick and choose, because you'll miss out on a lot of important personal transformation.'"

He's often speaking to a group that may need to hear that message. "Our generation, I feel we are free-lancers. We are open thinkers," said Andrew Olejnik, a computer informational science major from Hammond, Ind. "Fr. Scalf is helping us with our critical thinking. We're at a stage where we are asking questions and examining the answers, rather than just following the steps that we have to go through to get to heaven. The generations



“Fr. Scalf is helping us with our critical thinking. We’re at a stage where we are asking questions and examining the answers, rather than just following the steps that we have to go through to get to heaven.” –CCSJ Student Andrew Olejnik

before us might not like that, but that’s how we approach these questions.”

The students believe that they in turn can enlighten the institutions that aim to enlighten them. “I feel that millennials (those born between 1982 and 2004) have slowly changed the view of religion,” said Rocky Salinas, an art major from Berkeley, Ill. “Though people call

us rebellious, I don’t think of it that way. We stand up for people: people who are bullied for being gay, for being a different religion, or whatever. We’re making a difference and making the world a better place, and I think God would like that.”

Set Up for the Future

At Calumet College, Fr. Scalf

is heading up efforts to strengthen the college's Catholic identity and to offer students more opportunities, through coursework and campus ministry, to explore and embrace their faith life. He serves as chair of the mission and ministry committee and this year instituted two four-day Kairos retreats, one for men and one for women, that proved popular.

"We are increasingly articulate in our mission and ministry," he said. "On campus, there's the opportunity for the sacrament of reconciliation and daily Mass. The students operate a food pantry. There's a mission trip to Guatemala every year. In a number of ways, our Catholicity is explicit—but it's explicit by invitation, not by imposition."

Imposition probably wouldn't work anyway. "As a generation, we're more accepting of other people's beliefs, and

we respect their beliefs," said Kevin Arviso, a business major from Arizona. "We're open-minded, questioning, and we want to know the facts. We want reasonable answers to back up our questions."

Arviso was raised in the Protestant tradition. He had options when it came to choosing a religion course, but "I took Fr. Scalf's class because I wanted to explore the other side, which is Catholicism," he said. "It's been different for me. Some of what I'm hearing goes against what I originally thought of the Catholic faith. But I like Fr. Scalf's professionalism. He's getting us set up for the future."

In talking about his teacher, Arviso, who wrestles for CCSJ, slipped up and called him Coach Scalf. While correcting himself, he acknowledged that "it's easy to call him a coach because he's guiding us. He's walking us through the big questions," he said. "First, he asks our opinion and finds out what we're thinking. Then he tries to go further and show us. Some teachers would simply tell their students, 'You're wrong.' But he shows us a different way of looking at things."

That fits with Fr. Scalf's own view of his role at the college. "The teacher has to be the coach. If they're struggling, I am here
(Continued on page nine)

Missionaries in Ministry at CCSJ:

Br. Jim Ballmann, C.PP.S.
Br. Ben Basile, C.PP.S.
Fr. Kevin Scalf, C.PP.S.
Br. Jerry Schwieterman,
C.PP.S.

STAYING TRUE TO THE MISSION

Calumet College of St. Joseph (CCSJ) serves the overachievers who can be found on any college campus. “We have valedictorians who come here, and salutatorians, and an honors learning community and all the rest,” said CCSJ’s president, Dr. Daniel Lowery.

But from its beginning, the college in Whiting, Ind., near Chicago, offered a home to at-risk students, those whose families struggled, who didn’t have the best academic backgrounds, who were first-generation Americans. “Our particular mission is to serve at-risk students,” Dr. Lowery said. “At one time, they were Eastern European. Now, many are Hispanic or African-American. But our dedication has remained strong.”



CCSJ President Dr. Daniel Lowery.

(Photo by Jean Giesige)

This year’s freshman class is 34 percent Hispanic and 20 percent African-American; CCSJ has once again been ranked by *U.S. News and World Reports* as the most ethnically diverse college in the Midwest, a source of pride for its educators and the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, who founded the college in 1951.

