Partners on the Journey

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood Partners in Mission Newsletter

WINTER 2016

IMPORTANT DATES:

January 9
Second Saturday Mass
St. Joseph Chapel

January 23
Fourth Saturday Mass
St. Gerard Majella

February 13
Second Saturday Mass
St. Joseph Chapel

February 27
Fourth Saturday Mass
St. Gerald Majella

March 12
Second Saturday Mass
St. Joseph Chapel

March 19
CPPS Dinner Auction
Old Hickory

March 30-April 9
General Chapter

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Welcome Patti Belmont—New Governing Board Member

The PIM governing board welcomed its newest member during their November 2015 meeting. Patti Belmont was appointed by Sr. Fran Raia. The governing board is now complete with five lay Partners and two Sisters. Patti is pleased to be a part of the group and is looking forward to getting to know the other board members. She will chair the recruitment committee. Patti is a member of the Disciples in Action– St. Agatha small faith community and serves as their current leader.

The governing board continues to meet to discuss the structure of the Partners in Mission and to support the director of the Partners. The next board meeting will be in February and will be a one-day retreat at Meadowlark in Warrenton. The group is hoping to grow as a team and will pray and reflect on the mission of the Partners (*to carry on the legacy of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood by deepening our relationships with God, each other, and the Community to heal our broken world*).

Patti Belmont, new governing board member, helping set- up for St. Agatha's Christmas Party.

If you have questions or concerns you wish to be addressed by the board, feel free to email the board Chairperson Lori Larkin (lori.larkin.cppspim@gmail.com) or Secretary Mary Reynolds (mary.reynolds.cppspim@gmail.com). *—Mary Reynolds*

Small Faith Communities--the ♥ *of Partners in Mission*

The Latecomers

Back row: Mary Donnelly, Sr. Robert Ann Harper, Sr. LaVerne Wester Front row: Bernie Donnelly, Helen Brown, Sr. Viola Marie Spire, Connie McKoskey (Denis Wilhelm, not pictured)

Today we focus on the Latecomers! This small faith community meets at Villa Theresa each month. They made their first Commitment promises in 2014. Their name reflects the timing in their lives of their entry into lay ministry with CPPS. Coincidentally, each of them was late to one of their formation meetings, so they thought the name was appropriate and a bit funny! Outreach for the group is visiting the elderly residents of Villa Theresa, sometimes with Duchess, the therapy dog!

The community's leader is Denis Wilhelm who works as a display designer, writes a spirituality blog, and dotes on his grandchildren. His two mentors, Sr. Robert Ann Harper and Sr. LaVerne Wester, both of whom were long time elementary school principals but now assist in the coordination of social services at St. Joachim and Ann Care Services in St. Charles. Mary and Bernie Donnelly are retired; Mary was an executive assistant, and Bernie was a data processing manager. They are also proud parents of the aforementioned, Duchess. Helen Brown is the devoted caretaker of her husband with dementia. In 2015, two new members joined the community, Connie McKoskey and Sr. Viola Marie Spire. It seems for these partners the saying is especially true: better late than never!!

—Peggy Hoefel

"Our Precious Blood..."

Lori Larkin

Lori Larkin

Lori Larkin has been a Partner in Mission since September 2012. She belongs to the Mustard Seeds small faith community and serves as Chairperson of the PIM governing board. Lori was invited to explore Partners in Mission by her friend Mary Martin; a classmate from St. Mary's Academy.

Lori grew up in O'Fallon and currently works as an insurance underwriter for AIG. She lives in St. Charles County with her husband of 33 years, Ed. She has two grown children and three grandchildren.

In her spare time Lori enjoys playing with her grandchildren and likes to read, bike, and take long walks.

Lori is also working with PIM Director Debbie Whited in the "Pathways" process. She finds meeting with potential PIM very rewarding and inspiring. Their faith sharing has energized her more than she ever thought it would.

