Mary Ann Sherman was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is married to her husband, Mark, and they have been married for 31 years. They have eight children, four girls and four boys.

In 1988, Mary Ann and her family moved to St. Louis. She did not know anyone and had no family here. Sr. Virginia, a CPPS Sister, ministered in her parish to elderly shut ins. Mary Ann felt like a shut in because her husband was a TWA pilot and would be gone for several days at a time. Sr. Virginia started visiting Mary Ann and she eventually joined the newly established Partners Program.

Mary Ann wasn’t always able to make the Partner meetings, but when she did, the sisters always made her feel like a V.I.P. Mary Ann has been a partner for 18 years. She says that she has been privileged to mingle with the most inspiring and phenomenal women she has ever known. Mary Ann’s favorite prayer is the rosary.

Last May, Mary Ann, her husband, Mark, and two of their sons hiked 400 miles across northern Spain on the ancient pilgrimage path called, “Camino de Santiago.” Mary Ann is quoted as saying, “I truly felt as if it was a preview of Heaven.”

I asked Mary Ann if I could interview her for this article and she replied yes, however, she told me that she was not very interesting. I am thankful for this opportunity; Mary Ann is definitely interesting and an inspiration to all of us.

Mary Ann

At the beginning of August, members of the Hope Community participated in a Handicapped Encounter Christ (HEC) retreat weekend at the Pallottine Renewal Center in Florissant. HEC provides people with all kinds of disabilities an opportunity to attend a weekend retreat.

This Spirit filled group of adventurous women, Liz Allmeyer, Cindy Ryon, Sister Nadine Flott, Sister Marie Laurent, Sister Luanna Brucks, Nancy Roark, and “newbies,” Sandy Dennis and Linda Moehrle, were a bit nervous prior to the retreat.

As each woman was paired with a person with a disability for the weekend, their fears quickly dissipated. Partners comments included: I knew Christ was calling me to be Christ in this way; I knew God wanted to see me grow; it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. And, Liz was excited to share the following poem written for her on the weekend by Joe, her weekend partner.

Help us, Lord, have trust in you,
As what’s best for us you know.
You want us truly happy.
In holiness, help us grow.

From the moment of conception
We’re all works of your perfection.
Lives healthy or handicapped
Are deserving of protection.

Free us from our excuses,
Lord, stubborn help us not be.
So like clay you can mold us
Dear Lord, start, start with us today.

Joseph G. Schelling

When the weekend was over, they all agreed to participate again next year because it truly brought their Hope Community commitment of bringing hope to others into focus. Thank you, ladies, for being Christ’s reconciling presence in our broken world.

by Lori Larkin
Exceptional Event

By Ellen Jones

Saturday, August 17th, TLC faith community once again invited all Sisters and Partners to attend the annual Potluck Barbecue. With twenty-three sisters and forty partners expected to attend, this would be the best turn out to date! This year was a special treat with the St. Joseph Cottleville Men’s Club providing the meat and the drinks. Those able to join us know that the head chef of Toni’s cooked pork steaks, bratwurst and hamburgers for us, and with the many varied side dishes supplied by all the party goers, it proved to be a most delicious meal.

This is always a very special opportunity for Sisters and Partners alike to simply relax, talk and enjoy one another’s company. It was exciting to meet people for the first time and reconnect with old friends. Many Small Faith Communities take a break for the summer and this was a fun way to touch base before beginning a new year of gatherings. We were very happy to see quite a few of our members who will be making their first commitment in September. The weather was perfect and having the use of the school lunchroom meant easy access and comfort for all.

Celebration Day

by Sr. Ginny Jaskiewicz

September 8, 2013, the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood welcomed Susan Buerkle, Peggy Hoefel, Kurt Hoefel, Theresa Krausel (St. Louis), Sandy Dennis, and Linda Moehrle (O’Fallon) as Partners In Mission. This year the commitment ceremony followed the final blessing of the 11:00 Eucharist. Sr. Carol Orf called the candidates forward into the sanctuary to make their first commitment and to receive the Partners’ pin from Sr. Fran Raia. Kurt and Peggy then gave an eloquent testimony of their relationship with our CPPS Community and how the formation process helped to deepen their faith.

After a delectable lunch, Sandy Meyer punctuated our afternoon with a lively Getting to Know You process. Sr. Paulette Weindel then spoke of her 30+ years of ministry with immigrants and refugees at St. Pius V. Georgette, a refugee herself, joined Sr. Paulette and related her heart wrenching story of being a refugee from Africa and of her courageous and reconciling act of opening an orphanage for the children of those who slaughtered her people. The Assembly Day was a day of welcoming our Partners, celebrating our birthday and the gift of our charism of reconciliation.
Thank You for the Growing Opportunity

By Debbie Whited

Thanks to the generous financial and spiritual support of the Sisters and Partners, Liz Allmeyer and I journeyed to Baltimore, Maryland, on a beautiful June weekend this summer for a workshop sponsored by NACAR, the North American Conference of Associates and Religious.