“The vast majority of our students are the first in their family to attend college,” Dr. Lowery said. “Even the idea of college is foreign to them. What does it mean to engage in learning at that level? What makes it different from the high school they attended? We have many students who come to us with zero percent expected family contribution. They’re so poor they can’t afford a pen. They get their federal and state aid, and we waive the rest of their tuition.”

There have been times in its history when CCSJ struggled to keep its doors open, to pay the heat bill. But it has never let go of its core mission, Dr. Lowery said. “If you think back to great Catholic institutions, many of them were founded for kids who couldn’t get in anywhere else.

“A lot of Catholic colleges have walked away from their original
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Staying True to the Mission

(Continued from page eight)

mission. They are competing for the best and brightest students, and they have high tuition. If, as Pope Francis said, we're the poor Church serving the poor, where would Jesus say Catholic higher education should be today? It would be in Whiting, Ind., doing what we're doing."

Dr. Lowery has directed everyone at the college to be more intentional about their Catholic identity, including the C.P.P.S. members who are part of the faculty and staff, as they reach out to students who may be meeting a Catholic priest or brother for the first time. "I have yet to run into a Missionary of the Precious Blood who is beating his chest and is a real cheerleader. They tend to be self-effacing and quiet," he said. "But I have suggested to them, as there are fewer of you, you have to speak a little louder."

Dr. Lowery is a permanent deacon, and he encourages faculty members to follow his lead in talking about their own faith life to students. Through the C.P.P.S. members on campus, he said, they see a living example of faith in action.

"We're not hiding who we are under a bushel basket. We hope that what we bring to you will make you stronger in your own faith tradition—that you will realize the strength that your faith brings to you."



Coach in the Classroom

(Continued from page seven)

to help," he said. "I don't expect them to walk on water: I just want them to learn how to swim. And I'm going to help them swim, with God's help."

His role as a priest fits perfectly into his role as a teacher, Fr. Scalf said. "When you are ordained into the priesthood, you are following Christ, who was not only a great healer but a

teacher," he said. "My goal in the classroom and around campus is for the students to have an increased awareness of God's love for them, their love for God, and to see that the diversity they find here on campus is something to be accepted, respected and turned into an asset, because that's what Jesus did."



Frying Pan to the Back of the Head

The story of my call is a great story of God’s patience. I was slow to listen, and good at ignoring the call. I didn’t fully hear God’s call until I was in my early 30’s—though I know now that God had been calling me from as early as third grade.

When I was 15, my parish in California had a transitional deacon who was a Missionary of the Precious Blood. He talked to the youth group about the diaconate, and he also told us about permanent deacons—and I thought, “Aha! That would be the best of both worlds!” As a permanent deacon, I could serve the Church AND be a husband and father. But, since 35 was the minimum age to enter permanent deacon training, it was literally a lifetime away.

The voice I finally heard came from an unlikely source. I was in my early 30’s and managing a restaurant with the dream of one day opening a place of my own. I was also active in my parish, and was part of the choir that would sing the *Exultet* during the Easter Vigil. I was talking with Karen, a server at the restaurant where I worked. She was not a Catholic—she wasn’t even a Christian. She practiced no faith. We were talking about music and life when I said something like, “If priests could be married, I would probably enter the seminary tomorrow.”

Without missing a beat, she said, “That’s a lousy reason not to do it.”

I was blown away by her comment. It was like a frying pan to the back of the head. I was used to hearing comments like that from priests and Catholic grandmas, but not from someone like Karen. But it was God speaking through Karen that finally got through to me. I began to discern, to prayerfully ask who is it that God is calling me to be in this world. I discovered I had a heart for ministry. I would have been perfectly happy as a husband and a father—but never as happy as I am as a priest and a Missionary of the Precious Blood.

Our vocation is, for me and for you, our best path toward holiness and joy: our best path toward heaven. So if you are searching for your vocation, or praying that our young people discover theirs, I say, pray boldly! And if you feel that God may be calling you to life as a priest, religious brother or sister, take the time to listen. Don’t be scared of it, and don’t ignore it. For me, it’s been the best journey of my life.

