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CINCINNATI C.P.P.S. NEWSLETTER

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

Ephesians 1: 7a

PBMR Outreach Grows Over 16 Years

Earned the Trust Of the Neighborhood By Staying Put

Jean Giesige, editor

In the beginning, they would direct people to the red door.

The first center of the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) was hard to find. The PBMR was a brand new initiative and nobody, least of all its founders, four Missionaries of the Precious Blood, knew exactly what it was going to be. Part of that was on purpose; it was meant to be not only a new ministry but a new way of doing ministry, and so there wasn't any sort of roadmap or business plan.

"We had found space in what had been the janitor's

apartment at St. Michael's Parish (on the south side of Chicago) and we moved in," said Fr. Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S., PBMR's director. Their new office was in the back of the building, as signaled by the mailing address: 1936 W. 48th St.—Rear.

"We painted the door red and told people, 'Come to the red door,' because otherwise, they would never find it," Fr. Kelly said.

It wasn't as random as the address makes it sound. The four Missionaries who had dreamed up this new ministry—Frs. Kelly, Denny Kinderman, Joe Nassal and Bill Nordenbrock—had explored the neighborhood before they moved in. They had talked with people to see if they would fit in.

But beyond that, Fr. Kelly said, "we didn't have a methodology. We had all kinds of ideas on retreat models and missions that we could do in churches. We knew we wanted to engage with the neighborhood, and we knew we want-



Fr. Dave Kelly leads the prayer at a PBMR staff meeting in Chicago.

"Living in the community, working in the community, that's been the biggest thing in terms of building our credibility." — Fr. Dave Kelly

ed to promote reconciliation. There's no strategy in reconciliation; it's more of a lens. Our aha moment came when we saw it as a philosophy that would allow us to live out Precious Blood spirituality in a way that would engage non-religious folks."

Sixteen years later, the PBMR, now at home in a former school building on S. Elizabeth and W. 51st in Chicago's Back of the Yards (Continued on page 186)

What's new with the new creation? See page 187 for a reflection and timeline from Br. Juan Acuña, C.P.P.S., new creation coordinator.

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neighborhood, serves approximately 290 youth and 100 adults from the neighborhood, and many more through its ministry at the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center. It has an annual budget of \$1.8 million. Its income includes \$200,000 per year through various fundraising efforts; \$800,000 from grants and foundations; and \$84,000 from the Cincinnati and Kansas City Provinces. Earlier this year, it received a \$400,000 grant (\$100,000 per year for four years) from the MacArthur Foundation to "fund strategic planning efforts, bolster human resource and training offerings," enhance its communications, and improve its

technology.

Much of its annual budget goes for staffing; PBMR employs 17 people fulltime, and three more part-time.

It has become a force for good in a neighborhood that's tortured by violence, and its reach extends far beyond, into the city's judicial system, where the PBMR is respected for doing what it says it will do.

And what is that, exactly? It's about being a part of the

community, opening its doors for anyone who needs a safe space. For anyone who feels lost and abandoned and wants to be found. "Living in the community, working in the community, that's been the biggest thing in terms of building our credibility," Fr. Kelly said. "People know we're not going to go anywhere. They know that we're a part of the community."

"We're continually growing
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Cincinnati C.P.P.S. Newsletter

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Editor: Jean Giesige
cppscommunications@gmail.com

Latin American Province Approved

At the meeting of C.P.P.S. Major Superiors in Chile in November, the major superiors voted to reconfigure the units in Latin American into a single province.

The vote came after a long process of discernment and initial study and preparation; the possibility of a Latin American Province has been under discussion for more than two years.

Members in Latin America have created commissions that will help them generate documents that will be put forward for approval by the members in Latin America and by the general curia. This must happen before the new province is erected.

We'll explore the process that has gotten them to this point, and the next steps in the process in the January issue of the *Cincinnati C.P.P.S. Newsletter*.



Community Notes

Address Corrections

A computer glitch caused **Fr. Leon Flaherty, C.P.P.S.**, to go back to his former email, rather than the one that was published in the November issue of the *Newsletter*. His current (and correct) email is flahertyleon1@yahoo.com. This email was included in the 2018 address book.

The entry for **Br. Tim Hemm**,

C.P.P.S., was incorrect in the 2018 address book. Br. Tim notes that his cell, 219-869-7919, is his only phone. His email is timh@saintjoe.edu.

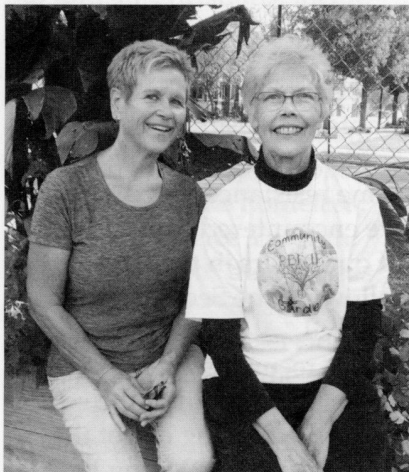
Please note the change in your address book.

The Cincinnati Provincial Assembly will begin on May 20, 2019, at St. Charles Center in Carthage, Ohio.

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in the sense that in the beginning, our numbers were not that great. But now people see we're in it for the long haul. They understand that we're part of the fabric of the community, part of the landscape. It took seven or eight years to build that reputation, and we did it by individual relationships."

