The Message of Easter: Hope

As the dark days of late Winter get progressively longer and the notion of Spring seems once again possible, I think of what the gradually dawning light of that first Easter morning might have meant to Jesus’s followers. I imagine them, held in the grip of fear and grief, receiving the unbelievable news that, “He lives!” How could this be possible? They had witnessed for themselves the events of the previous days. They had seen Jesus crucified with their own eyes. Who would have dared hope that anything other than what was seen first-hand could be true? And yet, Jesus was alive. He did rise from the dead. He is with us now.

At Easter, it’s a joy for me to remember that all things really are possible with God. And, as we near Holy Week and Easter Sunday, I hope you will take heart in knowing that no matter how dark or low things right in front of our eyes may appear, there is always Hope; there is always God.

May each of you have a very blessed, happy, and hope-filled Easter.

- Audrey Jungermann

Commitment Relationship—Small Faith Communities

A committed relationship is an interpersonal relationship based upon a mutually agreed-upon commitment to one another involving love, trust, honesty, openness, and respect. One form of a committed relationship exists in our spiritual connections with the Sisters and Partners within our Small Faith Communities.

When we talk about the key parts of our Small Faith Communities, we are talking about: respect, sharing, prayer, mission, outreach, and most importantly, relationships. In order for our Communities to develop healthy relationships, we need to build, deepen, and maintain friendships within the group. We can’t assume that those relationships will develop naturally. Life happens and conflicts arise and sometimes a Partner will have to miss a monthly gathering. One goal of a Small Faith Community is to make the relationship so valuable that Partners want to schedule other activities around the gathering, so as not to miss any meeting. When a Small Faith Community is that valued, Partners will turn down conflicting invitations and events to attend SFC Gatherings.

Attendance at monthly gatherings is crucial. Your presence is needed in your group; it greatly affects the dynamics of the group and the experience of other members. Likewise, your absence leaves a hole in discussions and you are missed. Please make it part of your own personal goals to develop and maintain a committed relationship with your Small Faith Community.

- Carol Oldendorf
Heritage Preservation Efforts

Our congregation’s heritage preservation efforts can be thought of not only as collecting “gems” from the past, but also as storing “seeds” to nurture future generations.

Prior to the renovation of the Motherhouse buildings into Villa Theresa in 2008, a heritage room had been established in a small room in what is now Sr. Marge Cordes’ apartment. During the renovation phase, some of the displays were reassembled on a temporary basis in the cloister corridor.

After the renovation, in 2012, Sr. Fran Raia and her council established a heritage committee—Sisters Mary Cecile Gunelson, Barbara Payne, Mary Beth Kemper and Robert Ann Harper—to develop a more permanent display area. Two years later, Sister Eileen Schieber and Leah Wand, Mission Advancement Director, became part of the Heritage Committee. In 2015 Sr. Robert Ann resigned and Sr. Marge Cordes took her place on the committee.

The heritage area now includes the cloister corridor as well as the area around the back of St. Joseph Chapel: lounge and hallway leading to the administration area, former sacristy, former sanctuary, and St. Faustus Chapel and relic room. Our development of this area serves to house precious articles from the past as well as to adorn and enrich spaces used by sisters, Partners, and guests for gathering, learning, reflecting, and praying.

- Sr. Cecile Gunelson

Partners in Mission Travelling Chalice

The Traveling Chalice idea came about in response to a question: “In what way can we embrace daily the Sisters we have pledged to support?” It was brought to my attention that the Christum Dei Prayer that the Sisters say daily would be a bonding symbol to pray in their honor. As Spirituality Committee, we felt that giving Small Faith Communities a visual component to use at monthly gatherings would provide a memorable and meaningful experience. It was further hoped that Partners would begin reciting the Christum Dei prayer daily themselves as a way of connecting with the Sisters.

The Travelling Chalice is now a reality and has been in circulation since late Fall of 2018. It is accompanied by two beautiful examples of embroidered art from the Ecclesiastical Art Department that were created over 50 years ago. Together, these items can help set the tone for a prayerful experience at monthly gatherings.

At the Leader’s meeting in September, SFC representatives signed up to take turns “hosting” the Chalice and EAD artifacts at their monthly gatherings. When one SFC is finished with the items, a representative from the group is to contact the next SFC in line and arrange for a relay. If the representatives are unable to meet, the Chalice should be brought to Audrey Jungermann at the Precious Blood Center where it may be picked up by the next group.

- Patti Belmont

Christum Dei (Precious Blood Canticle):

Antiphon: Christ, the Son of God who with his blood has redeemed us, come, let us adore him. (Prayer continues on the left.)

2018 SFC Leadership Team with the Travelling Chalice and items from the Ecclesiastical Arts Department
Featured Governing Board Member

Sr. Doris Rechtiene

I was born almost on the church steps of St. Liborius in North St. Louis. My mother began labor as she was leaving Mass—luckily for both of us, she made it to the hospital! My father, mother, older brother, younger sister, and I moved to Mattese when I was four. I attended Assumption Parish grade school and entered the Aspirancy right after graduation. There, young women contemplate God’s plan for them. I was considered young to make this decision, but I had already thought about it for several years. I was attracted to Religious life by the Sisters at Assumption who were shining examples of love and kindness. I made my final vows in 1954.