**Call and Answer
by Fr. Steve Dos
Santos, C.P.P.S.**





Lifesaver

**Br. Jim Ballmann
helps people keep
their head above water,
in the pool or in school**

The YMCA in Whiting, Ind., was built in 1923 by John D. Rockefeller and Standard Oil as a gift to the city. It is an imposing brick structure with a third-floor balcony that opens off Rockefeller's walnut-paneled club room.

But inside, the Y is bright and modern, humming with activity as people of all ages come through the doors for swimming, basketball, running and other activities.

The pool is on the lowest level, and there, with a big smile and observant eyes, Br. Jim Ballmann, C.P.P.S., teaches people to swim.

"Okay, Ethan, kick and scoop!" he exhorted one of the five-year-olds during a recent Thursday night session for beginners. The other five-year-

olds in the class, of course, are not standing still in the water while Br. Jim put each new swimmer through his paces. He had to keep an eye on all of them, as did the moms and dads gathered on a nearby bench to watch the class. In between instructions, Br. Jim issued all the usual course corrections that are so necessary with little kids: don't run, keep your hands to yourself, wait your turn.

"With this age, I use distributive learning, which means that you teach them a skill and then give them time to play—and in playing, they're using the skills that we're teaching," Br. Jim said.

With the playing and the swimming and the splashing, he also had to keep his eye on the clock because his next class,

six- to 12-year-olds, comes to the pool right after the three- to five-year-olds. Over his 30 years as an instructor, he has taught hundreds of people of all ages how to swim—which is remarkable, because first of all, he had to learn himself.

“I’d Like to Learn to Swim”

Br. Jim, a native of Dayton who was professed a religious brother in 1969, came to Whiting in 1984 to minister at Calumet College of St. Joseph (CCSJ). The college was founded by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood to offer a college education to the children of working-class families in northwest Indiana, just outside of Chicago.

Fr. John Lefko, C.P.P.S., a legendary figure around Whiting who was then CCSJ’s president emeritus, showed Br. Jim around town when he first arrived. As they drove by the YMCA, Br. Jim remarked, “I’d like to learn to swim,” which probably surprised Fr. Lefko, because Br. Jim was 36 at the time.

Fr. Lefko set him up with swimming lessons, and Br. Jim learned he had a talent for swimming. “I learned to swim, became a lifeguard and then an instructor,” he said.

He is an excellent instructor, said Natalie Galindo, who is the aquatics director at the Whiting

YMCA. Br. Jim teaches class from children ages preschool through 12 on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and on Saturday mornings for children, adults and people with developmental disabilities. He’s good with all ages, she said.

“A good instructor is someone who is passionate about what they do and passionate about helping others,” which is a good description of Br. Jim, Natalie said. “In addition to teaching courses, he comes in to swim his own laps, to work on his own swimming. He’s an inspiration, not only to me but to other staff members as well.”

Br. Jim sees his swim classes as a ministry. “I’ve taught people from six months old to 80 years old—people who are terrified of the water and people with no fear of the water,” he said. “Each person has his or her own challenges, and it requires patience and different teaching skills to help students overcome the obstacles that may be keeping them from learning to swim or achieving their swimming potential. And in teaching people how to swim, I feel I’m helping them live safe and healthy lives.”

An Inquisitive Mind

Maybe learning to swim at 36 has made Br. Jim more empathetic toward new



Br. Jim Ballmann helps students in the computer lab at CCSJ.

swimmers, no matter what their age or ability. Or maybe that's just the way he is. He has an active, inquisitive mind that pushes him to dig deeper, acquire more knowledge and learn new skills.

Br. Jim's fulltime job is with CCSJ, where he teaches computer courses and helps out in the business office. It was the same with computers as it was with swimming; he came to technology as a fully formed adult, when he was in ministry at the Sorrowful Mother Shrine. Fr. Fred Falce, C.PP.S., who was then the shrine director, urged him to learn about computers—so he did. He later moved on to CCSJ, where he took over the payroll and other functions.

Once at CCSJ, he volunteered to help Br. Jerry Hall, C.PP.S.,

who was then in charge of the college's computer system. "I went over one evening to help him out, and I enjoyed it," he said. The college offered a degree in computer information systems, so Br. Jim enrolled and graduated with a degree in 1988.

