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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

On the C.P.P.S. Site in Liberty, Mo.

Renewal Center Offers Healing and Hope

(Editor's note: Dennis Coday is the director of engagement at the Precious Blood Renewal Center in Liberty, Mo. He wrote the following to introduce the center to the members, Companions and Amici of the Cincinnati Province.)

Dennis Coday

One of the first things a visitor to Precious Blood Renewal Center in Liberty, Mo., sees is a wall hanging with a quote from Fr. Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S., who was the Kansas City provincial director when the new center building was dedicated. The quote comes from his address at the dedication ceremony:

"Though we stumble now and again, we dare to walk this way, live this truth, discover this life that awaits us."

The next thing a visitor is likely to see is another quote on another wall hanging just inside the main meeting room, this one from Rumi, the 13th-century

Persian poet and Sufi mystic:

"Come, come, whoever you are wanderer or worshipper ... it doesn't matter. Come even if you have broken your vow a hundred times. Come, come again, come."

These two quotes capture much of what the renewal center is about. We shape our programming around these ideas and our mission statement: "Precious Blood Renewal Center is a safe and sacred place, offering healing and hope, renewal and reconciliation for all people." The mission statement flows from the values of the Kansas City Province, which include emphasis on social justice ministry and interfaith ministry, reaching beyond members of the Catholic Church.

We have felt the urgency of this mission statement acutely in recent months.

The renewal center sits on the 32 acres that have housed the Kansas City provincial offices since the late 1980s.



The Precious Blood Renewal Center is in a thoroughly renovated building on the C.P.P.S. grounds in Liberty, Mo.

Four buildings sit around a large pond and are encircled by woodlands and hay fields. It is a green oasis in a literal and figurative sense.

Kathy Keary, a Precious Blood Companion and certified spiritual director who has been with the renewal center since its early days, describes it as "an escape into a beautiful setting where the divine is clearly visible. Over the years, I have witnessed countless people retreating to the center and finding a renewed sense of wholeness and connection with the Creator."

The other longtime staff member, Director of Hospitality
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To learn more about the Precious Blood Renewal Center, or to sign up for its newsletter, visit pbrenewalcenter.org.

Join in Spirit with Homicide Prayer Vigils

CPPS Sisters Mark Anniversary of Dayton Mass Shooting

Sr. Jeanette Buehler, CPPS

We remember their names:

Megan Betts

Monica Brickhouse

Nicholas Cumer

Derrick Fudge

Thomas McNichols

Lois Oglesby

Saheed Saleh

Logan Turner

Beatrice Warren-Curtis

Nearly a year ago, on August 4, 2019, these nine people, as well as the perpetrator, Connor Betts, were killed in the mass shooting in Dayton's Oregon District. Their personal stories and the pain suffered by their families, friends, co-workers and even those of us who did not know them continue to linger like a shadow over our city. Their lives are precious. They mattered. Their families matter, and we continue to grieve with them.

In 2019, they were among a total of 45 people memorialized by the Community Homicide Prayer Vigil group in Dayton. Most of those we have prayed for did not die in a mass shooting as defined as three or more victims killed at the same time or place. But when looked at as an accumulation, isn't that number massive? Doesn't the total qualify as a mass shooting, one victim at a time?

Before the pandemic, the Community Homicide Prayer Vigil group met on Saturdays at noon at sites where homicides had occurred—on the streets, on curbsides, in front

yards, in parking lots, in abandoned lots or alleyways.

Today, our vigils continue virtually—but our work has not diminished. Indeed, so far this year we have remembered 12 people locally, ranging in age from 85 to five months. And nationally, we watched the news reports through May and June as the ongoing violence and persistent systemic racism against black people in this country—particularly the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor—culminated in widespread protests across the U.S. and around the world.

Our vigils are a form of peaceful protest when we stand together, witnessing to the senseless taking of another human life. The Sisters of the Precious Blood began holding homicide vigils in 1993 and prayed at 131 sites until May 1997. In 2006, the Sisters and the Missionaries of the Precious Blood brought together an ecumenical group that resumed the work of this ministry.

Since March 2006, the Community Homicide Prayer Vigil group has organized 545 homicide vigils in greater Dayton. Through our prayer and advocacy, we seek justice for all victims and their families. We listen to their stories, and we use our collective voice to speak about the lives lost one by one.

Victims' final moments do not define who they were. We have found over the years that there are innumerable stories and circumstances surrounding violent death, but there are common denominators: the victims are remembered for their

smiles, or the care they showed to family and friends, or their struggles to make changes in their lives. The deceased person portrayed in the news does not tell the whole story of the person, the child of God, who was cherished by family and friends.

Understanding the great value of our Church's intercessory work, we invite you to join us in prayer when you hear of yet another homicide, whether it has occurred nearby or thousands of miles away. In this way, we can be in solidarity with the victim and the victim's family as we realize our connected humanity in the body of Christ.

With sadness and hope in Jesus' redemption, we remember and continue to pray for the families who lost loved ones in the Oregon District last summer as we mark this painful first anniversary. And we do the same for those who are killed each week in acts of violence or neglect.

In this time of pandemic, not everyone will be able to gather in the streets to protest or give witness to the senseless taking of life. But each of us can find a way to remember those who are killed and to work for justice. What would our support mean to the deceased's family and friends to know that the community cared enough to stand with them? And how might our hearts be changed by our caring actions and presence?

Sr. Jeanette Buehler, CPPS, is the coordinator of the Community Homicide Prayer Vigil Group.

