

Partners on the Journey

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood Partners in Mission Newsletter

SPRING 2020



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SPECIAL DATES

- April 5—Palm Sunday
April 12—Easter Sunday

Pathways to PIM

If you know someone who would like to learn more about Partners in Mission, please have them contact me or a member of the Board. We will be happy to explain our mission and answer questions.

A new Pathways class is forming now for the Fall.

Thank you!

Audrey Jungermann
636-542-9479

Reconciliation—Deepening our Relationships with God, each other, and our suffering World.

"He is not Here"

"Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. *He is not here; he is risen, just as he said*". Matthew 28: 5-6

This must have been startling news for the women at the tomb on Easter morning. In their grief they discover Jesus gone, and then, perhaps even more astounding, they are told by an angel that he has risen.

To me, these words say everything about how cared for by God we are. The angel's

greeting begins, "Do not be afraid", a message God sends us over and over. Next, "...he is risen" is news of a promise fulfilled. Not only is Jesus no longer in the tomb, but he *lives*; he is among us now and always will be.

This Easter, may we be free from fear and joyful in the knowledge that God is present in the world. And, when it's difficult to feel that presence, may we be the ones to bring it forward. Happy Easter!

-Audrey Jungermann

God Believes in Jubilees

Jubilees remind us to always trust in God. Our anniversary prayer shows a recognition of God's gifts as we celebrate God's faithfulness, remembering that "All is gift" and showing that we can be, "instruments of healing in our suffering world".

On Sunday, February 2, three "jubilees" were celebrated: The feast of Jesus' presentation in the temple; the 150th anniversary of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood coming to America; and the Golden Jubilee of Sr. Maria Jesus Montano Cortadellas from Bolivia.

The liturgy reflected the presence of the Sisters in South America and Finland, with songs and readings in both Spanish and English. The beautiful, "This is My Song", a patriotic song of Finland, was sung as a reminder that all countries are blessed by God, and all are called to live together in harmony. The response to Prayers of the Faithful was sung in all three languages.

The day was a proud celebration of the Sisters' history, beginning with their founding in Switzerland, their dedication to holy adoration and caring for those around them, their endurance of 25 years of political unrest in Europe, and their decision to bid farewell to all that was familiar and set sail for new lives in Ameri-

ca, Illinois, and finally, Missouri.

We were blessed to have Sisters Guichy Loma Aliaga, Maria Luz Mejia Vasquez, and Rosa Maria Ludena Cordova from South America present to celebrate with Sr. Maria Jesus as she renewed her vows.

A pair of inscribed vases were given to the Sisters by the Partners in Mission in recognition of their milestone anniversary. Each Sister was easily recognizable by her red rose corsage, lovingly made for them by *Disciples in Action* Small Faith Community.

After Mass everyone proceeded to the dining room. A proclamation was made by Mayor Hennessy of O'Fallon and a monetary donation from the Sisters was gifted to International Institute. A delicious buffet was followed by anniversary cake. Everyone agreed, the day was a true "gift"!

- Mary Jane Matejka



Spanish choral group



Sr. Janice's welcome

Featured Board Member: *Carol Oldendorf*



Carol Oldendorf

I was born January 21, 1962 to a wonderful woman named Dorothy. Dorothy was nearing 40 when she found out she was expecting me. She had raised two other children, and was divorced and seeing a gentleman at the time. Dorothy realized she was not up to raising another child. She was concerned about the impact the birth might have on her other children, and so she moved to a Catholic Charities maternity home until I was born. Dorothy relinquished me on February 19th, and on March 7th I met my wonderful new parents, Virgil and Marion Oldendorf.

My parents loved me unconditionally, and I them. They were my parents through and through--devout Catholics who raised me in a faith-filled home.

