

## Being a Living Chalice

*By Sr. Mary Shaw, ASC*

As I pause and look over my life and more specifically, the past 25 as an Adorer of the Blood of Christ, the words of Sacred Scripture put it in context for me: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. Before you came to birth I consecrated you. I have appointed you as prophet to the nations (Jeremiah 1: 4-5).” Being an Adorer, a prophetic person — or as I like to say: Being a Living Chalice — has not come to consciousness lightly. It began while I was still in the womb being fashioned and molded by the One who called me into existence and continues to call me.



Growing up on the shores of Cape Breton [Nova Scotia], baptized in the Roman Catholic faith in a culture of Celtic roots, it became clear to me at a very tender age the Presence and Promise of GOD in all creation. God’s call came from the ocean; from the forests; from and through all the events that were part of my life. Embrace your events and the situations of your life and you will find Me. The events of daily life: births, deaths, mine accidents, ocean storms which overtook fishermen, weddings and gala celebrations at Christmas and Easter. Life was not easy on the shores of Cape Breton, where the environment’s harsh winters seemed paralytic. These all molded the cup of my being and filled me with His Presence. Embrace the reality of the now; embrace your situations of your life and you will find ME. My being as an Adorer was and is forged, tested and molded and re-fashioned by the journey of my life and those people who have touched me and continue to engage me. What is it that called me to be an Adorer and what is it that sustains me?

Part and parcel of experiences and embracing them are invitations. Invitation! Yes, the importance of being present to another. Our Constitution says, “As the quality of our life becomes more loving, our community life itself will be a prophetic sign of what the whole Church is called to become: a communion of love in which people of every tribe and tongue and nation are united.” (LC 2:6) A sabbatical from teaching in Nova Scotia to discern the direction of my life brought me to St. Louis to study Theology. The embracing of my situations indicated a crimson thread woven into the fabric of my being and being with. There was a recognition of the Hound of Heaven evident in my life and for which I am so grateful...for alone, we are nothing. As I took time, pondered and searched, a simple greeting (not life shattering) but with the potential for life changing circumstances came to me. It was a simple: “Are you planning to stay?”

That remark has made all the difference. Marvelous but what a challenge! It confirms the reality that we are called daily to be open to the other; to affirm the other; to recognize the other, especially the one we may not want to greet. Each

day, you and I are called to live in relationship with self, other and God. Although I separate them for clarity's sake, they are in fact all ONE, recalling the old Gaelic hymn: "Waking or sleeping, thy Presence my light; thou in me dwelling and I with thee one." Alone with the Alone and in my quiet times, I met Maria De Mattias; Gaspar Del Bufalo and was introduced in a formal way to Precious Blood Spirituality which gave meaning and resonated with all that had forged my life up to that point. There comes a moment we say YES to Someone or Something and that makes all the difference. My yes to my GOD at that time in De Mattias Hall [at St. Louis University] has made all the difference! The Cry and the Call of the Blood demands a response. The Cry and the Call are found in the experience of Life: in the embracing of all that is part of the fabric of life.

Although it has never been an easy journey, for the road less travelled never is, it is one that has been destined for me since all eternity. Life is in the Blood (Lv.17) and for me that puts an end to death. Blood is life, nourishment, and that which sustains us all. It is what we offer to those whom we meet and greet each day. The journey of an Adorer, the prophetic one, is that of the contemplative in action: meeting the One whom our hearts sought since childhood and finding the ONE in all whom we encounter each day. It is daily being HIS refreshing, healing, prophetic presence and an instrument of Charity, bringing about that "beautiful order of things" which the great Son of God came to establish with His own blood.

Now it is by your blood and mine...your presence and my presence...your invitation and mine. That deep thirst in all of creation that needs me to assuage its longing is that which empowers me daily. His Precious Blood coursing through my veins is that which sustains me. The ache of humanity and the cry of the blood calls for an answer. The best answer I can give is being an Adorer of the Blood of Christ, nourished and nurtured by His Precious Blood and humbly offering that to all I meet and greet on a given day. Blessed be the Blood of Jesus.