

On The Journey

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood



FALL/WINTER 2020



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Cover photo: A butterfly lands on Sr. Estelle Sullentrup during a trip outside at Abbey Senior Health
When asked 'What has been the gift of COVID-19?' Sr. Estelle Sullentrup responded: People growing in an awareness and compassion for the injustices in our day. It has strengthened family life, and helped some realize that less is better than more and be grateful. A need for God.
Photo by Lynn Geiser.

Editor: Leah Wand
Designer: Debbie Groesch, Groesch Graphics,
314-304-1876
dgroesch@sbcglobal.net

Contact Information:
Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon
Leah Wand, Mission Advancement Director
204 North Main Street
O'Fallon, MO 63366-2299
636-240-6010
lwand@cppsadmin-ofallon.org

For more information about the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood and their mission, please visit www.cpps-ofallon.org.

Dear Friends,

Life is changed, not taken away.

(Preface of the Mass for the Dead)

Life most definitely changed across the entire world in 2020. But, the cover photo of this magazine serves as a reminder that life is not taken away.



- ◆ We see Sister Estelle who despite being in quarantine at Abbey Senior Health for most of this year, remains generous, gracious and grateful.
- ◆ We see a butterfly that came into existence only because a caterpillar let go of the life it knew to enter the unknown world of a cocoon and be transformed to a butterfly.
- ◆ We see the autumn leaves that let go of their source of life and sustenance to return to the earth and nourish the new life that will come forth in the Spring.

Undoubtedly, 2020 has been a challenging year for everyone. It seems the darkness of the cocoon and the dying of leaves have been far more prevalent than butterflies and new growth. Yet, we pray that all the “letting go” asked of us this year will lead to new life. If we look with eyes of hope and gratitude, we may find gifts amid the pain and loss.

2020 is the 175th anniversary of our foundation as a community. While we postponed most of our planned celebrations, we remained focused on the theme of this year – All Is Gift. In this issue of *On the Journey* you will read of some of the gifts we have received.

In recognizing the gifts, we do not deny the pain. In the words of Sister Estelle, one of the gifts of this time is “awareness and compassion for the injustices in our day” (inside front cover). And, as one of our co-workers said to me recently, “Gratitude helps us to see what is there instead of what isn’t.”

Our prayer for each of you is that you will be able to find the gifts hidden in the challenges and distress you may be facing because of the pandemic. May we allow the experiences of this time to bring us closer to God and to the entire human family. Let us remember that life is changed, not taken away.

With hope and trust in God’s goodness,

Sr. Janice

Sr. Janice Bader
Superior General

Making Your Presence a Gift to Others

by Audrey Jungermann, Director of Partners in Mission

This Spring, when schools began to close and businesses began considering how—or if—they could remain in operation, I think many of us hoped that in a month or so we'd be back to normal. That, of course, was not the case.

We have all been affected by this pandemic; some in small ways, and others in not so small ways. What continues to rise to the top, however, are the ways in which people have found to continue their work, educate their children, and remain “social” at a safe distance.



CPPS Partners in Mission’s Direction Statement for 2020-2021 is, “Make your presence a gift to others.” This describes so well what Partners have been doing all along. During a time of shutdowns and restrictions, Partners discovered new ways of reaching out. The power of prayer took on new importance also - whether in the form of weekly “Prayer Moment” intentions, or in a member of the Spirituality Committee calling to pray with someone over the phone. Partners regularly sent note cards to Sisters and fellow Partners just to let them know they are remembered and loved. When Small Faith Communities were prohibited from gathering in person, many stepped out of their comfort zones and learned how to hold meetings by Zoom.

Being at home more allowed some Partners to be more present to help with grandchildren. Others made the best of an otherwise frustrating situation and developed patience in the face of events they could not control.

We have all been blessed with unique gifts, talents, and abilities. We all have the capacity to love and to share our love with others. We can all make a gift of our presence.

The pathway to becoming a Partner in Mission begins with a period of exploration where candidates learn the history and charism of the Precious Blood Sisters and the ways in which Partners carry on that legacy. Within Small Faith Communities, Partners support each other spiritually and encourage involvement in various ministries. If you would like to learn more about Partners in Mission, please contact Audrey Jungermann at 636-542-9479 or ajungermann@cppsadmin-ofallon.org, for more information.