"I'm the one who got us on the internet," he said. It seems right that it was a swimmer who enabled all CCSJ students to surf the web.

He already held a degree in philosophy from Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, Ind., which seems far from computer information systems but really isn't, according to Br. Jim.

"I've told everybody that my degree in philosophy has served me better in programming and data processing than any computer class," he said.

“Philosophy stimulated my critical thinking.”

A Problem-Solver

He’s known around campus as a problem-solver, someone who digs in and doesn’t quit until he finds answers. “Anytime we run into a problem with the system, I might spend two or three weeks trying to get to the bottom of it,” he said. “I work at it until I get it solved.”

He encourages his students to be the same way. He teaches a course in basic computer skills to CCSJ students who may be adept at social media but lack the computing skills they’ll need at the jobs they hope to land after graduation.

In that class, he lectures on Tuesdays and presides at the computer lab on Thursdays. “Lecture days are the easy days,” Br. Jim said, because during the computer lab session, he almost literally runs from computer station to computer station, helping each student with his or her questions.

Just as in his swimming classes, he calls each student by name, assesses where they are in life and what they need from him to get to the next level. One of his students said that his grandfather had recorded every inning of decades’ worth of Cubs’ games. “That would be the perfect thing for a database,” Br. Jim told him,

then helped the student set one up, an exercise in computer skills that the student will probably always remember.

Another student, he suspects, has a learning disability, and so he offers extra help. Another’s grandmother—her sole support—just died and so he understands when she misses a class. Some can’t afford to buy the textbook, which he deduces when they doing poorly on open-book quizzes.

In the classroom or in the pool, Br. Jim sees his primary role as helping people reach their highest potential, becoming their best selves. In doing so, he’s imitating Jesus and therefore following his vocation: it’s just that simple.

“At Calumet College, as at the Y, we minister to an underserved population, the poor and the marginalized,” he said. “I live Precious Blood spirituality in the way that I treat others. I value each person and help them all reach their full potential. This takes a lot of individual attention rather than as a group. I try to make each person feel that they have my complete attention and time.”

That’s true whether he is in the pool or on dry ground. “I have always felt that Precious Blood spirituality is not something that I do but something that I live,” he said.





Ordination in Guatemala: We ask for God’s blessings on a newly ordained Missionary of the Precious Blood, Fr. Arnolando Tun Hor, C.PP.S.

Fr. Tun was ordained by Bishop Rodolfo Valenzuela Nuñez of the Diocese of the Verapáz on December 3, the feast of St. Francis Xavier, patron saint of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. The ordination took place at San Miguel Parish in Tukurú, Guatemala. Fr. Rony Diaz, C.PP.S., writes that “it was truly a feast for the people of God and for our C.PP.S. mission in Guatemala.”



Fr. Arnolando Tun is ordained in Guatemala.

The ordination was held outdoors at a municipal sports facility in Tukurú to accommodate the large crowd. Fr. Diaz notes that “after 30 years of C.PP.S. ministry at San Miguel, Fr. Arnolando is the first Missionary of the Precious Blood of the Q’eqchi culture from the parish, from this municipality, to be ordained.”

The Q’eqchi are descendants of the Mayans; they live in the mountainous northern region of Guatemala and have their own language and customs.

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood are also pleased to announce the definitive incorporation of Victor Manual Navichoc Menchú, C.PP.S., in Bogotá, Colombia, on October 21, the Feast of St. Gaspar del Bufalo, our founder.

Fr. Joseph Deardorff, C.PP.S., director of the Colombian mission *ad experimentum*, writes, “As a mission, we were honored to celebrate the definitive incorporation of Victor Manual Navichoc Menchu, C.PP.S. Victor is from Guatemala and has finished his studies at the university here in Bogotá. He has worked in the parish for two years,



Victor Navichoc with Fr. Joseph Deardorff.

helping to prepare children for their first communion. Victor was a great asset to our mission.”

Victor left Colombia in November to begin his ministry in the Missionaries’ Central American Mission.

Please pray for both Fr. Tun and Victor Navichoc as they begin new ministries.

