

imagine ONE

THE CONGREGATION OF THE
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

FALL/WINTER 2012 ■ VOL. 4 ■ NO. 2



Called to the
Common Good

*‘Love your neighbor,
as you love yourself.’*

Mt. 22:39

Our mission as Sisters of St. Joseph flows from the purpose for which the congregation exists: We live and work that all people may be united with God and with one another.

We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, living out of our common tradition, witness to God's love transforming us and our world. Recognizing that we are called to incarnate our mission and charism in our world in fidelity to God's call in the Gospel, we commit ourselves to these Generous Promises through 2013.

- ⊕ We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, promise to take the risk to surrender our lives and resources to work for specific systemic change in collaboration with others so that the hungers of the world might be fed.
- ⊕ We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, promise to recognize the reality that Earth is dying, to claim our oneness with Earth and to take steps now to strengthen, heal and renew the face of Earth.
- ⊕ We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, promise to network with others across the world to bring about a shift in the global culture from institutionalized power and privilege to a culture of inclusivity and mutuality.
- ⊕ We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, promise to be mutually responsible and accountable for leadership in the congregation.

WE CARE ABOUT ALL CREATION

In awareness of our mission, the Congregation of St. Joseph is pleased to present this issue of *imagineONE*, which has been produced in an environmentally sustainable way.



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On the cover: In Scripture, Jesus calls "Love your neighbor as you love yourself" the second greatest commandment — after "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind." Loving our neighbors as we love ourselves unifies us as God wishes, "May

they all be one. ..." It focuses us on protecting the common good — that all people have equal access to basic necessities such as clean and affordable fresh water, clean air, jobs, affordable healthcare, sufficient foods, equal justice under the law, education and decent housing.

If you guessed Tipton, Indiana, you are right! Donated by a friend of the Sisters, the House of Prayer is a contemporary Montana-style log cabin snuggled in among the pine trees on the Tipton campus. The cabin is a kind of sanctuary for those who want a respite from the chaos of daily living.

imagine ONE



Where is this?

This image comes from one of our congregational centers. Do you know which one? See below for answer.

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The Common Good



One way of thinking about our congregations' Generous Promises (see page 2) is as a pledge to promote the common good. We need to consciously think as global citizens concerned about the well-being of the totality of creation. Such a consciousness calls us to tend to the signs-of-the-times: What are the unmet needs in our world today? Who has no voice, no place at the table when significant decisions are made? Where are thriving relationships blocked, or prevented from ever forming? Our vision, rooted in the Gospel, must be wide and inclusive.

Promoting the common good isn't easy, as we have an inclination to take care of ourselves first. We have grown accustomed to a very comfortable existence, one which frequently makes the rights and needs of others invisible to us. We naturally surround ourselves with people who think and look like us. We need to challenge ourselves to expand our awareness, to walk in the shoes of those whose life circumstances are far different than our privileged place, to advocate toward world relationships that are more balanced, more nuanced for the common good.

Developing such a vision is challenging, and requires the courage to look inside my own heart and motivations as well as look outside at the global situation. It takes deep discernment, honest prayer, new sources of information that stretch my awareness; a willingness to be the "different drummer" who speaks the invitation to others to consider a topic from another angle and to raise the level of consciousness about the possibility to change "what we've always known." It means risking friendships and reputation ... just as Jesus did.

Jesus was subversive to the status quo simply by encouraging ALL people — every *dear neighbor* — to develop into their fullness. He loved without distinction: neither gender nor age, political leaning nor economic status, mental nor physical health, language nor nationality was a deterrent to his inclusive love. As baptized disciples, we are called to do the same.

When it comes to achieving the common good, we realize that each of us is responsible for making it happen, wherever we are, whatever we do, day after day — in our congregation, our families, our communities, our nation and our world. That is how we sisters strive to live our faith and that is what this issue of *imagineONE* is all about.

May the pages of the magazine inspire and support you as you bring the love of Jesus everywhere you go.

Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Jeannie". The script is elegant and cursive.

Jeannie Masterson, CSJ
Congregation of St. Joseph Leadership Team

upfront

Photo by Sister Judith Ann Teufel, CSJ



First graders like these at Annunciation grade school in Leogane, Haiti, finally have a chance at education since the 2010 earthquake that captured the world's attention.

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH 'INVEST' IN *earthquake survivors' education*

Although Haiti is no longer in the spotlight of the news, literally millions of our *dear neighbors* there are still in dire need of major relief.

Soon after the earthquake hit Haiti on January 12, 2010, the U.S. Sisters of St. Joseph Federation's representative at the United Nations, Griselda Martinez Morales, CSJ, requested that the international team of the federation peace and justice coordinators initiate a response on behalf of the federations. CSJ members of that team, Sisters Joan Atkinson and Sue Wilson from Canada and Sisters Mary Beth Hamm, Jeanette Bussen, Diana

Oleskevich and Mary Ellen Gondeck from the U.S., began researching possibilities for responding.

The group contacted organizations involved in education, health care and micro-financing in Haiti. Ultimately, they proposed to both the Canadian and U.S. federations that they fund the work of Mission Haiti, a nonprofit organization sponsored by a



Sister Sue Torgersen, CSJ, serves lunch to students at Annunciation grade school in Leogane, Haiti.

Minneapolis parish that has been active for many years in Leogane, Haiti, about 20 miles southwest of the capital, Port-au-Prince. Leogane was the epicenter of the earthquake. When Sisters Sue Torgersen, Judith Ann Teufel, and Mary Ellen Gondeck visited Annunciation grade school in Leogane, they saw firsthand the extensive damage it sustained and complete destruction where the Rose de Lima secondary school once stood.