A Conversation

with Sr. Joanne Reuter, CPPS



What was it like to be an essential worker and have to work during the lock down? Our administrator at Regina Cleri gave us his business card to show to law enforcement officers if we ever got stopped on our way to work. I felt I was just doing my job to the best we could under the circumstances. I didn't feel like I was doing anything special.

Tell us about your experience contracting COVID-19: The fact that I contracted the virus was a complete surprise; it sneaked up on me. Priests and employees at Regina Cleri started having symptoms and trips to urgent care were scheduled. We found that some tested positive. We then started quarantining the priests in their suites. We checked temperatures and oxygen levels several times a day.

Then after days of work I was advised to go to urgent care and later received word that I tested positive. I was quarantined for three weeks and was grateful my symptoms of fatigue and shortness of breath weren't more severe. It was a "new learning experience" and has helped me empathize with others who contract the virus.

What was your biggest struggle? Being confined to home was a struggle; not being able to be with others except by phone or email, or when items were left by the door. I missed daily Mass, but did have more time for prayer, reading and sleep.

What was the gift of this experience? Contracting the virus was a gift. The generosity of my sister, parish friends and community members was such a blessing and meant so much to me; as well as the quiet time for prayer and reflection. These gifts made the 'quarantine' more tolerable. I found participating in daily liturgy and other spiritual programs on the computer was truly a gift as were encouraging calls from our Sisters in community and Partners in Mission.

Sr. Joanne Reuter recently retired after working as a Nurse at Regina Cleri in St. Louis, MO, for 18 years.



“What has been the ‘Gift’ of COVID-19?”

Keeping with the “All is Gift” theme from our 175th Anniversary year, Sisters were asked, “What has been the “Gift” of COVID-19?”

Here are their responses:



Sr. Marcella Scego: I was blessed because I didn't feel bad and was able to visit by telephone. I liked being with the other resident with whom I was isolated. We are privileged to have mass and prayer, like the rosary and E.W.T.N. I feel like I am traveling by TV to Rome, Lourdes, etc. We are very blessed.



Sr. Geraldine Vogel: One thing that gives me a joy is to look out the window and admire the beautiful clouds with the sun shining brightly or the full moon on some nights.



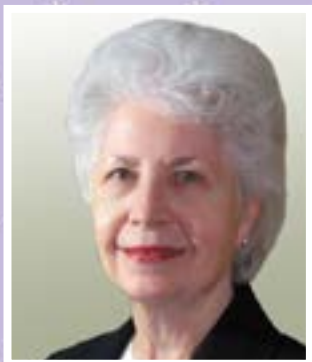
Sr. Suzanne Besancenez: I think one positive thing that has come to me is appreciation of the grounds here in O'Fallon. I have watched the winter trees fill with leaves; now they are losing them again. I have enjoyed beautiful sunrises and sunsets and one rainbow that took my breath away.



Sr. Mary Vénard LeBeau: The Gift that I have found is the easy access to daily Holy Mass coming online. This made attending Mass from home possible.



Sr. Joyce Schramm: During this time of isolation, there have been so many times when we have made contact by phone, just to check in with friends, family, Sisters and Partners. I have had really meaningful conversations with Sisters that I have always liked, but have never taken the opportunity to go any deeper than “Hello, how are you?”



Sr. Mary Beth Kemper: The gift I received since the pandemic takeover is more time to appreciate nature. I raised plants from seeds and cuttings that I never tried before. Everything wants to live and grow!



Sr. Toni Temporiti: One of the positive things that has come out of this COVID-19 pandemic is the gift of time – time to go deeper – deeper into what was and what will be – especially in regard to community, family, and the world.



Sr. Mary Cecile Gunelson: The positive during this period of being secluded and semi-quarantined has been a special gift of time: time to walk, read, reflect and pray, an extended retreat. I have also had more time to tune into the events of our world and be sensitized to the plight of those who are less fortunate than I.



Sr. Julia Marie Wolf: During this time of COVID-19 I feel much closer to Jesus, Mary and the Heavenly and Earth Angels. In the beginning with the extra time I felt like I was on an extended retreat, such a blessing! Trying to reach out to others without physically seeing them is an extension of this closeness to Jesus, Mary and the Angels.