When asked why she volunteered to serve on the governing board, Lori replied, "I had been feeling the call to serve more deeply and when the invitation was made to volunteer for the board, it came at a time that fit perfectly. It has been one of the most enlightening experiences of my life so far."

—Mary Reynolds

Sister Loretta Sigler

Sr. Loretta Sigler grew up in Bloomington, Illinois. After graduating from college in 1971, she eagerly began teaching in a public school. But deep within, she felt God calling her to religious life. She made her first vows as a Precious Blood Sister in 1978. Interestingly, when Loretta was only 6 or 7 years old, her grandmother had predicted Loretta would one day be a religious sister.

Five years later, Sr. Loretta felt a calling to join her fellow Sisters in Bolivia. For 10 years, she served in pastoral ministry/catechetics at Cristo Rey parish in La Paz. With a tear in her eye, Sr. Loretta recalls the words of a young man who had completed a retreat given by Sr. Loretta, "Now I know my life doesn't belong to me. I can't commit suicide." At Cristo Rey, she began an RCIA program, something new to this Bolivian parish. Soon, Sr. Loretta's RCIA program was being used by several other parishes.

Sr. Loretta returned to Missouri in 1993 and continued her work in pastoral ministry.

Sr. Loretta is a member of the Disciples—St. Agatha small faith community. She feels her greatest gifts are being a good listener and empowering others to learn to trust themselves.

Please keep Sr. Loretta in your prayers as she continues to battle cancer of the esophagus.

—Debbie Whited

Sr. Loretta Sigler

Sr. Marie Laurent Klein, Sr. Dory Obermann and Sr. Joni Belford for our first Trivia Night in 2011.

Hoping to See Your Beautiful Face

Saturday, March 19 – CPPS Dinner Auction at Old Hickory. This is a major fundraiser for the Sisters. You can help by attending the event either as a guest or as a helper—help set up or donate an item for the auction. Items needed include gift certificates ($25 value), bottles of wine ($15 value), and home-baked goods. Contact Leah (lwand@cpps-ofallon.org) for more info.

Saturday, April 16 – CPPS PIM Trivia Night at St. Joseph Cottleville School. This is the Partners' sole fundraiser and each Small Faith Community is asked to donate a themed gift basket for silent auction. Please consider attending, too. A fun time is guaranteed.

—Mary Reynolds

For Your Spiritual Journey...

"When we pray we speak to God; but when we read, God speaks to us."
St. Jerome

The start of the New Year often involves resolutions including steps to become healthier. This should begin with our spiritual lives, maybe including some spiritual reading.

Partner Kathleen Bolduan suggests a light biography option that has helped her in her relationship with Christ: *Pastrix: the Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner & Saint* by Nadia Bolz-Weber. Raised Church of Christ, ordained Lutheran Pastor, Nadine looks at some of the aspects of our faith we take for granted, such as grace and hope. She has overcome addictions, to become the minister for the outcasts of society, gays, lesbians, transgendered, and the homeless. While sometimes crass in her appearance and writing, her spikey hair, tattoos, and colorful speech have helped her become accepted as family by those to whom she ministers.

Kathleen Bolduan

Sr. Susan Borgel offers a deeper spiritual option in *The Dark Night of the Soul: A Psychiatrist Explores the Connection Between Darkness and Spiritual Growth* by Gerald G. May, M.D. Anyone who had read St. John of the Cross, understands that it can be very difficult to grasp and understand. Gerald May breaks down the mystical theology of St. John in words that can more readily be understood. The Dark Night of the Soul "is a deep transformation, a movement toward indescribable freedom and joy. And in truth it doesn't always have to be unpleasant!" (p.4) The dark night "is nothing other than the story of a love affair: a romance between God and the human soul that liberates us to love one another. (p.12) Through the words of Gerald May, the mysticism of St. John is easily read, understandable, and thus attainable.

Sr. Susan Borgel

Check them out today!