Both the U.S. and Canadian federations accepted the team's proposal and have committed an initial \$300,000 to support ten girls through their grade school and secondary school education over 10 years, beginning this fall. The commitment also includes funds to purchase the land for building the secondary school. ●

Sisters supply 100 dresses for a unique 'boutique'



Photo by Ann Hultgren

Sisters Kathleen Lucas, CSJ, and Pat Borchardt, CSJ, went right to their sewing machines when our congregation gave a unique gift to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, Calif., on the occasion of their 100th jubilee year. In support of the Canadian and U.S. Federations of Sisters of St. Joseph commitment to cover tuition for ten orphaned students for ten years at Annunciation elementary school and Rose of Lima secondary school in Leogane, Haiti, we are donating 100 dresses, 100 dolls and 100 uniforms in honor of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange. Leogane was the epicenter of the devastating 2010 earthquake. ●

NEW DVD RELEASE ON HAITI

Former student dedicates life to documenting world poverty



Gerry Straub, who was taught by Sisters of St. Joseph while growing up in New York city, focused his film heavily on the children affected by severe poverty in Haiti. Here, two weeks before the massive 2010 earthquake, no one knew how much more dire life would soon become.

Gerry Straub has just released “Mud Pies and Kites,” a compelling DVD about the people of Haiti before and after the devastating 2010 earthquake that took more than 300,000 lives. Today, more than two years later, nearly 400,000 Haitians are still living in tents.



Gerry is a former network television producer who worked at all three major networks in New York and Hollywood; he produced the most popular television soap opera in history, *General Hospital*. Following a dramatic conversion experience in an empty Franciscan church in Rome, Gerry walked away from his successful career, and devoted himself fully to writing a book on St. Francis of Assisi. That led him to form a ministry, Pax et Bonum Communications, which produces films on global poverty. He gives multi-media presentations at churches and schools in order to raise awareness of the plight of the poor and our need to relieve their suffering.

As Gerry narrates “Mud Pies and Kites,” his words clearly echo the sisters’ mission of unity. “Love of God and love of neighbor are so intertwined as to become one and the same,” he insists. “To be a follower of Christ is to be a friend of the poor and the excluded.”

“When I attended St. Benedict Joseph Labre grammar school in Queens, N.Y.,” he recalls, “the Sisters of St. Joseph instilled in me the need to care for the poor. It took many years for that lesson to blossom, but the faith of the sisters was always a source of inspiration to me.”

Gerry has already begun a new film which features work the Jesuits are doing in an overcrowded refugee camp in northern Kenya and in the massive slums of Nairobi. The film will introduce first world audiences to the desperate refugees who fled violence and hunger in Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and the Congo.

To order a copy of “Mud Pies and Kites,” go to Gerry’s website at www.PaxetBonumComm.org. ●

Students see the global reach *of poverty*



The mission trip students visited with young people who live just outside the Managua city dump. Two young Californians taught them how to create podcasts to petition for improvements in their neighborhood. According to Sister Mary Ann, "The podcast we saw was asking the city to provide them water during the day, not just at night, and it was very well produced. But it's an uphill battle because no one listens to them – yet. They're not giving up, though. They're working to improve their own future."

Very nearly half of the people in the world live in dire poverty. It may not be half of the population in the U.S., but the masses of human suffering are teeming in places like India, China, Africa, Central America, Mexico and the Middle East. That is why, when Sister Mary Ann Wyllie, CSJ, read about students from our congregation's high schools in LaGrange, Ill., and Baton Rouge, La., making a mission trip to Nicaragua, she thought, "Maybe I can arrange for our students to go there, as well. If you want to know what life is really like for people living in another country and culture, you have to go see for yourself."

Sister Mary Ann is the campus minister and liturgist for 270 students at Shrine Catholic High School in Royal Oak, Mich., about five miles north of Detroit. It is a parish-affiliated school with students primarily from working families.

But, in order to assure parents of their students' safety, Sister Mary Ann went there first in 2011 to see for herself. She visited with Sisters Jeanne Gamache, CSJ, and Dianne Fanguy, CSJ, who were working with Cantera, a center for teaching the local people to build a more just and fair society. In addition to checking accommodations, she asked about opportunities for her students to pitch in on the work at Cantera.

Once she showed her photos to students back at school, Sister Mary Ann invited those who were interested in taking the mission trip to an evening program with their parents. "The response was far greater than we expected," she remembered, "30 students and we could only take 12.

"So, we asked the interested students to fill out a lengthy application, write an essay and have a personal interview with the three adult chaperones," Sister Mary Ann explained. "We asked them things like 'What are your fears or concerns about going on this mission trip? Since this trip is about both service and faith, how do you understand the relationship between your faith and service?' We also sought input from the faculty, principal and counselors."

Once they identified the 12 successful candidates, the real preparation began. "We started meeting monthly, beginning with a prayer and journaling," she said. "These monthly meetings also served to build community among the team and we got to know one another on a deeper level. By this time, Sister Jeanne had returned to Michigan after completing her three-year ministry at Cantera. She joined in our monthly meetings and was a great asset and resource in our preparations."

Then there was the matter of paying for the travel. Originally the cost was estimated to be \$1400 per student. Because of the high cost we began to raise funds. The students held bowling parties, worked concession stands at the school's games, collected bottles and cans, helped at Sister Marie Benzing's "Centro de San Jose" tutoring program, where they did gardening and



Miguel, 12, taught Sister Mary Ann Wyllie, CSJ, how to make bracelets of thread that he sells at Podcasts for Peace, a program that teaches young people the value of hands-on work and the skills of saving money and setting some aside for more materials.

weeding. As a result, they raised \$15,000 of the \$21,000 needed for 12 students and four adults, leaving the remaining cost of \$500 each for air fare, lodging and food and ground transport.

Two days before they embarked for Nicaragua, the pastor of the school's parish, Sister Mary Ann and the school's principal presided at a commissioning ceremony during a Sunday liturgy. Each student received a St. Therese pin (the students represented the Shrine of the Little Flower parish) and a certificate of commissioning. In Nicaragua, Sister Mary Ann explained, "the students worked on experimental farms, learned how to tend beehives, process mangos, and cultivate worms for fertilizing. They visited with rural families who had no running water or electricity, learned from the mothers how to make tortillas, visited schools and interacted with preschoolers and young adults, stopped at a fair trade art shop to see how fair trade works for the benefit of the locals, and were horrified to see the mammoth city dump where thousands of poor people and children live and scavenge — where even babies are born." ●

Just the following brief offering of some of the students' observations about their Nicaragua experiences speaks volumes about compassion, joy, simplicity, generosity, faith, energy, hope — and the unity they now feel with people in another part of the world:

“One day we had lunch at a “hole in the wall” and walked past the place where women were making tortillas. Isa – one of the Cantera volunteers – was holding one of the women’s babies, saying to the baby in Spanish so the mother could hear, “Tu eres simpática. Tu eres inteligente. Tu eres important” – just like Aibileen in the movie, “The Help.” Now, when I hold babies, I’ll tell them that in front of their mothers.”

