

Partners on the Journey

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood Partners in Mission Newsletter

SPRING 2022



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

Spring



The first sign of the coming of Spring is that the BIG snow of February has melted and the beautiful first flowers are appearing. Birds are returning and starting to build their nests. Plants and trees are growing with bright green leaves. The beautiful colors of life are emerging, fresh and bright. Everyone is feeling new and amazing with the wonderful scents of Spring in the air.

Spring transforms our dormancy into change, growth, and newness. Our perspectives of the day-to-day takes on new life. We have the feeling we can conquer the world. We want to spruce up, get out of the house, meet with our friends, enjoy this fresh new season.

Spring brings us each a new window of opportunity. We are turning the tide from dormancy to life. Each season of life brings its own set of challenges, blessings, and opportunities. Each season of our lives will reveal more about our own character; it will shape us. While we cannot control the seasons of our lives, we *can* control our response to each new season. As we move into the Spring season of our lives, let us learn, grow, and blossom. There is no end to what we can accomplish together!

As we walk in nature these beautiful Spring days, let us take the opportunity to think about our future as Partners; to discern, pray, and begin deciding our future, our sustainability.

I offer this beautiful prayer by Thomas Merton to help us think about our future:

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore, I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

-Carol Oldendorf

WHAT'S INSIDE:

St. Veronica, Patron Saint of Photographers 2

Meet Partner in Mission Joyce Miller 2

Getting to Know Sr. Mary Therese DeMoor 3

Faith Seekers Small Faith Community 3

Remembering Sr. Seraphina Zwissig 4

Important Reminders 4

I'd Love to Hear from You!

If you know someone who is curious about Partners in Mission, please let me know. I will be happy to contact them, answer their questions, and explain what we are all about.

Also, if you have an interesting item for the Newsletter, the Communications Committee is always looking for interesting material. Contact Carol Oldendorf or me with your ideas.

Thank you!
Audrey Jungermann

Bless you, St. Veronica, Patron Saint of Photographers!



Mary Jane with Sr. Gene Marie



Mary Jane with Sr. Renee

So, just how does someone from two thousand years ago become the patron saint of photographers? It is said that St. Veronica used her veil to wipe Jesus' face, and that He showed His gratitude by leaving His image on the veil. According to Wikipedia, this relic is now housed in the Monastery of the Holy Face (Monasterio de la Santa Faz), on the outskirts of Alicante, in Spain, in a chapel built in 1611.

Photographs have the power to stir up very powerful memories. Simply browsing through old pictures can sometimes feel like a sacred ritual. Pictures are often one of the first things people try to save in an emergency. They are treasured pieces of family history, sometimes being the only link a generation has to its past.

As Partner Mary Jane (Wigand) Matejka was going through old photographs recently, she came across a

couple that took her back in time to her years at St. John the Baptist High School. One of the pictures showed her with a beloved teacher, the late Sr. Gene Marie Moellering, who also happens to have been a favorite aunt of Partner Denis Wilhelm. In another, Mary Jane is standing by Sr. Renee Brinker, another dear teacher, who spent over 40 years in Finland and who celebrates her 70th Jubilee this year!

Some day when you have a little time, pull out those old albums and boxes of pictures and see what might be hidden there. You may even feel the presence of St. Veronica as you look through these little windows to the past.

-Mary Jane Matejka and
Audrey Jungermann

Meet Partner in Mission *Joyce Miller*



It is a cold, wintry morning at Villa Theresa as I write and reflect on yesterday's ice and snow. I know the Spring I yearn for is still weeks away, but the approaching

Lenten Season reminds me of the promise of new life and resurrection.

Alleluia!

I moved to Villa Theresa Apartments in April, 2010. The past twelve years have flown by, and have richly blessed my life. At the invitation of several Precious Blood Sisters, I became a Partner In Mission in 2018, and joined the Mustard Seeds Small Faith Community. Our monthly gatherings where we share our lives and

pray together has become my favorite part of being a Partner In Mission. In addition to our monthly gatherings, the Mustard Seeds adopt a family at Christmas and volunteer at the Diaper Bank.

