



Traffic Stop

**Who is protecting
the children and mothers
on the streets of Chicago?**

Donna Liette, C.P.P.S.

I had just turned out of the parking lot of our Precious Blood Center on my way to a meeting in downtown Chicago when two of our kids hollered from the corner bus stop, "Sister, you got some change?"

While I was waiting for the light to turn green so I could turn onto a side street and find my change, a car pulled up out of nowhere on my right and the driver said, "Go, the light's green."

I ignored him because I wanted to turn and he was in my turn lane, so I motioned for him to go and he sped off. I turned the corner, wondering what that was all about. I found some change, gave it to the kids and thought I would be on my way, only to find the same car and driver right in front of my car, hood to hood.

Feeling a bit fearful, I quickly turned into a nearby alley, backed out and went on my way, hoping I could get to my meeting on time. I was again waiting for the light to

turn green, when the same man showed up on my left, window rolled down, showing me his Chicago Police badge! Oops!

Then he began to interrogate me: "Do you know where you are going?" (I still have Ohio plates and, being an elderly white woman, I understood why he might have thought that I was lost!) I replied, "Yes, sir."

"Did you know those kids that you were talking to?"

"Sure, those are our kids!"

"What are you doing in this neighborhood?"

"I work here." (He looked surprised!)

"Do you know there are lots of shootings all around here? It is very dangerous."

"Yes, I do know."

"It really is not safe for you here."

I just looked at him and shrugged my shoulders.

"I was just trying to protect you. Okay, be careful."

Finally, I was on my way to the meeting, but I couldn't help wondering if he cared as much about our children, our mothers standing at bus stops

unprotected, as he did for me. They are the ones who are not safe. I felt sad and angry all at the same time.

When I told Lamonte Lay, one of our youth employed here at our center, what had happened to me, he told me about his experience of being pulled over by a police officer as he was driving home one evening:

The cop said, "Step out the car."

I thought to myself, *Damn, I thought he just wanted my license and insurance.* I got out of the car and put my hands on my trunk.

The cop asked, "Where you on your way to?"

I answered, "Just leaving my girlfriend's house."

The cop asked, "Do you have anything in the car?"

I answered, "No, I don't smoke."

He checked the car. A second cop told me to come to the back seat of the squad car so he could run my name. He put me in handcuffs and into the back seat.

He asked if I had ever been arrested, and I said, "Yeah." He got my description, and we waited about 10 minutes.

The second cop said, "He's clear." They let me out and I drove off.

Yesterday, I was sitting in a circle of youth who are ambassadors of peace in their respective schools. As the talking piece circled around, each student told of his/her experiences of being pulled over by police and questioned. They



The New Creation

*Reflections from the
Precious Blood
Ministry of Reconciliation*

talked about their experiences of violence; one had a brother killed six months ago; another a classmate; each one had a story that no child should ever read, experience or witness.

Our city is polluted with the blood of our children. Every day at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation, youth ring our bell, looking for a safe place. Sometimes, they come looking for food and money, but most of all for love, for family, for peace.

The children in our neighborhood grow up fast. They live with the constant sound of police sirens and gunshots. They live in fear of being stopped by the police, of being shot or being arrested for criminal activity while innocent.

For these children, it is hard to sleep at night; and for us who read these stories and live among them, it is also hard to sleep.

Is it not our Precious Blood spirituality that keeps us awake and calls us to stay with these children until all is well?

Sr. Donna Liette, C.P.P.S., is a staff member of the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation.



Community Calendar

March 8–10: Lenten discernment retreat at St. Charles Center, Carthage, Ohio.

May 20–23: Cincinnati provincial assembly, St. Charles Center, Carthage, Ohio. Companions covenant rite on Tuesday, May 21.

May 20: Diaconate ordination, Robert Jansen, C.P.P.S., St. Charles Center, Carthage, Ohio.

House of Advanced Formation

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large room that can be renovated into a chapel. Initially, we will use the large first-floor apartment and two apartments on the second floor. The renovations that we are planning will give us nine bedrooms. We hope to rent the two apartments on the third floor to other religious, then we would be able to share prayer and liturgies. It also helps to create a larger peer community for our candidates."

Timing was good for the purchase, which Fr.

Nordenbrock coordinated with the assistance of Mark Giesige, director of mission advancement for the Cincinnati Province. "The formation team also thought that this was a good time to make an investment in Chicago real estate," Fr. Nordenbrock said. "Values have decreased in the past few years, but with the anchor of the University of Chicago in the Hyde Park neighborhood, we do not think that the market will stay low. It seemed to be a good time to purchase this property."

Missionaries Move from St. Mark

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with a dozen or so bedrooms, about half with their own sitting rooms and bathrooms, to a single family home with four bedrooms and one and a half baths is a real challenge. One can see the front of the old St. Mark rectory from the front porch of the new house.

The first guest, Companion Gerry Downs,

arrived from California one week after the move. She and I commuted from there as we preached a parish mission the last week of February.

One possibility for the former St. Mark's rectory is that it will be transformed into housing for honor students at Xavier University. The main part of the church may be leased to a company that builds and renovates churches throughout the U.S., Europe and Latin America; the basement of the church may serve as a soup kitchen, food pantry, and hall for rent.

I often comment that I was never trained to negotiate real estate deals, rental contracts, or manage multiple properties, while still trying to be a pastor to the people of the Church of the Resurrection. I am happy that the new home of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood at the Church of the Resurrection includes space for guests to visit.