—Maddie Tracey, junior

“The people were so open and accepting of us. They were so happy with what little they have. It gave me a new perspective. I don’t need half of what I have.”

— Mark Ruhle, junior

“What made a lasting impression was seeing how poor everyone was. It’s difficult for kids to get an education there. The choice is between schooling and helping families. I hope to return to help make their lives easier.”

—Genevieve Schmidt, senior

“When we were in rural Managua, we were invited into a humble home. It had a dirt floor. They were so happy to be with us. Their happiness is not in material things. People depend on relationships there. I saw a totally different example of fatherhood and motherhood. Here, we identify ourselves by what we do for a living. There, they identify themselves as a family man or mother.”

—Nick Rennpage, teacher



IT'S OFFICIAL: A NEW NOVICE

The congregation officially received Alison McCrary (r) as a novice with a liturgy in Baton Rouge, La., in May. Sister Christine Parks, CSJ, (l), was her formation director. Alison, who is a native of rural Georgia, a member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee and an attorney, will focus on a concentrated program of prayer, study, reflection and limited ministerial engagement during the two-year Novitiate prior to taking first vows. Shortly after her reception liturgy, the *National Catholic Reporter* published a special insert on vocations, which featured Alison as one of 12 Catholic women under 40 making a difference. ●

Sisters call for respectful engagement WITH VATICAN

Many U.S. Catholics are aware from news reports that there are areas of substantive disagreement between the Vatican and a large number of American Catholic Sisters. In April, the **Congregation for Doctrine and Faith (CDF)**, a key Vatican office, that had conducted an assessment of **Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR)**, issued a highly critical report of LCWR, whose membership represents 80% of women religious congregations in the U.S.



Among other concerns, the CDF report stated that LCWR is overly involved in advocating for some issues of peace and justice while neglecting other issues that the Vatican deems important. As a result, the CDF named a panel of three bishops, led by Archbishop J. Peter Sartain, of Seattle, Wash., to re-write the bylaws and statutes of LCWR and its operations, including overseeing and approving speakers for its conferences and approving contributors to LCWR publications.

Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) president Sister Pat Farrell (center), OSF, gave a press conference during LCWR's press conference at LCWR's 2012 Assembly in St. Louis Friday, Aug. 10, 2012. Joining Sister Farrell are Sister Florence Deacon (left), OSF, president-elect of LCWR, and Sister Mary Hughes, OP, past president of the organization (at time of photo).

As members of LCWR, our congregation leadership team participated with more than 900 other leaders of congregations in the annual LCWR Assembly in early August. In five executive sessions spread over three days, LCWR members engaged in a discernment process conducted in a spirit of prayer, with efforts made to hear all perspectives of its members so that the LCWR response would be representative of the full body.

“Let us not, on either side, claim that we have already discovered the truth. Let us seek it together as something which is known to neither of us. For then only may we seek it, lovingly and tranquilly, if there be no bold presumption that it is already discovered and possessed.”

— Pat Farrell, President of LCWR, paraphrasing a quote from St. Augustine about civil discourse at 2012 LCWR Assembly

Members expressed belief that religious life, as lived today by women religious represented in LCWR, is an authentic expression of religious life that must not be compromised.

They expressed deep disappointment in the characterization of LCWR by the CDF, along with hope that open, honest, and respectful dialogue with Archbishop Sartain could lead to increased understanding between church leadership and women religious, as well as create more possibilities for the laity to have a voice in the church. The first of these dialogues with Archbishop Sartain was held with the LCWR Board on August 11, with another scheduled within a few months. The membership was clear that continuing this dialogue should be reconsidered if LCWR is forced to compromise the integrity of its mission.

LCWR's work at the recent assembly indicates how seriously women religious live their responsibility to be a constant healing influence in the world. The best possible outcome can only be what works for the **common good** — for the sisters, for the church, for the faithful who are the church and for the world in which the church is a large presence. ●

Two high schools

Upgrade facilities

Students starting this school year at Nazareth Academy in LaGrange Park, Ill., and Saint Joseph Academy (SJA) in Cleveland, Ohio, will enjoy facilities upgrades designed to help them achieve their learning goals and make some great lifelong memories.



Artists' renderings reflect upgrades of the sports area at Nazareth Academy in LaGrange Park, Ill., and the cafeteria at Cleveland's Saint Joseph Academy, which were not quite yet in use at press time.

Nazareth Academy is expanding its athletic facilities in a way that is guaranteed to provide lasting benefits for every student at the bustling 22-acre campus. Improvements include a new multi-purpose softball field, complete with an artificial playing surface, permanent dugouts, fencing and a lighted scoreboard. Five tennis courts will serve as home to the Roadrunner championship tennis programs, and, as any observer will attest to, easily accessible parking spaces always make attending events more enjoyable.

The new construction rounds out on-campus facilities for nearly every competitive sport in which Nazareth participates in the East Suburban Catholic Conference. It also provides added accommodations for students to participate in physical education classes and intramural activities during and after school hours, including the band and pom pom organizations.

Nazareth, established in 1900 as a girls' school, is now coeducational, and serves families from 57 communities and more than 100 grade schools in Chicago and its western suburbs. The school pillars include scholarship, service, spirit and unity.

In Cleveland, Saint Joseph Academy students almost need a map to find their way around the new state-of-the-art multi-purpose room space since it has replaced and doubled the size of the original 84-year-old cafeteria.

The expansive and airy space has a wall of windows that overlook SJA's campus above Cleveland's Metroparks. Students enjoy their lunch, collaborate on projects and access a range of multi-media technologies in both large and small group settings. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this renovation is the addition of a rooftop learning area.