—Robyn Dannenmueller

A Reflection by Carol Jung

Wisdom Circle Enjoys Retreat Days at Meadowlark

Our Wisdom Circle of seven gathered at Meadowlark October 2, 3, and 4 for a getaway of sharing, praying, deepening our trust and friendship and, of course, some relaxing.

Breakfast meals were always on our own, so individuals could rise and refresh at her own pace. Other meals were planned ahead and shared together.

Throughout the days, each lay partner provided the leadership for one faith sharing event. These topics included:

- How art through the ages impacted concepts of spirituality.
- Choosing life paths of power, violence, and compassion.
- The spirituality and reality of aging.
- Feasting on self-love, compassion, and our goodness.

Our Sister Partners provided meal prayers and a para-liturgy before our special Saturday evening meal. During this time commitments were renewed to PIM and each other.

We set goals and dates for our 6th season. We discussed sharing hosting as well as leading our sessions through "shared responsibility."

In between we rested, walked, enjoyed quiet time and each created a mandala.

If your small faith community would like to enjoy the beauty and peace of Meadowlark, please contact Dawn Bohning (dbohning@cpps-ofallon.org) for available dates.

"We laughed and shared our stories of Women Partners on a journey together. The time was sacred and a true cup of blessing for each."

- Carol Jung

Women & Spirit

Following morning Mass on Saturday, November 14, a group of thirty-five Sisters, Partners, lay residents of Villa Theresa and parishioners of Assumption and All Saints were able to view *Women & Spirit* in Alpine Heights. A lively discussion followed the 56-minute video that tells the story of the many courageous Catholic Sisters who founded many of our nation's schools, hospitals, and other social institutions during our country's early history.

Another opportunity to view the video as a group will be available in April or May following the fourth Saturday morning Mass at St. Gerald Majella in Kirkwood.

If your small faith community would like to borrow a copy of *Women & Spirit* for one of your gatherings, please contact Debbie Whited. Discussion questions are provided with the video.

—Debbie Whited

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 broken world.

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

Lori Larkin, Board Chair
Mary Reynolds, Secretary
Patti Belmont
Dawn Boschert
Susan Buerkle
Sr. Ginny Jaskiewicz, Sr Advisor
Sr. Barbara Schlatter, Sr Advisor
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Partners on the Journey

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2016 General Chapter

Preparation and Prayer

On the beautiful, crisp Saturday of November 7, many of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood and several Partners in Mission gathered at the Mercy Center for the Sisters' annual Fall Community Day. The day was a continuation of the summer community days of preparation for the 2016 General Chapter to be held on March 30 through April 9 at Pallottine Retreat Center in Florissant.

'There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."
—Margaret Wheatley

In the morning, guest speaker Sr. Mary Dacey, a Sister of St. Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, led those in attendance on a reflection journey using the Emmaus story and asking, "What is the Emmaus journey in your lives and in the life of the congregation?" She further questioned a willingness to claim/reclaim time for silence, contemplation, and listening.

In the afternoon, Sr. Mary used the 2005 Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson as a backdrop, leading to the question of what is needed for conversations pertaining to reclaiming and letting go.

Partners received a letter from Sr. Fran explaining the purposes of the General Chapter: to set direction for the next six years; to provide time for prayer, reflection, and discernment; and to elect new congregational leadership. The mailing also included a list of delegates, participants, and pray-ers. Eleven Partners signed up to be participants, and twelve Partners signed up to be pray-ers.

Please continue to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as the Sisters continue to plan for their 2016 General Chapter.

—Debbie Whited

Conversation is the natural way we humans think together.
Ask "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?" Keep asking.
Notice what you care about.
Assume that many others share your dreams.
Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.
Talk to people you know.
Talk to people you don't know.
Talk to people you never talk to.
Be intrigued by the differences you hear.
Expect to be surprised.
Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something
Know that creative solutions come from new connections.
Remember, you don't fear people whose story you know.
Real listening always brings people closer together.
Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.
Stay together.
—Margaret Wheatley

Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future
By Margaret J. Wheatley, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.; February 2009