Assembly Day on September 12, 2021, was a significant event. It was the first in-person assembly we have had since 2019. It celebrated an awareness of our future path with the introduction of the Partners in Mission Direction Statement: *With a steadfast faith in God, we travel together into the next chapter of our story by listening, sharing, and embracing our transformation.*

The day’s theme of “Embracing our Transformation”, a report by the Sustainability Committee, and talks by Partner in Mission Mary Reynolds and Sr. Carol Orf each gave substance to the spirit of the Direction Statement.

Mary Reynolds presented a challenge of Mother Teresa’s to see ourselves as instruments of God’s work. Sr. Carol Orf reminded us that the commitments we make as Partners in Mission are really commitments to God.

Each person received an origami butterfly as a reminder of their beauty as one of God’s creations and Leaders were given a candle with the Direction Statement for their Small Faith Community.

The day itself would not have been possible, however, if not for Sr. Janice Bader who managed technology, Denis Wilhelm who on short notice stepped in to emcee, Carol Oldendorf who worked to set up the hall and represent the Sustainability Committee, and Jean Douglas and Jeanne Palombo who pitched in where needed to make the day go smoothly. My sincere thanks to each of them!

Thank you also to everyone who came. The day demonstrated what is possible when Partners in Mission are on the task! An unofficial count is that 57 Partners and Sisters were present in person and eight Partners attended by Zoom.

-Audrey Jungermann

The Books of Our Life

If you have not yet had a chance to see the collective handiwork of CPPS Sisters and Partners in Mission as *The Book of Our Life*, it will be worth your while to do so. The books are beautiful. One contains submissions by Sisters and the other by Partners. Right now, there are two volumes to each “Book”, which represent the past and present of Precious Blood Sisters and Partners. Very soon, a third volume containing reflections on our future will be completed.

The outside covers were artfully designed by Sr. Mary Beth Kemper and skillfully custom-fit in linen by Sr. Mary Cecile Gunelson. Inside are contributions from Partners and Sisters in response to reflection questions presented by the 2022 Chapter Steering Committee. Submissions take the form of inspirational prose, artwork, poetry, and collages—and are stunning. What a wonderful representation of who we all are!

The books have been displayed at Community Days and at Partners’ Assembly Day, but unfortunately, not everyone has been able to attend these events. Hopefully, as gatherings continue to open back up, everyone will have a chance to see them soon.

-Audrey Jungermann
Every year, the Wisdom Circle Small Faith Community plans a pilgrimage to a place that enhances our spirituality.

Our partner and host, Sr. Rosemary Oellermann, lives in Perryville, Missouri, a little more than an hour south of St. Louis. In the past, Sr. Rosemary has shown us the charms of the National Shrine of the Miraculous Medal in Perryville, which is based upon St. Catherine Laboure’s visions of Mary.

We have visited and toured the Florentine-style Assumption Church, seen the Vincentian Seminary, and enjoyed the gift shop of religious articles. We have walked the outdoor Rosary and prayed at the outdoor shrine to Mary.

On our most recent visit to the Shrine, we made a special plan to experience the “Marian Meditation Walk” which is also outdoors. Being one with nature always opens the mind, and during this time of COVID, we felt it was also a good idea to gather outside.

At long last, the vision of Sr. Mary Cecile, the CPPS Heritage Committee, and Partners in Mission has finally come to life...beautifully!

The Heritage Hallway behind St. Joseph Chapel now displays the proud history of Partners in Mission on the wall facing the Sisters’ history from their founding to the present day.

A few finishing touches are still being added to the Partners’ display, but very soon everything will be complete.

The beauty of Sr. Cecile’s design allows for changes to be made at any time. New Small Faith Communities may be added and members may be moved from one group to another as needed. We have complete flexibility to keep the display up-to-date. The memorial plaque for our deceased Partners will always be part of the display, as well.

I hope you have a chance to see this lovely chronicle of Partners in Mission history very soon!

-Audrey Jungermann

At the “Marian Meditation Walk”, we were greeted by the statue of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. Hand carved marble statues by Italian artisans depict 12 images of our Blessed Mother from various countries and historical times. We enjoyed the beautiful, larger-than-life portrayals of our Blessed Mother in the circle and followed the maze-like walk to its center. It was truly awesome!