SJA opened its doors in 1928 with the goal to provide quality, faith-based education and prepare young women for the academic rigors of the approaching 20th century. The goal remains strong – to prepare young women for a globally oriented 21st century. Saint Joseph Academy is the only remaining all-girls Catholic high school in the city limits.

The school will plant a tree near the new wing, in a tribute to the Sisters. ●

To learn more about these ministries, log onto the web and visit Nazareth Academy at www.nazarethacademy.com and Saint Joseph Academy at www.sja1890.org

Love for her aunt inspires a commitment to our mission

For Mary Nielsen, the decision to support the sisters through her estate developed out of love and admiration for a family member. Mary's great-aunt, Rose Nash, Sister Inez Nash in religious life, entered the congregation in 1922 and entered eternal life in 1997.

"She entered when she was in her mid-teens and was a dedicated, devoted, and happy sister until she died in her 90s," said Mary. "One of our favorite things to do when we visited Huntington and Wheeling (in West Virginia) on vacation was to see Aunt Rose. She was cheerful, funny and a great example of the joy that can be found in the religious life. She was so funny and good-natured and would let us tease her about her height; by the time my siblings and I each reached the age of 8, we were taller than Aunt Rose! She could stand tall under my dad's outstretched arm! She also was a wonderful principal of a grade school and quite innovative, too. She had TVs in classrooms long before it caught on in public schools. The last time we all saw her was at a family reunion in Wheeling. I have a wonderful photo of her with my mom and my sister and her newly born daughter — what a beautiful picture of the generations," Mary recalled.



Mary Nielsen

When asked why she feels it's important to make financial contributions in support of the sisters, Mary says she believes that the sisters have put their lives in God's hands to do His work here on earth. "It's the one way I, too, can participate in His work." Specifically, Mary chose to support the sisters through a bequest in her last will and testament. She shares that she feels a bequest allows her to give more to the sisters than what she could in an annual contribution. "I wanted to help continue their missionary work. One priest spoke at my parish said that those who can go to the missions, go; those who can't go, give," she said. "I wanted to help these women both in their active work and as they got older and needed more care themselves. I have already been so blessed by knowing them all my life," Mary added.

Mary shares that she read about charitable bequests in one of the congregation's publications, and she simply asked her attorney to make her desire to support the sisters a part of her will. One of the things Mary likes about leaving a bequest to the sisters is that it's a non-taxable contribution, and for someone who may have estate taxes to contend with, a charitable bequest may be an opportunity to lower a taxable estate, thus allowing for a greater gift to loved ones. ●

If you are interested in leaving a bequest to the sisters in your will or want to make a distribution to the sisters through your revocable (living) trust, the congregation offers language for such provisions that you can take to your attorney. To obtain this information, contact Gary W. Mulhern, our gift planning specialist, at 304.232.8160, ext. 148, or visit our gift planning website, www.csjgiftplanning.org.



Vatican II at 50 years

What it was, is, and can be

by Sister Mary Peter McGinty, CSJ, Ph.D.

Vatican II was the 21st ecumenical Council (gathering of bishops) in the history of the church. 2,500 bishops attended the four sessions between October 11, 1962 and December 8, 1965. The only voting ...members were Roman Catholic bishops and heads of male religious orders. For the first time, non-Catholics and Catholic lay people were invited to attend as auditors. Orthodox and Protestant churches sent 80 observers. 52 Catholic lay people — 29 men and 23 women — also took part as auditors. 16 documents were published.

The Pope has declared a “Year of Faith” which will begin in October 2012, the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Fifty years since the Council began! Do you remember that exhilarating event? Those of us over 60 can still sense the excitement of those days. I was a graduate student at Marquette. We and our professors followed each day’s report. There had never been a council like this one. Over 2,500 bishops from every part of the world were gathered together in St. Peter’s Basilica, each representing the community of faith in his diocese. Great things were expected and, indeed, great things happened.

One thing became evident as the documents were formed: **the language** was different. Previous councils followed a more juridical or legal rhetorical style. This Council used such words as “people of God,” “collegiality,” “cooperation,” “partnership,” “pilgrim,” “servant,” “charism,” “conscience,” “joy and hope.” Such language indicated nothing less than a new understanding of the church. And that is what began to come forth from this extraordinary gathering.

Excitement peaked as the first document was released. The Council was beginning to look at the church in its fullest expression, **the liturgy**. Changes in the liturgy are the most visible and immediate expressions of council reforms. As you read the document, you catch the method of returning to the sources and, at the same time, updating and renewing. For over a century, a movement of liturgical renewal had been stirring in the church: renewed attention to Scripture, to early Christian writings, to the history of the early church, to the renewal of monastic life. Experiments were authorized for the use of a more “dialogical” form of the liturgy. “The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” was the fruit of a long process of maturation. In time, all the sacramental actions of the church would be renewed to

be actions of the community of faith through which the Christian people are progressively transformed as individuals and as a community. The church is brought into being by the sacraments and then acts as an instrument and mediator of the grace of God. Liturgy is the work of the people. Indeed, it is a good place to begin the reformation and renewal of the church.

How did the Council present the church? The basic statement was that the church is the people of God. The people gathered together as a **faith community**,

responsive to the stirrings of the Spirit in their midst, and ready to commit themselves as disciples of Jesus to the mission of transforming the world. That really set us to thinking: The church is not primarily an institution, but a people. And they are a holy people. For the Council made clear that all people are called by God to a life of friendship and love and are able to respond to that call, live in God’s love, and become agents of transforming love in the world. The church does not exist as an end in itself but is called to be of service to the whole human community.

Moreover, this church is placed within the context of the creation of our world. Christ is the firstborn of all creation; all things have been created through him and for him. Seen from

this cosmic perspective, the church appears to have a decisive role to play in the work of creation.

Church is the people who gather to celebrate the liturgy, are sent forth to live their lives, ever aware of the **mission** entrusted to them. The church carries the responsibility of reading the signs-of-the-times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Christians no longer are encouraged to flee from the world, but to enter into the life of the world to build the kingdom. The church cooperates with all humankind in confronting the most important challenges of the age. The celebration of the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life, which brings the transforming love of God into action.