Years ago, I received an invitation to enter Pathways. That invitation came at a very difficult time in my life, however. My parents had moved in with me, although Dad would soon move to a nursing home where he could receive the care he needed. Then, in April 2014, as my mom and I were on the way to pick Dad up for a birthday lunch, Mom--my

best friend--suffered a brain aneurysm. She passed away four days later; Dad followed five and a half months later. The parents who meant the world to me were suddenly gone. They raised me to be independent, but never taught me how to live without them. Five years after their deaths I am still learning.

In 2016 I was again approached about Pathways and this time I said, "Yes". What a wonderful decision that has been! I became a Partner in 2017, was Leader in my Small Faith Community *Sacred Journey* for two years, and I now serve on the Governing Board, chairing the Communications Committee that creates this quarterly newsletter.

As I've gotten older, I've begun to look at my life in reverse, and oh, what a life I have had! God was with me every step of the way. Serving God through CPPS Partners in Mission connects me to something bigger. I hope to serve this community for many years to come. It is an honor to know these wonderful Sisters who have devoted their lives to God and reconciliation.

-Carol Oldendorf

Partner *Jill Berry*—A True “Disciple in Action”

St. Agatha's *Disciples in Action* Small Faith Community are blessed with an exceptionally gifted member: Jill Berry.

Jill has worked as a nurse with HIV / AIDS patients for over 25 years. This December she was recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award for the hundreds of hours of selfless giving and compassionate love she has poured out for HIV / AIDS patients. The award was presented at World AIDS Day by AIDS Service Organizations of St. Louis, to which Jill belongs.

Once a month throughout the state of Missouri, people living with HIV/AIDS, medical case managers, medical staff, and the community come together at Planning Council and various other meetings. They update each other and develop plans on how best to meet the needs of the HIV/AIDS community and how to further educate people on preventing the transmission of HIV.

When asked how she would sum up her hours and years of service, Jill replied, "I saw the Face of God in every person!" We are blessed as Partners to have so many wonderful men and women like Jill within our community who have found their treasure in serving others!

Well done, Jill! Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!

- Patti Belmont



Jill Berry



Jill Berry and her family at the awards ceremony on World AIDS Day

Getting to Know: *Sr. Joann Fischer*



ish Pastoral Minister, retreat and spiritual director, St. Agatha Food Pantry director, executive director of the Precious Blood Leadership conference, and director during the early life of Partners In Mission.

My present ministries are to “walk” with people who are dying, to assist at communion service, and to give a reflection on Sunday’s Scripture readings. I also belong to a breakfast group of women of various denominations. My favorite prayer is, “By your cross and resurrection you have set us free. You are the Savior of the world”.

I have travelled to Europe twice, including a trip to Steinerberg, Switzerland.

People have been my greatest gift received. They inspire me and give me life.

The wildest thing I’ve done was to follow my heart into the community of the Most Precious Blood where I learned how to be an instrument of reconciliation.

For me, “Reconciliation lived” is being attentive to what’s going on in my own

heart. If something is troubling me at the end of the day, I put it in God’s hands. If the issue is still there in the morning, I write down what it is and what I am going to do with it. If it involves another person, I face my fears and ask that person for their time, telling them I do not want something to grow in my heart. I ask, “Do you have time to help me let go?”

For the world, I would like peace. For myself, that begins with me and the corner where I live.

-Sr. Joann Fischer

My name is Sr. Joann Fischer. I was born in St. Louis, the daughter of Irene Casey and Anthony Fischer. I have three siblings, all married. I have been a Sister of the Most Precious Blood for 62 years. I was drawn by the joy of the Sisters while attending St. Agatha elementary school where I would return in ministry years later.

My years of ministry included a variety of jobs: Educator for 25 years, renovating a school building in north St. Louis City for use as a pre-school, par-



Sr. Joann with her Breakfast group

Small Faith Community in the Spotlight: *Disciples in Action*

We, the members of Disciples in Action of St. Agatha's Small Faith Community, chose our name because, like the original Disciples, we come from many regions but we have one focus: the action of spreading Christ's love. Our group presently consists of six Partners in Mission, five Sisters, and several retired Partners who have become Prayer and Presence Partners.

