



C I N C I N N A T I

C.P.P.S.

June 2009  
Number 530

N E W S L E T T E R

*In Christ, through the  
shedding of his blood,  
we have redemption and  
forgiveness of our sins.*

*Ephesians 1:7a*

## Walkers "Blown Away" by Witness

### Annual Vocation Pilgrimage Draws All Ages

*Ken Schnipke, C.P.P.S.*

"God is good—all the time. All the time—God is good." So began the sixth annual *Stepping up the Call—A Pilgrimage for Vocations* on Saturday, May 9, 2009. The pilgrimage uses prayer, sacrifice and walking to increase awareness of vocations to the single and married life, as priest, deacon, sister and brother, and to hear from young people discerning the call to priesthood and the religious life.

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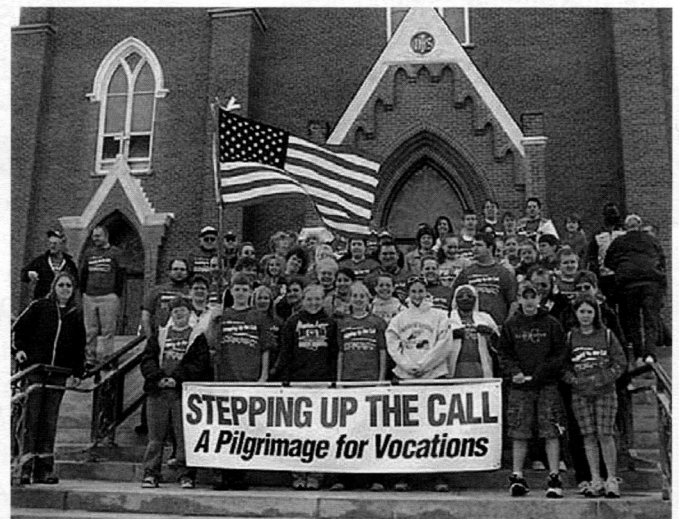
**Page 81:** *Pre-Registration Underway for PBLC Convocation.* The Precious Blood family will gather in St. Louis in 2010. Have you sent in your registration yet?

**Page 92:** *News from Home.* News items about the C.P.P.S., past and present.

"It was an excellent, excellent day!" said Benjamin Darnell with the office of youth ministries for Precious Blood Church, Dayton, who brought several teens to pilgrimage. "I'm blown away by the vocation witness talks. What a beautiful pilgrimage, wow. We'll be back next year for sure."

The day began at St. Augustine Church in Minster with Fr. Rick Nieberding, C.P.P.S., welcoming the largest group of pilgrims to date and calling us to prayer. Peggy Bensman reflected on her call to the single life challenging myths that the single life is lonely, absent of children and selfish. To the contrary she has been blessed with family and friends, nieces and nephews and a fulfilling life marked by service.

Nick and Gretchen Rentz marveled at the goodness of God in their lives, even when



**Pilgrims walking in support of vocations gather for a group photo on the steps of St. Augustine Church in Minster, Ohio on a windy Saturday morning in May.** (Photo by Br. Jerry Schulte, C.P.P.S.)

they had strayed, and were amazed by the power of the sacrament of marriage on their wedding day. "We learned the difference God can make in life. It's not just the two of us, but God also."

Carrying a *Stepping Up the Call* banner and American flag commemorating the National Day of Prayer held earlier in the week, the walkers set out on the 3.6 mile journey to St. Joseph Church in Egypt, Ohio. The wind was brisk and cool, but the spirit and perseverance (Continued on page 87)

# Walkers "Blown Away"

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of the walkers was stronger. The driving pilgrims made their way to Holy Angels Church in Sidney where Fr. Jason Bedel shared his call to the priesthood.

At St. Joseph we heard from men and women discerning the priesthood and religious life. David Doseck, a seminarian with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, emphasized the importance of prayer and being open to the spirit. Maggie Hagenauer, discerning religious life with the Sisters of the Precious Blood, spoke of friends. Some have been supportive and others think she's crazy. For her it is most important to be herself and know the importance of faith.

Another speaker, James Smith, was recently accepted into initial formation with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. He identified to the big "V" vocation, the universal call to holiness and intimacy with God that we all share, and the small "v" vocation to our particular way of life.

Sr. Mumbi Kigutha with the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood mused on how a young girl from Kenya ended up in a small church in Egypt, Ohio. She always found it hard to imagine herself a nun. She is an extreme extrovert and nuns seem so quiet. Yet she has found a place that fits well with her. "It's not *Sister Act*," she said, "it's better!"

The next leg of the journey was a 4.4 mile trek for the walkers to Maria Stein Relic Shrine and two additional

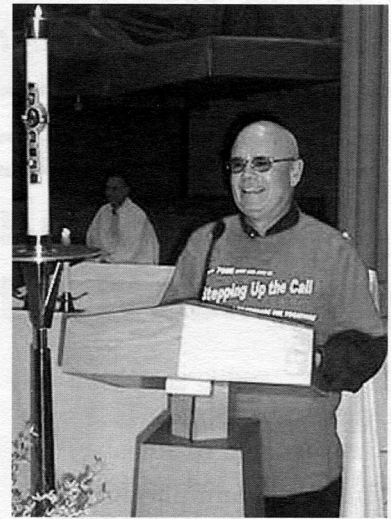
stops for those driving at St. John the Baptist, Maria Stein and St. Aloysius, Carthagena. We were welcomed at the Relic Shrine with lunch provided by Linda Thieman and the St. Henry youth group.

We then participated in Benediction. Hal Belcher, a seasoned deacon and school administrator, recalled the questioning in his vocation. With serious illness looming in his last years of his preparation for the diaconate he queried, "if you are leading me, why is this happening?" He has since learned that sometimes the most difficult part of a good decision is just before it happens.

Sr. Jody Kroeger, C.P.P.S., has found God most clearly in the ministry and the people she serves. She has found that God speaks even in the unsettled moments of life and that she is grateful and happy to be a Sister of the Precious Blood.

The final stop of the pilgrimage was St. Charles Center, Carthagena for the celebration of the Eucharist and to hear about life as a priest and brother from two men who are brothers in blood and brothers in the Blood of Christ. Reflecting on the readings from the Fifth Sunday of Easter, Fr. Tom Hemm, C.P.P.S., emphasized the role of mentors. As St. Barnabas was a mentor for St. Paul, so too Fr. Tom was mentored by the devotion of his parents and the witness of great Missionaries like Fr. Ambrose Lengerich, C.P.P.S.

Br. Tim Hemm, C.P.P.S.,



(Photo by Br. Jerry Schulte, C.P.P.S.)

## Br. Tim Hemm gives his witness talk.

never felt he had an earth shattering vocation story. He never got knocked off a horse and saw the bright light as did St. Paul. Rather his journey was marked by the steady faith of his parents and the continual awareness within that he was called to be a brother.

The pilgrimage was coordinated by the Sisters and Missionaries of the Precious Blood, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and volunteers from parishes throughout the St. Mary's and Sidney Deaneries. Indeed, the goodness of God was revealed this day through many people.

*Stepping Up the Call* was a journey that took us to several holy places, highlighting the vocation each person receives in baptism, and placing special emphasis on the call to priesthood and religious life. It was an adventure marked by challenge and driven by prayer. Is there someone you know who may be called to the religious life as a priest, brother or sister?