The church is not
primarily an institution,
but a people...The church
does not exist as an end
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of service to the whole
human community.





Pope John XXIII

Is there **structure** to this church?

Yes. The local church (the gathering of the people of faith) has its leaders, whom the Council calls servants: the bishop, the priests, the deacons, and the lay ministers. Very clearly, the Council states that authority is service, not power. Every bishop is responsible for the authenticity and unity of his community of faith. He is concerned for the internal unity of the local diocese, but also for the unity of this local church with all the other local churches. The bishop's authority is rooted in the grace of his ordination. He is not acting as the Pope's agent or delegate. Each local church is united with all the other local churches to form the universal church. The Pope, as the Bishop of Rome, has the responsibility to maintain the authenticity and unity of the whole church. The Pope and the bishops together form a college and share leadership over the entire church. The college shares with the Bishop of Rome, and never apart from him, supreme and full authority over the universal church.

At the time of Vatican II, the church was coming to a new consciousness of itself as a **world church**, with an increasing awareness of the dignity of the human person and the aspiration of people to exercise fully their own judgment in matters of faith. All persons are bound to follow the dictates of their conscience; thus, the Council affirms the **right to religious freedom**. The individual must not be forced to act against his/her conscience, nor be prevented from acting according to conscience.

Another turnaround proposal from the Council had to do with our relations with other Christian churches. Pope John XXIII had said that one of the primary aims of the Council was to be the restoration of unity among all Christians. The **ecumenical movement** was among the signs-of-the-times to which he drew the attention of the church. The Council affirmed the presence of many elements of sanctification and true faith outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church.

Other Christian churches and communities participate in some measure in the one church of Christ. The Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as a means of salvation. The Catholic Church remains a pilgrim church, still growing in Christ and always in need of purification, renewal, and reform. The disunity of the churches is among the most serious impediments to the church's mission and witness. Christians are encouraged to enter into good relations with our sister churches and work toward the emergence of the one church of Christ.

The Council took another step away from the exclusivity nature of the church in saying that the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in **other religions**. It has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which often reflect a ray of that light which enlightens all men and women. Without renouncing their own convictions and way of life, nor condemning those who

believe differently, Christians are urged to acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians. Remember, these bishops live in the world with all its diversity. They know what is happening and what needs to be done.

The Pope, the bishops and all the people rely on the sources of faith: **revelation and tradition**. How do you understand these two terms? What the Council tells us is that these are not two separate sources of knowledge of our faith. Rather, revelation takes place within the overall process of tradition. Neither is a finished entity, but continues to happen within the life of the church. **Scripture** holds priority of place in the process. The Council opens up the study of Scripture and encourages all to find in the pages of Scripture the reality of God's revelation in Jesus. This is the faith that is to be lived and passed on to others.

Perhaps you can see that this Council recommended many significant changes, changes that would alter the way of life for all Christians. This is only a taste of what the Council asked, and continues to ask, us to do. But for us who are members of **religious communities**, the Council asked for particular revisions affecting our whole way of life. The adaptation and renewal of the religious life included both the constant return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original spirit of the institute (or congregation), and its adaptation to the changed conditions of our time. The ultimate norm of the religious life is the following of

Christ set forth in the Gospels. Each institute has its own particular characteristics and work. All should share in the life of the church. They should promote among their members an adequate knowledge of the social conditions of the times they live in, and of the needs of the church. The purpose of the religious life is to help the members follow Christ and be united to God through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The manner of living, praying and working should be suitably adapted everywhere to the necessities of the apostolate, the demands of culture, and social and economic circumstances.

By the end of the Council sessions, we had before us a full plate of recommendations for all Christians in order to live the mission of Jesus in a world which continues to change so radically. What actually happened in the years following Vatican II? The bishops and theologians returned from Rome to their local churches. Some of the Council's teachings were not received easily into the life of the churches. The collegial nature of the episcopal office was given a purely consultative role. On the other hand, there has been an explosion of new lay ministries: lay people study theology and serve as professors, religious educators, catechists, pastoral care givers, canon lawyers, and parish and diocesan administrators. Vatican II remains a turning point in the history of the Catholic Church, and indeed of world Christianity.

We, as Christians and as women religious, were asked to make a shift

from heavily European Catholicism to a global Christianity. For the first ten years, we rolled up our sleeves and went to work. Many changes began to take shape. (Search on the Internet and read "Perfectae Caritatis" to see how thoroughly we followed the directives of Vatican II.)

But we also noticed that the nuances of how to read the Vatican II documents revealed important differences: Neo-Augustinian influence and neo-Thomist perspectives. In hindsight, we can see that these differences were present in the formation of the documents, but had been compromised in order to present a consensus vote on the documents.

What are the characteristics of these views? Which do you feel comfortable with? For those who follow the thought of Augustine, the church and the world are rivals. The world is a negative entity in which sin and evil abound. We are suspicious of the world; the church is far removed from it. The church is an island of grace in a world given over to sin. This view favors a monastic style of life and spirituality, and is skeptical of Vatican II.

A neo-Thomist view practices openness to the world and gives place to history and to pluralism. It seeks the signs-of-the-times. It is theology in act, and takes a new position toward a secularized world. It emphasizes the relevance of history for theology. It is open to the idea of episcopal collegiality, and understands itself as a world church. It implements a shift from classical culture to historical

consciousness, bringing about a complete restructuring of catholic theology. It becomes historicist, phenomenological, existentialist, and personalist. It sees the universal church as a communion of particular churches. It fosters dialogue with non-Christian religions and nonbelievers.