Our members are: Leader, Mary Mann, Julie Schlichting, Patricia Belmont, Kathi Broughton, Jill Berry, Colleen Curran-Schulte, Linda Tonnies, and Lori Speiker; Mentor, Sr. Carolyn Pozarich, Sr. Clare Ann Litteken, Sr. Monica Marie Toenjes, Sr. Joan Klaas, and Sr. Loretto Maes; and Prayer and Presence Partners Conchita Ongioco and Paul and Carol Pellegrin. We schedule our gatherings for once a month, rotating locations among

members' homes. We also rotate responsibilities for providing prayer, meeting content, and food at each gathering.

Sharing our faith and stories of our lives has cemented our friendships in the Lord! We have an active food pantry at St. Agatha's Convent. Between seeing to the clients' monthly needs and participating in the Christmas Party, we keep quite busy. Some of us are active on the Partners in Mission Governing Board, we participate in a variety of projects championed by the Sisters, and many of us are involved in our own parishes.

The blessing of having so many Sisters to share their opinions and insight at gatherings has been the biggest gift to our Small Faith Community. We look forward to having more opportunities to share with other Communities.

-Patti Belmont



*Members of Disciples in Action
Front row, left to right:
Sr. Clare Ann, Lori, Mary;
Middle row:
Colleen, Jill, Kathy, Sr. Carolyn,
Sr. Monica;
Back row:
Julie, Patti, Sr. Joan, Sr. Loretto*

Stonehenge

In March of 2012 when my wife and I lived in Wiltshire, England we visited Stonehenge. I must admit that initially I wasn't all that thrilled about seeing it. What could I see there that I hadn't already seen in books or documentaries?

The true purpose of Stonehenge remains a mystery. The massive stone circle was erected 4,500 years ago by ancient people using simple tools. Legends and theories abound. One of my favorites is that the wizard Merlin magically transported it to Wiltshire from Ireland. Some folks believe aliens built it as some sort of celestial observatory. Others are convinced that it is some great spiritual destination and that the stones have healing powers (we even encountered a few self-proclaimed Druids on our journey).

Walking through Stonehenge I was struck with a great sense of loss. These giant stones were assembled by ancient people using tremendous strength, spending countless hours, and employing precise calculations. This must have been an important place! How sad that today we have lost whatever significance was once attributed to this great monument!

Will our own churches, mosques, and temples someday only be a curiosity to future generations?

Will our places of worship become just tourist destinations? Will they only be a place for smiling photos with friends with no consideration of the significance of our beliefs?

Other trips to great cathedrals, abbeys, and ancient churches in England made me ponder if my own Church is not at risk of some day becoming extinct. As I walk through other hallowed buildings it seems that there is more tourism than worship; more photography than prayer; more indifference than belief.

During this Lenten season I hope to once again embrace Jesus' love for all. Struggling in my own humble, flawed way to follow His tremendous example, I will remember that I am loved. Reminded that God created all of us, I will attempt to be more loving to others.

I believe that Stonehenge may be a cautionary tale.

As a person of faith, I believe that our worship spaces can avoid becoming obsolete, hollow ruins by embracing the love that Christ preached. I should be reaching out to all people with open arms, not turning my back on those with whom I disagree or of whom I am afraid. The doors should be flung wide open to welcome all of God's children.

"Keep your faith in all beautiful things;

In the sun when it is hidden,

In the Spring when it is gone."

- Roy R. Gilson



Only then can I truly bring the reconciling presence of Christ to others. Only then will I know God's love.

Lenten blessings to all!

-Denis Wilhelm

CPPS Partners in Mission

Partners in Mission strive to bring Christ's reconciling presence to those we encounter in our daily lives. We seek to carry on the legacy of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood by deepening our relationship with God, each other, and the Community to heal our suffering world.

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