A Perfect Experience of God’s Blessings in Abundance

September 10th was a perfect weather day and a perfect day to gather and celebrate CPPS Partners in Mission and welcome 26 new Partners.

Our gathering, at Trigg Banquet Center, was the first to be held off the main CPPS campus. The space was perfect as was the energy generated by the nearly 120 that attended.

The day began gathered with prayer in our small faith communities followed by Sr. Janice Bader who provided an informative talk on the developments in the community since the General Chapter in 2016. The Sisters are well on their way to making some very big decisions related to continued on p. 4

Small Faith Communities—the Partners in Mission

The Mustard Seeds became a small faith community in the fall of 2012, when Jeannie Palombo, Lori Larkin and Mary Reynolds made their first commitment. They, along with Sister Partners Nadine Flott and Marie Orf formed a tiny but powerful group. In the five years since, their faith and trust in one another has grown much like the tree mentioned in parable.

Their gatherings frequently consist of catching up with each other regarding family, work and travel, highlighted with stories of how they have been blessed with Christ’s reconciling presence. Praying for each other’s’ intentions is also an important part of their prayer life.

Over the last 5 years, the Mustard Seeds have served the community in several ways. They have sorted clothing at Mary Queen of the Angels, adopted families from St. Anthony Food Pantry, packaged diapers for the St. Louis Area Diaper Bank and helped out at Our Ladies Inn. And every time they serve together, they grow closer to each other and to God. It isn’t unusual for their prayer gatherings to end up being discussions about their last adventure in service and how excited they are to serve again. They always seem to receive the gift of energy from their gift of service.

—Mary Reynolds
“Our Precious Blood...”

Sandy Dennis

A Denver native, Sandy Dennis was a member of the Hope Community for five years before they recently joined with several new Partners to form a new as-of-yet unnamed small faith community.

Gifted with a listening ear, warm friendly smile, and always positive attitude Sandy has one son and two grandchildren. After spending over 15 years working for McDonnell Douglas and nearly another 15 at Citi Corp, Sandy is semi-retired; she works part-time for her son at his used car dealership in St. Peters. Sandy is an active member of All Saints Parish in St. Peters.

Sandy tells of being graced through Partners when she participated in Handicapped Encounter Christ, attended a prison ministry retreat, and many other times. She tells of having received so much more than she gave on both retreats.

Sandy is always trying to be a reconciling presence in all she does—Bible studies, women’s groups, a sorority she belongs to and her everyday life. Recently, Sandy invited Sr. Ruth Kertz and Sr. Esther Hogan into her home to share with 15 of her friends and family about human trafficking.

In the last five years, Sandy has lost over 180 pound through Weight Watchers. What a commitment and accomplishment!

Thank you, Sandy, for being an inspiration for Partners and so many more.

—Debbie Whited

Sr. Joanne Reuter

When asked to reflect on the theme of “In Giving We Receive,” Sr. Joanne Reuter fondly recalls a program she participated in many years ago called “Shut-in Retreats.” It was a program that paired nursing Sisters and teaching Sisters. The “paired” sisters would visit with patients at Chronic Hospital on Arsenal and pray with and for them. “Oh my,” Sr. Joanne explained, “How much more we got out of the experience than gave!”

A Precious Blood Sister for over 57 years, Sr. Joanne grew up in South Saint Louis and attended St. Elizabeth Academy where she was taught by Precious Blood Sisters. A member of the Sisters’ Gospel Justice Committee, Sr. Joanne stated that her social justice activism started in high school. She was a member of the Legion of Mary, attended a Catholic Action Conference in Chicago, and then it was in her blood.

Sr. Joanne was a teacher for five years before volunteering in the infirmary. While working in the infirmary, Sr. Joanne’s nursing gifts became apparent to the Superior General. She went on to receive her BSN at Maryville University. Sr. Joanne worked as a health and wellness coordinator for Cardinal Ritter Institute and SSM. She currently works part time at Regina Cleri caring for our retired priests.

Sr. Joanne finds her gatherings with her Faithful Remnant small faith community to be invigorating. She enjoys hearing everyone’s life stories.

—Debbie Whited

Save the Dates

CPPS Partners in Mission
Trivia Night Saturday, March 10, 2018. Doors open at 6 p.m., play begins at 7 in St. Joseph School cafeteria, Cottleville. Please plan a table with your small faith community, family or friends. If you would like to help plan trivia night, please contact Dawn Boschert.

CPPS Sisters and Partners
Winter Gathering Saturday, February 3, 2018, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at St. Pius V. We will celebrate our blessings as we continue our theme of Response to Human Needs: In Giving We Receive. More information about this spiritually uplifting morning to come.
For Your Spiritual Journey...