In 1985, 20 years after the close of Vatican II, John Paul II called a Synod of Bishops. This proved to be a turning point for the rise of the neo-Augustinian reception of Vatican II. John Paul II had been steering the reception of the Council in the way he desired. This movement revised and reinterpreted the decisions of Vatican II. A basic question: is the church a society or is the church a communion? In 20 years time, the concept of church as the people of God had faded away. Also, the role of the episcopal conferences had been reduced to a merely consultative body. The rift between Augustinian and Thomist viewpoints is fundamental to understanding the debate about the Vatican II documents. The excitement in accepting the style, spirit, and vision of Vatican II was gone. The remembrance of 2,500 bishops, hundreds of theologians, representatives of Christian denominations and other religions was a picture in a history book. "Aggiornamento," "ressourcement," "ecumenism," "religious freedom," "inter-religious dialogue" were vocabulary of another time. Following the same interpretation, Benedict XVI reshaped the role of the Council. It is this Augustinian view that is likely to prevail as the bishops enter into the Year of Faith and begin to review the documents of Vatican II.

Where are we now? Right in the middle of the controversy. The debate is between "correct understanding" and "erroneous interpretations." The theological case is put forth in the documents calling for the implementation of the Year of Faith, "Porta fidei" and "Notes on the recommendations for the implementation of the Year of Faith."

A neo-Thomist perspective sees Vatican II as an attempt to rediscover in the past fresh understandings and ecclesial structures that respond to the current world. It sees the Council confirming tradition as a foundation upon which faith can build and grow. It sees God as continually present in history and in culture.

A neo-Augustinian perspective regards tradition as a wall which functions to deter erroneous understandings. It sees the present context of the world negatively, assigning such labels as secularism, relativism, or pluralism. It longs for the past, for an idealized age of Christendom.

The ongoing conversation between Rome and the LCWR (see page 11) may coincide with the Synod of Bishops opening in October of 2012 on "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith." The target is the culture of today, a culture they perceive as one of relativism, of questioning basic human experiences, of corruption, of the undermining of values for which we exert ourselves.

We as women religious have moved out of "habits" that set us apart from the world. We face the challenge of witnessing to God's presence in today's culture.

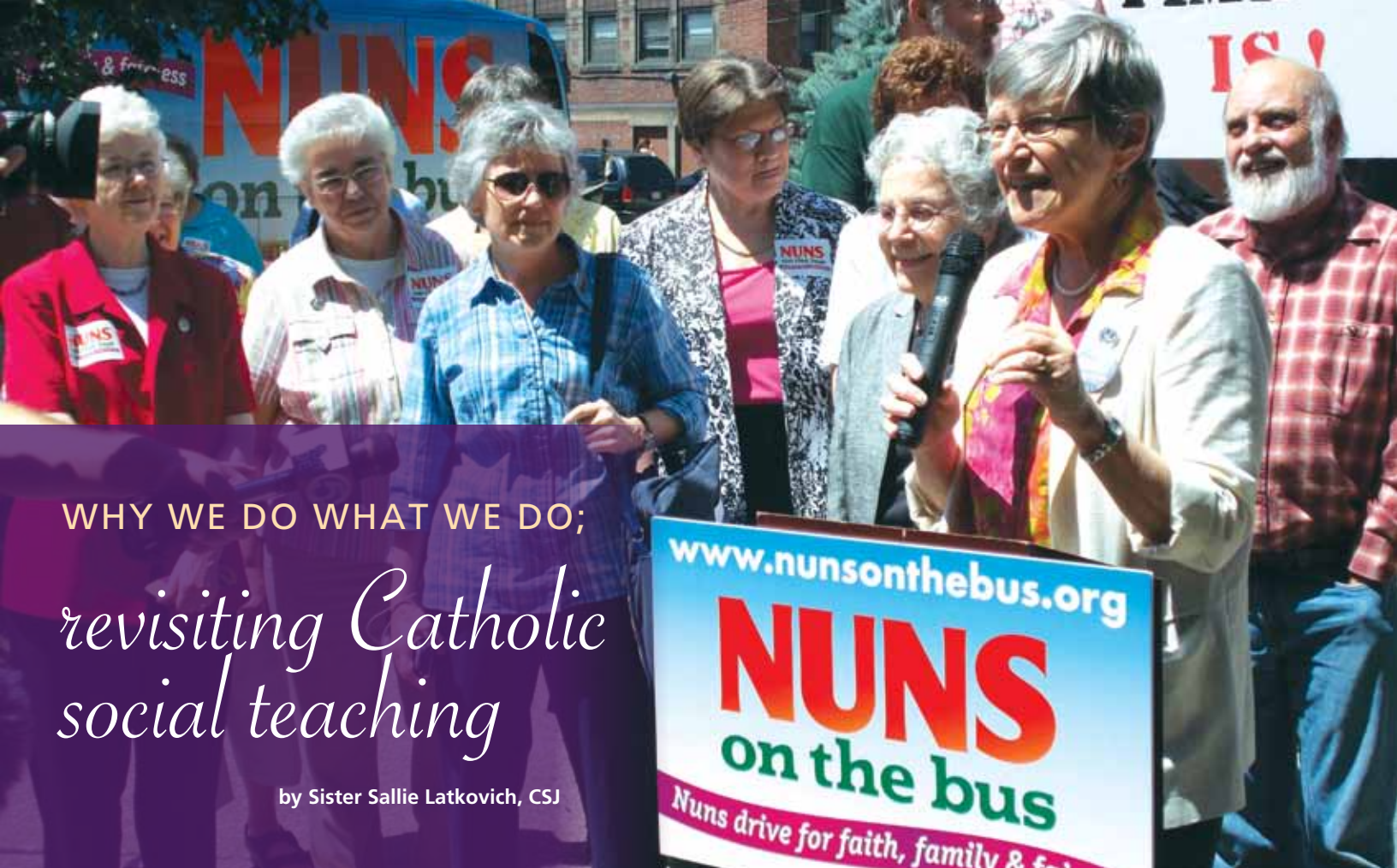
The Council reflects a conscious turning of the Church outward to the world and a deep felt solidarity with all of humanity. We seek to respond to the challenges of this time.

Fifty years and counting. ●

Photo by Joellen Strissa, CSJ



Sister Mary Peter McGinty, CSJ, Ph.D. After completing her studies in theology under Bernard Cooke at Marquette University, and teaching systematic theology for five years at the major seminary in Mundelein, Ill., she joined the theology faculty at Loyola University Chicago for thirty-five years. Now, as Professor Emerita, she serves as theology teacher and consultant, especially as called upon by the congregation.



WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO;

revisiting Catholic social teaching

by Sister Sallie Latkovich, CSJ

The Nuns on the Bus tour, which rolled across the Midwest earlier this summer to focus attention on Catholic social teaching of care for the poor, made stops in several cities where our Sisters and Associates live and minister (including St. Augustines in Cleveland, Ohio above).

Over the last hundred years, popes, conferences of bishops and local bishops have issued official documents in response to social issues that affect the people of God profoundly. Church leaders have spoken out on topics such as the importance of family and community as the basis for society, our responsibility for the common good, advocating options for people who are poor, teaching the unity of humanity, the superiority of peace over war and the imperative to care for creation. Taken together, these documents comprise what the church calls Catholic social teaching.

The body of these teachings is prophetic, rooted in justice, and quite challenging. The Hebrew word for prophet is “na’abi” — that is, one who sees. Thus, based on what the authors saw as reality in the world, their encyclicals, documents, letters and statements responded to real situations that real people were suffering in the world.

The documents call for justice — that is, “right relationship” with God, with all people (whom we in the Congregation of St. Joseph call the *dear neighbor*), and with all creation. The challenge of Catholic social teaching is that it addresses controversial social issues; and the statements are often uncomfortable and disturbing to the status quo.

Jesuit John F. Kavanaugh, Professor of Philosophy at St. Louis University, recently wrote an article about the great challenge, the searing indictment of the culture of wealth in first world North America. Kavanaugh chastises those who defend the accumulation of wealth by commenting: “I wonder what they might say of the multiple ‘off-notes’ that Jesus sounded in the Gospels. Is he ‘outside his area of competence?’ Is he ‘stoking class warfare?’ Or, is he calling us to a way of life that does not have capitalism as its bottom line? The documents of Catholic social teaching are rooted, first and fundamentally, in the Gospel.”



Our own Sister Judith Minear recently gave a reflection to some members of the congregation, and said: "Ours is a Gospel mission. Jesus was clearly open to the emerging consciousness of his time. He discovered, named and claimed a new vision: that our relationship with God and neighbor is primary — more important than laws or tradition. This new consciousness challenged the church and government of his time, even to the point of death. But Jesus' eyes were on the truth of what it meant to live into this new vision. It wasn't about breaking down a system that wasn't working. It was about "breaking open" a new vision, and co-creating with his disciples what was needed to make it reality."

Near the end of Matthew's Gospel, one finds the familiar parable of separating the sheep from the goats. The sheep are rewarded for their good works for the poor: "... whenever you did it for the least of my brothers or sisters, you did it for me." (Mt 25: 31-40) We sisters and associates of St. Joseph speak the focus of our good works in our Generous Promises: that the hungers of the world might be fed; that we strengthen, heal and renew the face of Earth; and that we work toward the transformation from a culture of power and privilege to one of inclusivity and mutuality. (See *complete Generous Promises on page two of this issue.*)

In his encyclical "Caritas in Veritate," issued in 2009, Pope Benedict XVI summed it up this way: "Charity is at the heart of the church's social doctrine. Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by that doctrine is derived from charity, which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law. (Mt 22:36-40) It is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups), but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones)." ●

Sister Sallie Latkovich, CSJ, directs the Bible Study and Travel Program as well as the Summer Institute at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. In addition, she teaches a course in Biblical Foundations of Spirituality. Sister Sallie is also engaged in retreat ministry and recently published "Mining the Meaning of the Bible," with Liguori Publications.



HIGHLIGHTS OF



Erin McDonald, who is in the application process to become a Sister of St. Joseph, worked with kids in Rwanda.

CARE FOR POOR AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Catholic social teaching emphasizes that Jesus identified himself intimately with the poor and marginalized people in society and that we must always treat them with respect, dignity, and care. This concern extends beyond one's own area to people suffering throughout the world.

THE UNITY OF ALL PEOPLE

The church teaches a basic solidarity among all people and a responsibility to work together for the benefit of all. The call of the Gospel is to live in harmony and peace among all people, respecting other nations, cultures and even religions.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The documents of the church proclaim that all people have the right to food, water, shelter and clothing, and that Catholics must be personally responsible for safeguarding these rights. The state also is responsible for ensuring these basic rights for each citizen.

Catholic social teaching



With Chicago's Holy Name Cathedral behind them, Sister Marybeth McDermott, CSJ, and other religious held a silent vigil earlier this year to demonstrate their solidarity with millions of undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AND FAITH COMMUNITY

The church teaches that family and communities rooted in faith are the foundation of both church and society, living and teaching the values of the Gospel. Every government has responsibility for protecting, supporting, and encouraging the family for the basic well-being of the entire society.



ABLE Families afterschool program offers a safe, fun and educational environment for children to grow and discover.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR STEWARDSHIP

At the core of the environmental crisis is a moral challenge that the U.S. Bishops address: that we use and share the goods of the earth, what we pass on to future generations and how we live in harmony with all of creation.

HUMAN DIGNITY

The Church has proclaimed as a basic principle that each person is created in the image of God. Every society is responsible for ensuring that human life is protected from the moment of conception until natural death.



Sister Janet Fleischhacker, CSJ, director of CSJ Ministries, visits with a child at Holy Family Child Care Center in Wheeling, W.Va.

THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The church teaches the need to respect employees and their rights to a just wage, decent work, safe working conditions, disability protection, and security in retirement. People have priority over capital; people are more important than profit. It was this issue that led Pope Leo XIII to write his encyclical letter, "Rerum Novarum" (on capital and labor), during the industrial revolution when many factory workers were mistreated and abused in the workplace.



Arise Chicago, a recipient of a grant from our Congregation, educates and assists low-wage workers in recovering owed wages and compensation. Above, former employees of Rolf's Patisserie in Chicago speak at a press conference about losing their jobs without warning and how their final paychecks bounced.

'THE SKY IS FALLING! THE SKY IS *falling!*'

by Sister Kathy Sherman, CSJ

With all the talk and misconstrued meaning about the Mayan calendar ending on December 21, 2012, the worriers among us would like us to believe that that day will be the last day of life on our planet. Not surprisingly, our traditional and cyber media have cultivated a plethora of doomsday predictions. In truth, however, the end of the Mayan calendar is actually followed by the start of a new cycle.

