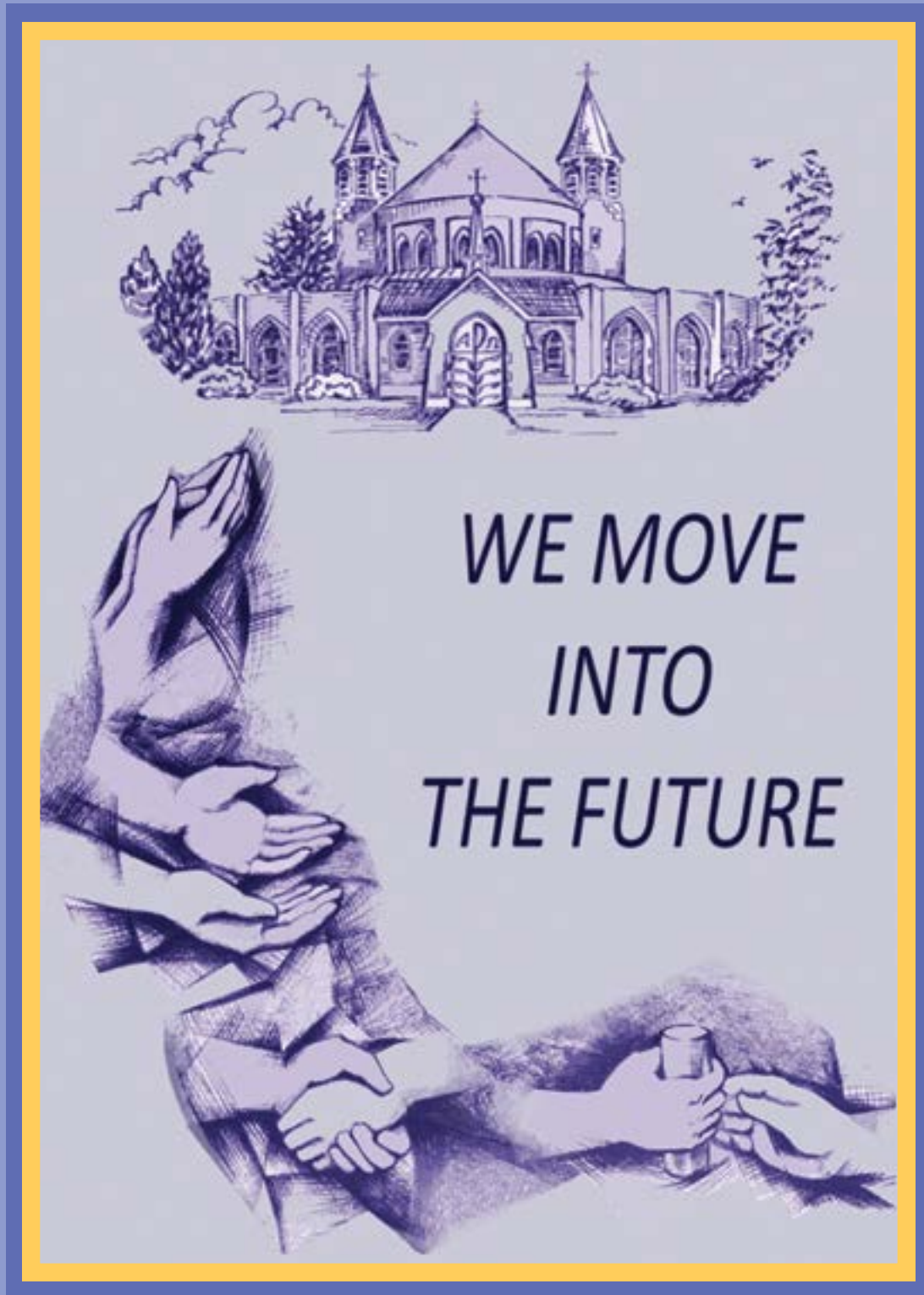


On The Journey

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood



SPRING/SUMMER 2025

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Editor: Leah Boessen, Communications Director
Collaborative Governance

Designer: Debbie Groesch, Groesch Graphics,
314-304-1876

Contact Information:

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon
Leah Boessen

204 North Main Street

O'Fallon, MO 63366-2299

314-768-1650

lboessen@collaborativegovernance.org

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

Cover photo: artwork by Sr. Mary Beth Kemper, CPPS.