In Memoriam: Fr. Richard Riedel, C.P.P.S., 90, died on September 29, 2016, in the infirmary of St. Charles Center, Carthagena, Ohio. He had been in failing health.

He was born on June 4, 1926, in Ellis, Kan., to Alex and Anna (Glassman) Riedel. He entered the Society of the Precious Blood in 1940 and was ordained on May 18, 1952.

Fr. Riedel spent many years in parish ministry and in leadership roles with the Congregation.

After his ordination he served at St. Cecelia Church in Detroit; St. Francis Church in St. Joseph, Mo.; Holy Trinity in Coldwater, Ohio; and St. James the Less in Columbus. He was appointed pastor of St. Augustine Church in Rensselaer, Ind., in 1970, where he served for 10 years.

In 1980, Fr. Riedel became pastor of St. Gaspar Church in Rome City, Ind. He was named pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Celina, Ohio, in 1982. During that time, he also served in the Congregation’s senate and was a member of its executive committee and personnel director.

In 1988, he was named pastor of St. Joseph Church in Dayton. He returned to Immaculate Conception in 1996 as its senior associate pastor. He retired to St. Charles Center in 2010.

Fr. Riedel had a servant’s heart and a gentle manner that made him well suited for parish ministry. He was aided by a phenomenal memory for names and could ask after people whom he hadn’t seen in years. He had unfailing faith in God and served him to the best of his abilities, always, transmitting that faith to the people he served, in word and in action. In his final illness, he was patient and cheerful, always more concerned for his caregivers than about his own suffering.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Monday, October 3 at St. Charles Center, with Fr. Ken Schnipke, C.P.P.S., presiding, and Fr. James Dugal, C.P.P.S., as homilist. Burial followed in the Community cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, Cincinnati Province.



Fr. Riedel



The Bus Will Circle Back

Fr. Ben Berinti, C.P.P.S., led the retreat for the Missionaries' lay associates (called Companions) last fall. He is a campus minister now but back when he was the pastor of a large, vibrant parish in Florida, he had a certain methodology when the parish was contemplating a big change. Change is hard, especially in an established parish. Fr. Ben said that he would explore and discuss a new direction as long as possible, but he knew that if he waited until absolutely everybody was on board, nothing would ever get done. So at some point, he'd say, "The bus is leaving the station, so if you want to be on the bus, get on board. If you don't want to be on the bus right now, don't worry because we will circle back. We'll be back to pick you up later."

I found that metaphor funny, apt and immensely comforting. I'm not always willing to change course or try new things. I still have had just one nibble of sushi and did not particularly like it. I know it's not easy to herd people like me, who like to hang back and mope and think about the good old days. I appreciate leadership that is inspirational and decisive, yet patient.

In this modern world, it's easy to feel like you're missing out. Time moves in only one direction, forward (usually fast forward). It's nice to know that the bus will circle back around for those of us who need a little extra time to get ready.

This message is really about second chances, which of course is one of the best things about our faith: the daily opportunity at a second chance. Without the awareness that our generous and patient God will let us try again and again to be the holy people that we were meant to be, life would be one nerve-wracking tight-wire walk after another.

Forgiveness is built in to our faith. I recently read a book by a fallen-away Catholic who said that the Church is good at teaching people to repress their true selves. I do not think this is necessarily true. At its best, our faith family encourages us to reach far beyond our grasp, to become better people than we ever thought we could be, while at the same time factoring in our human capacity to make mistakes. Don't we begin every Mass with the confession that we have sinned and are in need of God's mercy?

So on we go, two steps forward and one step back. And then a couple of sideways steps, and by the time we get back on course we find that the bus has left without us. It's good to know that if we wait faithfully, hold on to the vision, and stay at the bus stop, it will circle back.



At Our House
by Jean Giesige



A beautiful, peaceful, prayerful **HOME**



**SAINT CHARLES
SENIOR LIVING
COMMUNITY**

- Airy, spacious one- and two-bedroom apartments for seniors.
- Exercise room, library and walkways on the beautiful grounds.
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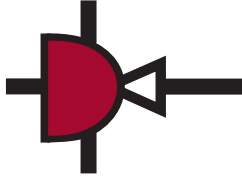
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