Its community gardens, managed by Sr. Carolyn Hoying, CPPS, produced about 3,400 pounds of food this year,



Above, Sr. Carolyn Hoying, right, with PBMR volunteer Mary Harkenrider. Below, Sr. Donna Liette with the PBMR's Community and Relatives of Illinois Incarcerated Children group.

up from last year's total of 3,000 pounds. Sr. Donna Liette, CPPS, works with mothers in the neighborhood, in her bright offices in the Mother Brunner House across the street from the center, which the PBMR has rehabbed. A second house is now being rehabbed and will serve as a shelter for families or individuals who are in need of temporary housing. In a rented house across the street from the center, PBMR operates Art on 51st, a gallery and meeting space with a woodshop in the basement.

It trains young people for jobs, tutors them and teaches them life skills. It takes young people out of the neighborhood on adventures to museums, movies and Lake Michigan. It offers them training in carpentry, cooking and screen printing. It helps mothers who are grieving the loss of a child. It works with the courts to try to find answers to the city's intractable violence.

PBMR keeps track of its statistics, but defining it by the numbers has never made much sense. Fr. Joe Nassal, now provincial director of the Kansas City Province, which supports the PBMR with funding and volunteer efforts (many of them Precious Blood Volunteers), says it has lived into the mission its four founders envisioned long ago.

"How do you measure success? Kids are still getting

killed (in the neighborhood), and we still live in a violent world. But there have also been remarkable stories from the young people they've accompanied," he said. "Through that spirit of accompaniment, they help people become their best selves. They offer an alternative to a world that continues to be bitterly divided. They try to be a bridge, to create a safe place where people can talk and listen to each. They give kids a future who wouldn't normally have a future."

At the center, the mood of the day can swing wildly from celebration and fulfillment when some small goal is reached, to frustration and grief when someone's life goes off the rails. Fr. Denny Kinderman, who has been part of the ministry since its beginning, said "it ain't always easy," but he can't picture himself anywhere else.

"As you grow into (the ministry), you learn what to expect. You learn to deal with ongoing seeming disappointments—but a lot of times, those disappointments are foundation to people learning or changing," he said. "Precious Blood spirituality always seeks a deeper meaning in what initially will look frustrating or impossible. That's exactly what Gaspar was doing with his life. The town of Sonnino was about to be destroyed, but he saw something different. He saw something life-giving. We see kids who are locked up, we see families who lose children to a violent death, and yet somehow, good comes out of it.

"It's a lived ministry—you just sit back and observe how

the Blood of Christ can bring life out of suffering."

People from outside the neighborhood come to the center to see how it works. "We constantly have people asking us, 'Can we come and visit? Can I do my dissertation through you?'" Fr. Kelly said. "We have access to this population that a lot of people don't have access to. We've established ourselves as an organization that can connect researchers to that."

"But there's a fine line between exploiting these kids and having them speak for themselves. Some people want to come and see these gang kids who are living in the ghetto—that's different from someone who actually wants to come and understand and be involved. Communities outside ourselves want to help, but to do that they have to sit with us and try to understand. There has to be a commitment, versus dropping in and dropping out."

They see and sense that commitment in themselves; in the people of the neighborhood, young and old; in their corps of volunteers; and in the people who are joining their growing staff. "We're growing a lot as a staff, and it's amazing to see how we all get along so well," said Fr. Kinderman. "I feel like God picked them for us and brought them here. You get the feeling that God is designing all this, and we let God surprise us."

One of the newest staff members is Michael Tafolla, a case manager who works with youth ages 18–28. Tafolla was incarcerated at the age of 18 and spent 20 years in jail. "I'm a living example that you can change your life," he said. "I

know that working with adults has a lot of possibilities. One thing we have learned about trauma is that when a child becomes fractured, that fractured child never leaves. Whatever coping mechanisms they use as children, they are going to use as adults. That's where a lot of trust issues come from."

Tafollo knows that his first job is to build trust among the young adults at the center. Then they can move forward—together. "What attracted me to this place is that they've done so much, and they refuse to give up. They are always asking, 'How can we do more?' Their concept of community doesn't stop in the Back of the Yards. Our community stops wherever our reach stops. And Fr. Kelly always encourages us to reach out to others."

While the PBMR has grown, its mission has not changed since Frs. Kelly, Kinderman, Nordenbrock and Nassal imagined back in 2002, in their small space in the rear of St. Michael's Church. "It's not all that different, to be honest," Fr. Kelly said. "It's bigger than I thought it would be. And bigger can be better, if we take it seriously and if our staff feels supported. We're not just growing for growth's sake."

"I've got a lot of ideas, and making them work is all about having good people around and having the reputation that we'll try new things. I'm willing to fail. I really do believe it's about the mission, and the rest will come."



The four founders of the PBMR (from left), Frs. Denny Kinderman, Bill Nordenbrock, Dave Kelly and Joe Nassal.

Condolences

The prayers and sympathy of the Precious Blood family are extended to:

The family of **Paul Siebert**, who died on October 26. Mr. Siebert was the father and father-in-law of Companions Dan and Sue Siebert (Celina, Ohio).

The family of **Cheryl Densmore Holaday**, who died on October 26. She was the sister of Companion Jim Densmore (Orlando).

The family of Companion **Joanne Koesters** (Dayton), who died October 30. Survivors include her husband, Ron, who is also a Companion.

The family of Amicus **Virgil Gelormino**, who died November 5.

The family of Companion **John Schmiesing** (Minster, Ohio), who died November 10.

*Eternal rest grant unto them,
O Lord, and let perpetual
light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.
Amen.*