Dear Friends,

On Easter Monday, our CPPS community joined the world in mourning the passing of Pope Francis. While we rejoice with him in his new life with God, we feel keenly the loss of his simple, gentle, and merciful presence.

Many beautiful and well-deserved tributes have been written, and Pope Francis' life of unwavering service was fittingly honored at his funeral on April 26. While I have nothing unique to add, I recall the words he said so often, "**Tedos, todos, todos!**" All, all, all are welcome!



On May 8, Cardinal Robert Prevost became Pope Leo XIV. In his first blessing, we heard repeatedly the Italian word, *tutti* (all). He wished peace to all peoples and to all the earth; he reminded us that "God loves you all and we are all in God's hands."

While this is a time of transition for our Church, it is also a time of profound continuity, a continuity rooted in the message of God's all-inclusive love.

For our Precious Blood community also, this is a time of both transition and continuity. On June 30, 2025, Sisters Susan Borgel, Marie Fennwald, and I will complete our term in community leadership. Ours is the last leadership team to be elected by our sisters. Primarily because of our sisters' ages, our next leader has been appointed by the Dicastery for Consecrated Life in Rome. Sister Barbara Jean Franklin, ASC, who has been ministering with us for the past three years, will become our leader effective July 1, 2025.

Just as the new leader of our Church does not change the essence of our Church, this change in leadership does not change the essence of our community. Sister Barbara Jean, along with our dedicated and competent lay staff, will continue to provide for the well-being of our sisters. Our sisters will continue to be present here in O'Fallon and in other missions where we serve. We will continue our mission to be a sign of Christ's loving, redeeming presence in our world.

We are deeply grateful for each of you who are companions with us on our journey — **todos, todos, todos — tutti, tutti, tutti!** We look forward to continuing the journey with you. In the words of Pope Leo XIV, "Without fear united hand in hand with God and each other — let us go forward. We are disciples of Christ. Christ goes before us."

Gratefully,

Sr. Janice Bader
Superior General

Congratulations

Congratulations to Sr. Barbara Jean Franklin, ASC, on being appointed the new leader for the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood. An appointed leader, known as a commissary, is named when a religious order no longer has members to serve in leadership but wants to continue living according to its own history, identity, and legacy. The Sisters are deeply grateful to Sr. Barbara Jean for her willingness to serve in this capacity, and they look forward to continuing their mission with her guidance and support.



Did you know that Sr. Pat Knobbe was instrumental in helping to restore her grandparents' house in Florissant, MO? The Historic Bockrath-Wiese House is located in St. Ferdinand Park. The farmhouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. "Your dedication, hard work, and unwavering support have brought new life to one of our community's most cherished landmarks, and we are truly grateful for your efforts." wrote the mayor of Florissant, Timothy J. Lowery.

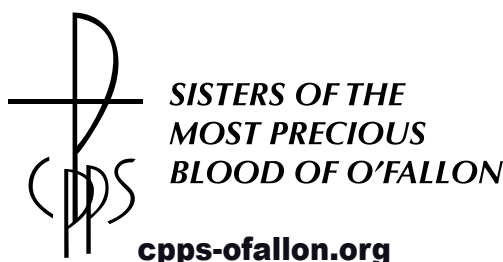


Sr. Pat's grandmother Mrs. Adelaide Weise stirring apple butter in the yard behind her home.

Legacy & Mission

The Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, through hard work, generosity of donors, and prudent investments are blessed to have adequate funds for the care of the Sisters as well as support of ministries. Throughout their younger years, the Sisters devoted their time and energies to active ministry. Now they continue to support those ministries with prayer, volunteer service, and financial support.