Sharon Stockmann

Wisdom Circle SFC: Sr. Fran Raia, Sr. Rosemary Oellermann, Carol Jung, Sherry Smith, Maureen McGrath, Sharon Stockmann at the Our Lady Seat of Wisdom statue
Hello! My name is Sister Helene Rueffer. I have been a professed Precious Blood Sister for 62 years. The Precious Blood Sisters taught me both at St. George Grade School and Bishop DuBourg High School. I was impressed by my high school teachers, especially by their peacefulness and enthusiasm for life. I especially remember Sister Beatrice Marie, Sister Gervase, and Sister Mary DeChantal, to name just a few. And so, I entered the convent right after graduating from high school in August of 1956 to “try out my vocation”. Needless to say, I stayed.

After my time of formation, I was missioned to teach first grade at Holy Innocents Parish and then two years later at Holy Family Parish. Then things changed dramatically for me. I was missioned to South America. After three months of intensive language training, I began to teach at Reyna de Las Americas in Lima, Peru. All subjects were taught in Spanish, except for English class. I was not fluent in Spanish, but with God’s help I survived, and the students learned something.

Living in Lima, Peru and learning about a different culture and language was a gift to me, and it made a big impact on my life. When I returned from Peru, I worked in religious education in parishes, at Regina Cleri Retirement Home for Priests, and in a program for Seniors with Disabilities before retiring in 2018.

I’ve come full circle in my journey because now I volunteer to teach English as a foreign language to immigrants.

-Sr. Helene Rueffer

I was born in Washington, Missouri and I have one sister. I loved the city of Washington and expected to live there my whole life. However, I met Alberta Iffrig, who was a St. Peters, Missouri man. When he and I married, I was happy to move to St. Peters. At that time, the town had a population of approximately 400 people. Mexico Road, which is now a main thoroughfare, was a rock-covered two-lane road! Albert and I lived there together until he died in 2006. We were planning our 50th wedding anniversary at the time. We have three daughters, all of whom attended All Saints Grade School and St. Dominic High School where they were taught by Sisters of the Most Precious Blood. One by one they attended college, married, and moved away from St. Peters.

After my children were all in school, I decided to get a college degree and become a teacher. I first attended St. Mary's College in O'Fallon and graduated from Lindenwood College in St. Charles. I taught at All Saints Grade School for more than ten years. Going back to school was one of the best things I ever did for myself; I would recommend it to anyone whose circumstances don’t make college possible in the normal timeframe.

In 2008, I joined a spiritual book group with Sister Rose Dobelman, the spiritual leader of the group. She was a great mentor for all of us. As we read and discussed various books, Sister Rose made me think of my Catholic faith in a whole different way. In 2015, Sister Rose suggested that our book group should become part of Partners in Mission. We all joined the Pathways program and became a very close-knit group, helping each other in joyful and sorrowful times. Our Small Faith Community is Saints in the Making.

This past March, a very challenging time for myself and my family occurred when my daughter, Mary, died of cancer. During my sorrow, my group was very supportive. We have prayed together for peace and acceptance. The members of my Partners group are dear friends, and I appreciate sharing our lives together.

-Alberta Iffrig
My journey as a Partner in Mission began in August of 1984—that was the year that I started my freshman year at St. Mary’s Academy. “SMA” was not my first choice of high schools—I wanted to attend Duchesne High School where the majority of my graduating class from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton/St. Robert Bellarmine Regional School were enrolled. My parents, Mom especially, were in favor of an all-girls experience. In retrospect, I am glad that things worked out the way they did. (That is the closest I can get to fully admitting that my mother was right.)

My high school experience first introduced me to the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood and I had no idea that this bond would continue well into my adulthood. I learned much from the sisters during my time at SMA—a lot in the classroom, but a great deal outside of it. During my high school years, I could not have told you what the charism of the order was, but I realize now that I was experiencing it on a daily basis.

I grew as a person in ways that I may not have been able to in another environment. Without the support of Sr. Carol Orf and Sr. Ginny Jaskiewicz (thank you both!), I would not have tried my hand at being on stage, a skill that has served me well in so many other aspects of life. I am still inspired by the enthusiasm with which the late Sr. Elaine Lamm taught Chemistry. I try to bring that same level of passion to my work—I trust that she is watching from heaven. These are just two of many examples of how the sisters impacted my life.

It was painful to experience the closure of SMA—my sister and I were fortunate to be able to count ourselves among its graduates, but my two youngest sisters were not able to benefit from a CPPS education. To this day, it is a strange feeling to drive up to 202 N. Main in O’Fallon and realize it is no longer my alma mater. However, the privilege to serve as a CPPS Partner in Mission allows me to keep my SMA spirit alive in a very unique way. While I enjoyed my years of high school, it is the years of Partnership that have—and will continue to—enrich my life.

-Julie Schlichting

In Loving Memory

Conchita Ongjoco

“Well done, good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your Lord”

-Matthew 25:23

Partner in Mission
from 1991 to 2021

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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