Chris Lloyd

Time of need. Since beginning to consciously do this, I have found that in giving of myself in the form of prayer for even those I do not know, I have received so much more - a connection with the suffering, an understanding of how rich my own life is, and a strengthening in my relationship with Jesus. Maybe if we all took time out to pray for one another, peace would finally be known worldwide.

—Debbie Whited

Sr. Carolyn is a member of the Disciples of St. Agatha small faith community.

While on retreat, Sr. Carolyn picked up a copy of My Life with the Saints by Father James Martin, SJ. Although it is an older book, it really touched her. At the end of her retreat, she found that she was only half way through the book, but she wanted to read more so she took the book home with her. She enjoyed the connections Fr. Martin made between his life and the lives of the saints. She was especially taken with the life of St. Peter. Although Peter was very weak, God loved him in spite of it just as God loves each one of us despite all our weakness and faults.

In the book, Fr. Martin describes his attachment to the saints and tells how he feels they have been his friends and guides throughout his life.

Partners Chris Lloyd, a member of the Gurtweilers, shared the following:

So often throughout the day, especially through social media, we hear or read a request for prayers for someone’s return to health, a loved one’s recovery after surgery, or employment for someone’s brother, cousin, friend, etc. I would often respond that I would, of course, pray for them.

Then one day, I overheard a coworker on the phone. She had received a call from a friend who had, at some point in the conversation, asked for prayers. She, of course, agreed. When she hung up the phone, she actually stopped and said a quick prayer aloud for the person she had just spoken with on the phone. I realized then, that I rarely actually prayed for the people I said I would pray for. I guess I always thought just saying that I would pray was prayer enough.

Since then, I make a conscious effort to stop, right then and there, in the middle of traffic, or scrolling through the news feed on Facebook, to actually spend at least a minute or two really thinking about that person and asking Jesus to be with them in their time of need. Since beginning to consciously do this, I have found that in giving of myself in the form of prayer for even those I do not know, I have received so much more - a connection with the suffering, an understanding of how rich my own life is, and a strengthening in my relationship with Jesus. Maybe if we all took time out to pray for one another, peace would finally be known worldwide.

—Debbie Whited

The 2017 CPPS Partners in Mission BBQ held on August 5 and sponsored by the TLC small faith community was a huge success. There were approximately 80 Sisters and Partners in attendance as well as 27 new members that were to receive their pins on September 10.

Allen Serfas of the St. Joseph Men’s Club furnished all the meat and drinks and thanked us for coming! Can you imagine?? We were thanking him. Chef Tom Longinette, with the assistance of Allen’s son Jack Serfas, did all the cooking. We had hot dogs, hamburgers, and pork steaks cooked to perfection. Everyone else brought a dish to share. I never saw so many happy faces.

Debbie Whited introduced the groups by Sisters, Partners, Partners-to-be, and guests. Each group received a round of applause.

On a personal note; sitting across from me was a new Partner-to-be, a friend I had not seen in 30 years.

God bless the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood.

—Helen Brown

Sisters and Partners singing the CPPS Blessing over our hosts and cooks, the St. Joseph Men’s Club members.
God’s Blessings in Abundance
continued from p. 1

their new direction.

Speakers for the day include Patti Belmont, Jill Berry and Sister Clare Ann, all sharing their experiences while working at St. Agatha Food Pantry. Their words were a perfect introduction to the direction chosen for the upcoming PIM year: Response to Human Needs, In Giving We Receive.

After a tasty lunch, the room got a lot noisier as PIM mingled and caught up with friends and prayer partners. Then everyone traveled to St. Joseph Chapel for mass where 27 new partners made their first commitment and the “old timers” recommitted for another year. With more than 160 in the Chapel, you could feel the Holy Spirit at work. It seems we are going to have a fabulous year.

Before ending the ceremony, the group honored Carol Pellegrin who was celebrating her 25th commitment ceremony as a Partner in Mission. Congratulations, Carol.

—Mary Reynolds

“...we need to collaborate with each other, to be reconciled with those with whom there have been rifts...we need to leave aside our certainties and learn to intuit with a heart in love and with an eye that sees God’s plans as they unfold in novelty. Above all, we need to ask ourselves, “What are God and humanity asking for today?”

Mary Pellegrino, CJS 2017 LCWR Presidential Address

Please continue to pray for the unfolding of the Sisters’ 2016 General Chapter Future Direction Statement.

Symbolism of the CPPS Partners in Mission Pin

Designed by Sr. Mary Cecile Gunelson, CPPS, the circular structure symbolizes the world where the Partner in Mission is called to be an instrument of God’s reconciling love. The two shafts of wheat on the bottom remind the Partner in Mission that living God’s reconciliation involves dying to self and rising to new life. The chiro in the center of the flower petals represents the reconciliation and harmony God desires for all creation and is a prominent symbol on the Sisters’ rings.

—Sr. Carol Orf