The Sisters of the Most Precious Blood are partnering with two catholic organizations to steward their gifts to nonprofit organizations, projects, and programming that give ongoing expression to their values of presence, hospitality, and response to human needs, as well as to their charism of reconciliation.



The Sisters of the
Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon
Legacy Fund
at the Incarnate Word Foundation
Supporting Catholic Education,
Spirituality & Reconciliation

iwfdn.org



The Sisters of the
Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon
Mission Fund
at the Marillac Mission Fund (MMF)
Supporting MMF Focus Areas
with an emphasis on Immigrants

marillacmissionfund.org

Learn more or apply for a grant at the websites listed above.

Congratulations to our 2025 Jubilarians!

75th



Sr. Alice Falk

70th



Sr. Joan Oberle

60th



Sr. Carol Boschert



Sr. Mary Beth Kemper



Sr. Ellen Orf

25th



***Sr. María Luz Mejía
Vásquez***

Jubilarians answer the question: What was one of your favorite Ministries?

Sr. Alice Falk

While I was inspired and enriched in all the ministries I engaged in, the one that stands out is my ministry to those who showed an interest in joining the Catholic Church. These RCIA participants were eager to learn and develop a closer relationship with all three persons of the Blessed Trinity and also to become active disciples. For some this meant successfully encouraging others to seek membership in our Church. For others it meant they were intentional in making their love of God genuine in their personal relationships with other human beings.

Sr. Joan Oberle

I have always felt CALLED to all my ministries in all areas; In my CALL to Education (35 years); my CALL to Mission Work in the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska: Parish Administration (12 years) and the Chancery Tribunal Office (20 years); and my present CALL in my ministry of retirement in my community as I prepare for my final CALL. I consider all as enriching Ministry Favorites as each was a CALL, which I appreciated, to what Jesus wanted me to do for God while on earth... to Be Christ's Continuing Presence in the World... following God's Guide as best I could and benefiting by following it with Trust... even if I didn't always understand it right away.

Sr. Carol Boschert

My favorite ministry was the 9 years I spent on the Texas/Mexico border running a clinic as a Physician Assistant. The clinic was about 100 miles from the hospital. A doctor flew down once a week to assist with patients I had questions about. It was a wonderful experience and if I had the health and energy that I had then, I'd do it all again.

Sr. Mary Beth Kemper

Teaching ceramics was one of my favorite ministries. Usually, the students had no prior experience with clay, so the class was a new, creative and usually relaxing experience for them.

Sr. Ellen Orf

St. Mary's Parish in Milan and St. Mary's in Unionville in Northeast Missouri where there wasn't a resident priest, and the diocesan center and many of its services was at a distance was one of my favorite ministries. Despite a history of anti-Catholic sentiment, and the challenges of a changing balance of long-time parishioners and new immigrants, I experienced opportunities to be a reconciling presence. To be a bridge for our sacramental minister, for the different groups in the community and with members of the ministerial alliance was for me a time of blessing.

Sr. María Luz Mejía Vásquez

One of my favorite ministries has been working with children at the Madre de Dios Shelter in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Caring for these children with all the love of a mother made me realize how much love I have received from my mother. Supporting these children's education, taking them to the doctor when a child was sick, listening to their sad stories, and accompanying them in their healing process has been a privilege for me to be a messenger of Reconciliation with these little ones.

St. Agatha



St. Agatha Parish, St. Louis 1873.

In 1872, the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood were welcomed into the newly formed parish of St. Agatha by the pastor Rev. Herman Leygraaf and his parishioners. In September of that year, the Sisters began teaching in the parish school and continued to do so for 100 years until the closing of the school in 1972. The construction of highways had removed homes and families from within the boundaries of the parish and contributed greatly to the school's closing.