To answer the St. Louis question of, "Where did you go to high school?", I attended Corpus Christi High School in Jennings, Missouri. I grew up in Ferguson, Missouri, with my twin sister, Jean, and my parents. Though I am now retired, I did secretarial work and medical transcription for many years. In my spare time, I enjoy listening to EWTN podcasts and spending time with the Villa Theresa community.

Wishing each of you a joyful and blessed Easter!

-Joyce Miller

After sharing my interest in reaching out to immigrants at the border with Sr. Helene Cooke, she suggested I contact Sr. Mary Rose Obholz, a Sister of St. Agnes who works in Bisbee, Arizona. I was led to commit three months to assisting one of her Sisters, Sr. Susan Kolbe, who is the only immigration lawyer in Cochise County.

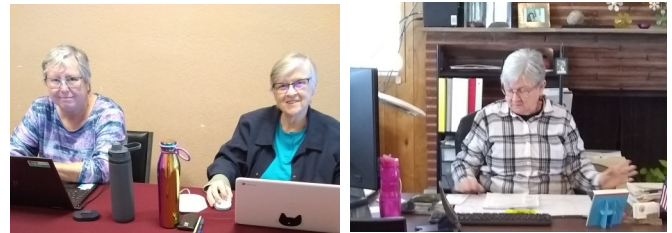
Sr. Susan has worked for many years helping immigrants with their permanent legal residency while assisting others apply for citizenship. I helped in the office with phone calls, preparing clients for their interviews with Immigration Services, translating and filing documents, and whatever else was needed.

As I worked, I began to understand the frustrations of the immigration system and why so many immigrants end up here illegally. Sometimes, even after the most careful work in our office, documents would be rejected by Immigration Services, requiring additional postage to be re-submitted. Other times, one could wait 50 minutes on the phone to speak with an agent in Tucson only to have the call cut off. Since the slowdown of work in the immigration offices due to the pandemic, there are long waits for documents to be processed. And, since applications for entering the country legally must be made from outside the coun-

try, people are waiting years to have their cases heard. One does not wonder why so many who are desperate to escape violence and extreme poverty in their own countries are choosing to enter the U.S. illegally.

I am grateful for the support of the Community and for the opportunity to assist resident immigrants get the legal help they need to remain in the country they now call "home."

-Sr. Mary Therese DeMoor



Sr. Mary Therese (right) working in Bisbee, AZ with Sr. Christi Ann Laudolff.

Immigration Attorney Sr. Susan Kolbe

Faith Seekers SFC - "Where two or more are gathered..."

In September of 2019, the Small Faith Community *Heart to Heart* was formed. Its members were Partners Kathy Flowers, Audrey Jungermann, Kasey Navratil, Mary Ann Zerr, and Mentor Sister Mary Cecile Gunelson. The group, although small in numbers, felt "mighty" in every other respect.

This community bonded during monthly gatherings where members shared of themselves, their everyday joys and trials, and their faith journeys. Not long after being formed, however, the group hit a bump in the road named "COVID". Gatherings were put on hold for several months over the Summer and into the Fall of 2020.

The relatively new bond that had been formed, however, was strong, and the SFC began to meet virtually.

Then, in Spring of 2021, a new opportunity was presented to the group. Another Small Faith Community, *Latecomers*, was in transition and its members were seeking other communities to join. The members of *Heart to Heart* discussed the possibility of welcoming *Latecomers* members who had not yet found a new SFC home. The decision was unanimous to give it a try.

Over the Summer, Chris Shields, Sister Robert Ann Harper, and Sister LaVerne Wester were invited to have lunch with the members of *Heart to Heart*. An immediate sense of connection was felt by everyone

present at that lunch. Once again, a unanimous agreement was reached, and the once-small SFC gained these three members plus Connie McKoskey, who joined as a Prayer & Presence Partner!

One of the first orders of business was to rename the new community with input from everyone; thus, *Faith Seekers* was born.