The workshop, "Contemporary Spirituality of Association," was presented by Sr. Sharon Kanis, SSND, and Mary Anne O’Donnell, an associate of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. The workshop was attended by over twenty-five associates, both women and men, and Sisters from across the country.

The main theme of the workshop was that everyone has his/her own spirituality. For some, this was an “aha” moment. Our spirituality is about our internal relationship with God (a spiraling inward) and our external expression of that relationship (a spiraling outward). It is formed from what we are taught (traditions of our families and church) and from what we experience (life events). It is our way of looking at the world.

To be a partner/associate, we do not need to “adopt” a new spirituality. The partner relationship helps us to go deeper into our internal relationship with God and helps us to grow in our external expression of that relationship through the charism of our associate congregation.

When we grow spiritually, we can help others to grow. But we do need to do the work. Partners in Mission help us to do that through the focused charism of being Christ’s reconciling presence, through the love, acceptance, and support of the Sisters and other Partners, and through holding us accountable for making our spirituality a priority.

Vincent’s Friends

By Sr. Marilyn Schneider

The Partners in Mission Community, Vincent’s Friends, is located in Perryville, Missouri. The Leader is Sr. Delores Schilli and members include Marie Clifton, Elizabeth McAtee, Elaine Pinar, Sr. Pat Muller, Sr. Rosemary Oellermann and Sr. Marilyn Schneider.

Vincent’s Friends meet monthly to share on the Sunday Mass text and have fellowship. Recent activities include: a luncheon with our partners and the four partner candidates where we all introduced ourselves and had good time; a surprise birthday party for Sr. Marilyn in July at our house in Perryville; attendance at Sr. Marilyn’s Golden Jubilee at O’Fallon where the partners witnessed the renewal of vows and celebrated with our community; attendance at the Partners in Mission Commitment Day in O’Fallon on September 8, 2013.

Individually our partners are very involved in our parish at St. Vincent’s. Elizabeth McAtee helps Sr. Delores with recycling, RCIA preparations, and other needed tasks. Marie Clifton helps with the collection of box tops for education and other valuable coupons for St. Vincent Elementary School to receive extra funds. Elaine Pinar is serving as the chairperson of our parish council, a member and secretary of our parish meetings, a member and secretary of our parish liturgy committee, head sacristan, head of art and environment for our worship, and the pastoral assistant for our pastor.

We cordially invite everyone to come to Perryville and visit us! We will give you a grand tour of our parish and home!
Beginning a Journey

By Sr. Carol Orf

The time of formation and discernment has begun for Partner in Mission Candidates in O’Fallon, St. Louis, and Perryville, Missouri. This year of formation provides a deepening of the relationship with the Sisters of the Most Precious, their history, charism and mission, prayer and ministry. As the Small Faith Communities meet monthly, personal and faith sharing bond the community together in trust and love. It is also a time to deepen one’s relationship with God and the larger CPPS community.

Sr. Delores Schilli and Sr. Marilyn Schneider are facilitating the community in Perryville and are their Sister Prayer Partners. We welcome Kathy Ann Fullmer, Judith (Jean) Walker, Amanda Schumer, and Connie Visnack. Serving in the life of St. Vincent’s parish, these women have many gifts to share.

Sr. Marie Orf leads the Small Faith Community in O’Fallon. On Monday, September 9, 2013, Marie hosted Ruth Bassett, Helen Brown, Mary Donnelly, Bernie Donnelly, and Denis Wilhelm as they began their year of formation. Sr. Robert Ann Harper and Sr. LaVerne Wester joined this energetic group as Sister Prayer Partners.

In St. Louis Sr. Carol Orf and Sr. Ginny Jaskiewicz met with Pat Belmont, Mary Mann, Julie Schlichting and Jim Baur. Eagerly they returned to this community with whom they had met February through May 2013. They warmly welcomed their Sister Prayer Partner, Sr. Carolyn Pozarich.

We are blest to meet annually people who are interested in joining with the sisters as we together further God’s mission of reconciliation.

Our Once and Future Vision

by Maureen McGrath

For several months the Ad Hoc Planning Committee has worked together to develop a proposal for the continuation of the mission of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood. The task is both rewarding and challenging. Our hope is to create a sustainable organization that will continue to work in communities around the world. Our work would mimic and expand upon the many accomplishments of the sisters. The sisters are and will remain a pivotal inspiration to our work in whatever form it takes. The statement that best describes our vision was mentioned at our last gathering on September 8:

CPPS Partners in Mission strive to bring Christ’s reconciling presence to those we encounter in our daily lives. We will carry on the Sisters’ legacy by deepening our relationship with God, each other, and our communities.

May we all find hope and joy for the future in these words. Pray for us while we continue to create this plan for our future.