The Sisters, however, wished to remain present in the parish in some way, since it was their first home in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Four Sisters came to live in the convent which was now mainly used to serve as a house of prayer. They were also asked to conduct a census of the parish to learn who was still living within its boundaries and what were the present needs of the people.

Not long after, homeless people in the area began ringing the doorbell asking for something to

eat. Preparing soup and sandwiches became part of the activity of the house of prayer. Gradually feeding the homeless evolved into St. Agatha Food Pantry and Center where persons within the parish boundaries could come to receive assistance for food, utilities, gas vouchers, bus tickets, etc. They could also find a listening ear in persons who prayed with and for them.

As of May 19, 2025, the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood will no longer be living and working at St. Agatha Convent and Parish. As the final Sisters leave, they are conscious of the many blessings they personally have received, as well as all our Sisters who have served here.

The Sisters of the Most Precious Blood want to thank all of the parishioners, both from the Polish speaking community as well as the English speaking community for all of the ways they have supported them both materially and spiritually and will treasure the friendships they have made over the years.

“At the heart of any healthy spirituality is gratitude. When I think back to my experiences working with the Sisters in parish ministry, “thank you” seems hardly adequate and entirely appropriate. Giving, without counting the cost, is probably the most courageous example of faith I know. Thank you Reverend Sisters. Thank you and may God reward your every prayer, every work, and act of mercy.”

– taken from a letter to his parishioners by Fr. Stanisław Poszwa (April 2025)

1. Convent at St. Agatha.

2. Sr. Mary Agnes Lyons and Sr. Loretta Marie Greifzu outside the Food Pantry.

3. Sisters at the House of Prayer: Sisters Anna Marie Flowers, Sylvester Wagner, Lorraine Crimmins, Corona Striegel, Theodosia Boehringer, and Helen Ann Schneider.



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4. Sisters Marjorie Cordes, Clare Ann Litteken, and Joan Klaas.

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



Sr. Mary George Hellmann
August 16, 1927 -
November 17, 2024

Entered: 1945
Professed Vows: 1947

After serving in the art department for several years, Sr. Mary George was asked to assist at the archbishop's residence in St. Louis. In addition to the archbishop's residence, she served in Missouri at the motherhouse and infirmary kitchens in O'Fallon; St. Elizabeth Academy, St. Louis; St. Vincent, Dutzow; St. John the Baptist, Gildehaus; and St. Sabina, Florissant. She also served at St. Mary's in Quincy, IL, and at St. Catherine's in Redwood Falls, MN.

Sr. Mary George was innocent, unpretentious, precise and deliberate in all that she did. Though quiet, and seemingly timid, she was never at a loss for words; a visit with her was seldom short. She was always eager to know about others, and she was faithful in sending cards and letters.



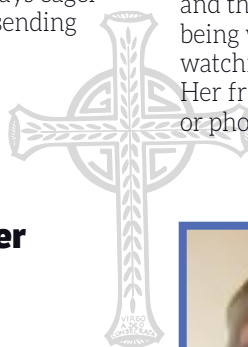
Sr. LaVerne Wester
April 30, 1931 -
January 23, 2025

Entered: 1949
Professed Vows: 1951

For thirty-nine years, Sr. LaVerne (John Leonard) was a dedicated teacher and principal at Holy Innocents, Holy Family, St. Stephen in St. Louis and at St. Joseph in Omaha.

She went on to serve as principal at Sacred Heart in Florissant, the largest Catholic school in the Archdiocese of St. Louis at that time, and then at Assumption in O'Fallon. Retirement from education marked the beginning of another thirty years of ministry to elders, the sick, and the poor ministering at St. Elizabeth Adult Day Care Center, the motherhouse, Mercy Hospital, and Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service.

Sr. LaVerne's life was all about relationships – relationships with community, family, friends, students and their parents, faculty, and coworkers. She loved being with friends whether it was while playing cards, watching a Cardinals' baseball game or having lunch. Her friends were delighted with her handwritten notes or phone calls for "special occasions" and for "no reason."