The expansion of this Small Faith Community goes beyond the mere number of its members. Ministries to the homeless through Sts. Joachim & Ann Care Center and prison correspondence outreach through College United Methodist Church, as well as the level of faith sharing, have been greatly enhanced. *Faith Seekers* find they are greater than the sum of their parts. When the group gathers, there's no denying the presence of the Spirit.

In the midst of what could have been chaos, something beautiful emerged, demonstrating once again that "all is gift."

-Audrey Jungermann



From the Archives—Remembering Sr. Seraphina

Anna Maria Zwissig [Sister Seraphina] was born in Seelisberg, Canton Uri, in 1831. She entered the Community at Steinerberg at the age of 15 on September 11, 1846. She has the distinction of being the only Steinerberg sister to reach O'Fallon.

Sr. Seraphina lived through troublesome times. In Steinerberg she endured poverty and harassment by a hostile government. She grieved as sisters died due to a mysterious disease and watched as Mother Theresa declined in health. When the community was dissolved, she went into exile to Ottmarsheim where the sisters soon learned of Mother Theresa's death.

The community in Ottmarsheim flourished in peace. There, Sr. Seraphina learned the art making figurines and flowers from wax.

In 1857, Sr. Seraphina was among the first sisters to go to Gurtweil.

The community prospered in Gurtweil until hostility arose against the Church and religious orders and they once again prepared for exile. In 1870, the first group of sisters left Gurtweil for America. Sr. Seraphina was among the forty-nine sisters in the fourth group who left in August of 1873.

Here in O'Fallon, Sr. Seraphina continued making wax art. She made all of the figures for a nativity set that was used for years in the convent chapel. She also made wax flowers that parishes bought to decorate altars. She made flowers and wreaths for brides and first communicants and other figures and flowers to sell.

Sr. Seraphina served as portress in Steinerberg and sacristan and portress in Gurtweil, O'Fallon, and at St. Elizabeth Academy. She also held positions of novice mistress and

assistant to Mother Augusta and Mother Armella. She was then known as Mother Seraphina.

It is said that Sr. Seraphina was somewhat short and robust and usually seen with a smile. She was a determined, energetic character.

Sr. Seraphina died at O'Fallon on Easter Monday, April 15, 1898, at the age of 67. She lies buried in our Convent Cemetery, Row 17, Grave #2.

-by Sr. Barbara Payne



Reminders

Assembly Day Cancellation: The Assembly Day tentatively scheduled for May 28 has been cancelled. The next Assembly Day will be in September. Thank you to everyone who responded with input about this event.

Hospitality Month is Here!! This month we once again open our Small Faith Community "doors" to people who might enjoy learning about Partners in Mission. Blessings to all SFCs as they welcome guests to their April gatherings!

Governing Board Nominations: Nominations are being accepted for three seats on the Partners in Mission Governing Board, now through July 31, 2022. Partners may self-nominate or submit another Partner's name for consideration. Nominations should be sent to Denis Wilhelm, Board Formation Chair.

Board members each serve a three-year term, during which they also chair one of five committees. The Board meets at least five times a year: Meetings in February, August, and October, a spiritual retreat in April, and a planning retreat in June. Elections will be held during Assembly Day in September.

Board membership is a unique way to be in ministry to your fellow Partners and the Partners in Mission organization. If you think it might be right for you, feel free to contact either Denis Wilhelm or me. We will be happy to answer any questions you have. Thank you!

-Audrey Jungermann

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.

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

Kris Jackson, Board Chair
 Denis Wilhelm, Vice Chair
 Julie Schlichting, Secretary
 Carol Oldendorf
 Jean Douglas
 Jeanne Palombo
 Sr. Ginny Jaskiewicz, Council Liaison
 Sr. Julia Marie Wolf, Sister Advisor
 Audrey Jungermann, PIM Director

204 North Main St.
 O'Fallon, MO 63366
 636-542-9479

Partners on the Journey Newsletter

Editors: Carol Oldendorf
 Sr. Mary Joan Dyer
 Publisher: Audrey Jungermann