In 1957, women’s religious communities of first world countries were asked to send Sisters to third world countries. When Leadership asked for volunteers to go to Lima, Peru, I volunteered with Sisters Agatha Marie and Mary Fulgence. We traveled by ship from New York to Peru, and then to a school in Lima sponsored by Maryknoll Priests. Starting with two classrooms of Kindergarten, we added another grade each year. In 1961 I was assigned to La Paz, Bolivia to start a school. CPPS Sisters had been there since 1959 in health ministry and PSR. I joined Parish Ministry, which, as I learned, meant being willing to do anything—"See a need and meet the need".

In the early 1970s I spent a year in the Institute for Religious Formation at St. Louis University. It ended in a 30-day retreat in Manresa, Spain, in preparation for a formation program in Bolivia. I worked with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in Latin America, giving workshops and retreats with a Jesus and Mary Sister in the Inter Community Program. I felt so blessed by this calling. I served in Latin America from 1957 until 2009.

I was involved with Partners in Mission from the very beginning. Sr. Mary Cecile Sullivan and I were among the first group of Sisters Prayer Partners. The graces and joys I experience with Partners are many. You really do live the Charism of Reconciliation!

I was invited to serve on the Governing Board 6 months ago. My goal is to use my God-given talents to listen and question and help the Board in any way I can.

- As told to Carol Oldendorf

Small Faith Community in the Spotlight

Faithful Remnant

The Faithful Remnants are a small but committed community. Although we lost three members last year, we are committed to staying together and even looking to grow. Our current members are Sister Barbara Payne, Sister Dorothy Ann Katke, Sister Joanne Reuter, Judy Shirley, and Susan Bruker. Our regular meetings are held once a month over lunch at Villa Theresa in O’Fallon. We all do outreach individually. Sister Barbara is deeply committed to sharing the Sisters’ story with us so that we in turn can share it with others. Sister Dorothy Ann is a “visiting angel”; her outreach includes visiting elderly people who, without her, may have no visitors at all. Sister Joanne is a nurse and cares for the elderly in retirement and skilled nursing communities. Judy devotes her time and service to her parish, which gives her many opportunities to serve. Susan is an architect; her passion is helping religious communities improve their ministries.

We begin each year by planning what to do as a group that year, and when. The monthly meeting plan usually includes a movie, lunch at a local restaurant, a novena, and a special guest or facilitator. This year we added visiting another small faith community. As Faithful Remnants, we live the charism of reconciliation by making a commitment to each other to come together each month to share, listen, and learn. This may sound simple but over the years we have realized together that you can always practice sharing, listening, and learning. This helps us when we go back to our daily routines to be better equipped at being a reconciling presence in the world.

- Susan Bruker

From top left: Susan Bruker, Sr. Dorothy Ann Katke, Sr. Barbara Payne, Sr. Joanne Reuter, and Judy Shirley
Save the Date!! Partners in Mission Trivia Night

Save the date and mark your calendars for a fun-filled night of laughter at our Annual Trivia Night! The event will be held on Saturday, April 13, 2019 at the Parish Hall of St. Joseph’s in Cottleville: 1355 Motherhead Road St. Charles, MO 63304. Doors open at 6 p.m. and rounds begin at 7 p.m.

Gather your fellow Partners in Mission, family and friends, to join your table. Or, make some new friends at Trivia Night! The cost for a table of eight is $200.00. Beer and set-ups are provided.

All Small Faith Communities are encouraged to donate a theme gift basket filled with goodies. Examples of possible themes are: Movie, Cardinals Baseball, Italian Dinner, Art Supplies, Books, Baking, Coffee and Wine, and the list goes on. BE CREATIVE!!

A silent auction will be held for the gift baskets and two door wreaths. And, as always, there will be the ever-popular 50/50 drawing!! Raffle tickets will also be sold for a beautiful quilt donated by the St. Cletus Parish Quilters. A drawing for the quilt will be held later in the year.

If you don’t want to play, you can volunteer to be a runner, a judge, or to help set up or clean up. Volunteers should arrive by 6:15.

I hope to see you all there!

Carol Oldendorf

Congratulations!!

Our own Carol Oldendorf has just finished a three-year-long program of formation with some of her fellow All Saints parishioners. This marks the end of an intense period of study that Carol took with 150 other participants to deepen their relationship with Christ and participation in the Church. A Commissioning Mass will be held at the Cathedral Basilica on April 13.

Congratulations, Carol, on this exciting accomplishment!

Audrey Jungermann

Winter Assembly Day 2019

On February 2nd, nearly 90 Sisters and Partners in Mission gathered at Bishop DuBourg High School for the 2019 Winter Assembly. Building Bridges of Reconciliation and recognizing the 149th anniversary of the Sisters coming to America were the central themes.

Sr. Carol Orf shared very personal stories of how God has healed relationships in her life, allowing for a new closeness to be formed. Sr. Carol offered new insights on Reconciliation as described in Scripture, and provided thought-provoking questions for reflection, prayer, and small-group discussions. When the song, Sanctuary was played, everyone was moved to sing along. We were all encouraged to ponder our own need to build bridges of reconciliation.

A terrific brunch followed with dishes brought by volunteers from Disciples in Action, Gertweilers, Wisdom Circle, and Faithful Remnant SFCs. On each table were baked goods native to countries where the Sisters served or significant events throughout their history.

A second presentation by Sisters Rosemary Russell, Carol Boschert and Joyce Schramm told of their work at the Troy, MO jail. Their mission furthers the CPPS Community’s Bold Action Plan of helping immigrants. Twice a month the Sisters minister to inmates by offering reading instructions and Bible study. Hispanic inmates are most grateful for the chance to practice their faith and heritage. The Sisters gave personal accounts of their work and a special collection to support this ministry was held; a total of $760.00 was raised.

- Mary Jane Matejka