Sr. Mary Harper
July 26, 1938 -
February 4, 2025

Entered: 1957
Professed Vows: 1959

Sr. Mary was a much-loved teacher at Most Sacred Heart, Florissant; teacher/principal at St. Stephen Protomartyr, St. Louis; and Assumption, O'Fallon. She served as principal at St. Paul in Fenton, St. George; St. Monica in St. Louis; and at St. Sabina in Florissant. After retiring from education, Sr. Mary continued to share her talents in varied ways. She served as a driver and local coordinator for the retirement community at the motherhouse. She ministered as manager of St. Elizabeth Adult Day Care Center, Maplewood; coordinator of the Sisters of Mercy retirement home and served the poor and needy at Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service.

Sr. Mary continued to appreciate those whom she served, as evidenced by her saving letters they wrote to her. These letters from former students, teachers, pastors, and others affirm the excellence, respect, and loving care with which she ministered.



Sister Mary Vénard LeBeau
February 22, 1923 -
March 10, 2025

Entered: 1942
Professed Vows: 1944

Sr. Mary Vénard taught for five years at St. George School in St. Louis before being missioned to Finland. Sr. Mary Vénard taught preschool and elementary grades at The English Schools in Helsinki and Tampere, serving as the principal in Helsinki. She served twenty years in Estonia teaching in Tallin and in Tartu. Later she worked in development for the schools in Tallin and Tartu, and for organizations caring for the handicapped, the blind, the sick and the elderly. She returned to Finland in 2015 and began ministering to African refugees.

Small of stature but mighty in deeds, Sr. Mary Vénard was recognized for her dedication by the Rotary Club of Denver, the Ebenezer Foundation of Finland, the President of Estonia with the Pro Terra Mariana Medal of Honor, and Pope Benedict XVI with the Pont. Maximus Award, the Church's highest lay honor. We are confident that her spirit lives on in the thousands of children and adults whose gifts she nurtured.



Partners In Mission

**Are you looking for more meaning in your life?
Do you want to deepen your spiritual life?
Come explore Partners in Mission!**

Partners in Mission is a faith-filled community of women and men dedicated to being a reconciling presence by offering compassion and support to one another and to those they encounter in their daily lives. As a lay associate group, they are dedicated to carrying on the legacy of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood.

Every Partner belongs to one of several Small Faith Communities. These small groups, each with their own individual personality, are the core and the strength of Partners in Mission. The road to becoming a Partner in Mission begins with a conversation. Candidates then attend five "Pathways" classes. During this period of exploration, candidates become part of a Small Faith Community, learn about Partners in Mission and the Sisters' history, charism, and former ministries. They also discover something about themselves and where they are on their personal faith journey. After completing Pathways, candidates discern whether to make a one-year commitment to become a Partner.

Anyone interested in learning more about Partners in Mission is encouraged to contact Director, Laurie Strickland at PartnersInMission1875@gmail.com or call 314-938-2478.



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Picture 1: Peace Seekers (Small Faith Community) serving at St. Anthony's Food Pantry 2025.

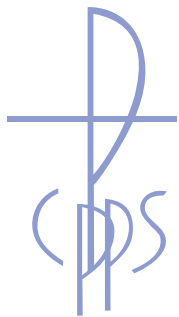
Picture 2: (Left to right) Mary Sue Sutton, Laurie Strickland, Joyce Kluge - new Partners in 2024.

Picture 3: Darlene Scaglione (left) and volunteer - St. Agatha's Christmas Party 2024.

Picture 4: Patti Belmont, (center) and volunteers at St. Agatha's Christmas party 2024.



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Sisters of the Most Precious Blood

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an immigrant
I was a ~~stranger~~
and you welcomed me.
Jesus
Matt. 25:35

Lord, help us to pledge our
allegiance to your love and the
gospel. Call us to reach out to
others so that we may truly be
one nation united in care for
one another as persons. Stir us
to support everyone: the poor,
the homeless, immigrants, and
those who thirst for liberty and
justice for all.

Amen