*We Remember... We Celebrate...
We Believe...*



Sister Mary William Pezold
February 17, 1928 -
March 16, 2020



Sister Janet Dohr
October 23, 1945 -
April 6, 2020



Sister Mary Brendan Block
July 28, 1918 -
May 3, 2020



Sister Sharon King
October 14, 1940 -
May 7, 2020



Sister Jean Rachel Brown
January 21, 1937 -
May 26, 2020



Sister Audrey Hemsath
November 4, 1935 -
June 3, 2020



Sister Rosemary Russell
December 9, 1939 -
July 31, 2020



Sister Marie Frances Wiederholt
August 26, 1927 -
September 11, 2020

God Provides During the Pandemic at St. Anthony Food Pantry

by Sr. Marie Orf



Our pantry has adapted very well during COVID-19 with God's help, lots of prayer, and friends who were there for us. In March, a doctor friend who came periodically to volunteer at the pantry, brought masks to us and encouraged us to wear them. God was always there, and others, looking out for us.

By the end of March, we started social distancing as the clients waited to come into the pantry. We put strips of tape 6 feet apart on the sidewalk. Inside the pantry, we changed our procedures and put 'yellow caution tape' at each station where the clients needed to go. We would say to them, "We want to keep you safe and we also want to be safe!" All the clients were so cooperative. They knew why we had to change some of our procedures. Some of them had already lost loved ones due to the virus.

All clients must wait outside before entering the pantry to register and receive their food. A volunteer is outside with the clients and allows one client to come in as another client leaves. We plan to continue this procedure for the coming months. It does take a little longer, but we all feel very comfortable serving the clients in this way. If we need to stay a little longer, it is a small price to pay to keep everyone safe.

Most of our volunteers were high risk so they stopped coming in March, but God blessed us by sending 3 new Ignatian Volunteer Corps volunteers. When the pandemic started, some of the other IVC volunteers could not go to their regular place of ministry because their site was closed. The IVC volunteers who were working with us told them about the pantry and told them that we were staying open.

Every year in October, we have classes for our families who wish to be adopted for Christmas. We want to give our families classes that will help them with their parenting and self-awareness skills. Since we can't have the classes indoors, we are having them on the parking lot. Again, God came through for us with beautiful weather these past few weeks.

We have received great amounts of food from the St. Louis Area Food Bank and Operation Food Search. We are able to give our families more food than ever before. As we have always said at the pantry, "God loves His poor!" God has made it possible for us to continue to feed our poor and give them the other services they so desperately need during this pandemic.

Until We Can Gather Again

- ◆ We were disappointed that we couldn't cheer on the Cardinals at our Annual Night at Busch Stadium.
- ◆ We were saddened to have to postpone our 175th Celebration on September 6, 2020.
- ◆ We wish we could get together with our Alumnae to celebrate the Feast of St. Elizabeth and visit with old friends.

We look forward to when we can celebrate together again. Until then know that you are in our thoughts and prayers.



Thank @ You

Thank you to all the HEROES who show up day after day, especially the ones caring for our Sisters.

Your kindness is greatly appreciated!

With Gratitude

We are very grateful to all our donors for their support in the 2019 -2020 fiscal year. Your kindness is greatly appreciated. The Sisters are able to continue their great work because of your generosity. Thank you!

Mission Advancement Office Statement of Accountability



- 73%** **Bequest**
- 9%** **South American Missions**
- 12%** **Individual Donations**
- 6%** **Retirement**
- 0%** **Annual Events**



- 14%** **Administration**
- 9%** **South American Missions**
- 6%** **Retirement Needs**
- 0%** **Annual Events**
- 71%** **Invested for Future Needs**

Income

Bequest	\$594,745.60
South American Missions	\$70,504.88
Individual Donations	\$98,108.12
Retirement	\$47,694.26
Annual Events	\$3,455.00
Total	\$814,507.86

Expenses

Administration	\$113,533.69
South American Missions	\$70,504.88
Retirement Needs	\$47,694.26
Annual Events	\$3,084.28
Invested for Future Needs	\$579,690.75
Total	\$814,507.86

*All scheduled events were cancelled due to COVID-19, therefore income and expenses relating to them were less than half a percent.



Sisters of the Most Precious Blood

204 North Main St.
O'Fallon, MO 63366-2299

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Join us in praying . . .

Lord we come to you with open hands and tired hearts asking you to:
Comfort us when we cannot console the sick and grieving.
Give words to our prayer when we have none.
And help us to find the path through this trying time.

What would you have us learn?

- ◆ To let go of what we cannot control
- ◆ To cherish the present moment and the present grace
- ◆ To listen to the silence and hear your love

Help us to learn, help us to wait, help us to love.

by Sr. Ellen Orf, CPPS