“*F*or the ancient Maya, it was cause for a huge celebration to make it to the end of a whole cycle,” says Sandra Noble, executive director of the Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies.

The ending of one cycle also held the possibility and the capacity for transformation in the next. The Mayan calendar starts fresh after every cycle much like ours does on January 1st each year. Most of us welcome this opportunity.

So as we approach the ending of 2012, what fresh hope for the future do we carry in our hearts and souls? What dreams do we dare to dream for one another and for all who call Earth home? As people of faith, who will we become and what will we do to create and lift up the evidence of God's reign in our midst?



Bob Englehart, Hartford Courant. Used with permission.

As a composer and songwriter, I express my dream for the world in the following lyrics:

"I dream a world where all are one and hands join hands across the nations.

I dream a world where children are safe and all creatures of Earth thrive together.

I dream a world where divisions are ended and songs ring out with sounds of healing.

I dream a world where all voices are praying and they're saying that Love is the only answer."

"All Is One" CD © 2006 K. Sherman, CSJ

It seems fitting that as we ponder the ending and meaning of 2012, we are also celebrating the 50th anniversary of Vatican II, one of the most significant happenings ever to take place in the Catholic Church. Many of us remember fondly the invitation of Pope John XXIII to open the windows of the Roman Catholic Church to let in some "fresh air." One of the mandates of Vatican II called upon the faithful to pay particular attention to reading the signs-of-the-times. In the Preface of "Gaudium Et Spes," (the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), issued by Pope Paul VI in December of 1965, we heard the following: "Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served." The introduction goes on to say, "To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the

duty of scrutinizing the signs-of-the-times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel."

Reading the signs-of-the-times today is both frightening and hopeful. On one hand we face the effects of global warming, observe major extinction of species, witness extreme poverty throughout the world, grieve as we read about the effects of wars and senseless violence and shake our heads at the rampant consumerism and greed.

At the same time, we are inspired by the growing efforts of many individuals, organizations and movements who are working together for the sake of the common good to heal and effect systemic change. Some of these include Doctors without Borders, www.doctorswithoutborders.org, which provides impartial assistance in more than 60 countries to people whose survival is threatened by violence, neglect, or catastrophe, primarily due to armed conflict, epidemics, malnutrition, exclusion from health care, or natural disasters. This organization ministers in places throughout the world where few others venture to go. Their efforts are reminiscent of the Sisters of St. Joseph who, since our founding in 1650 and throughout history, have acted with similar compassion and commitment.

On the battlefields of the Civil War, for example, the sisters tended the wounds and ministered to Union and Confederate soldiers, alike. Today, we also have Catholic Relief Services, www.crs.org, whose mission in part is to "Promote human development by responding to major emergencies, fighting disease and poverty, and nurturing peaceful and just societies."

Heifer International, www.heifer.org, is another source of global hope. It envisions a world of communities living together in peace and equitably





sharing the resources of a healthy planet. Its mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the Earth. Its strategy is to “Pass on the Gift.” As people share their animals’ offspring with others — along with their knowledge, resources, and skills — they create an expanding network of hope, dignity, and self-reliance that reaches around the globe.

Another movement that is influencing systemic change is the Pachamama Alliance. The Alliance came into being in the 1980s when the elders of the Achuar people of Peru began to recognize that growing industries like oil, lumber, rubber and commercial agriculture were having harmful effects on their environment and way of life. Seeking to change the trajectory of humankind from overconsumption to creating a just, thriving and sustainable world, they invited the global community to work in partnership to achieve that dream. Some of our sisters and associates have taken the Alliance’s leadership training, “Awakening the Dreamer,” and are now educating and training others to be leaders in the ways of planetary sustainability and reverence for all creation.

The efforts of these organizations spring from passionate and committed persons, whose care for the world flows from an ever-deepening awareness that we are truly one sacred community. They are keenly aware of the “signs-of-the-times,” and they are working and

ministering “under the lead of the befriending Spirit.” They are “fresh air” breathing new life and healing into a broken and hurting world.

They believe, as many do, that this planet we call home is an interconnected whole, an intricately woven and sacred web of life, just as Chief Seattle reminded us long ago when he said, “Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.” We are awakening to the reality of our global citizenship and it challenges us to live out of an evolving consciousness — one that continually moves us toward communion with God and all others — a consciousness that announces to the world that the time of separation and division is coming to an end!

Reading the signs-of-the-times also informs my ministry as a singer/songwriter. Engaging with the world and the pain and suffering that beset it becomes the fertile soil for dreams and songs to emerge. Here in the United States, we are presently enmeshed in the great American political process of national elections. This privilege is, perhaps, one that many of us take for granted. Months ago, while listening to the campaign vitriol during the primaries, I remembered my days singing protest songs in the 1960s. It was important for artists, dreamers and activists to speak out and remind the country about the values that birthed our country. It still is.

We need to reawaken in us what we still hold dear — all that is good, right and just about America. That desire is what inspired my song, “This Is the America I Believe In.” The song’s message is rooted in Gospel values. It advocates for the common good. It is another way of expressing the dream of God spoken by Jesus in Jn 17:9-11 “May they be one.”

*Now is the time for all to be fed.
Now is the time that all had a bed
to rest from the cold on a long winter’s night.*

Refrain

***This is the America that I love.
This is the America I believe in,
how about you?***

*Now is the time for violence to end.
Now is the time for us to befriend
those who have fallen on times that are hard.*

Refrain

*Now is the time to heal what is broken.
Now is the time to hear what is spoken,
the longing for work, for food and home.*

Refrain

*Now is the time to set our sight
on the dream once again how all have the right
to life and liberty, pursuit of happiness.*

Refrain

*Now is the time to protect all creation.
Now is the time for equal education
for children who one day will lead us in peace.*

Refrain

*Now is the time to reach out our hand.
Now is the time to join with all lands in building a
world where all can be one.*

***This is the America that I love.
This is the America I believe in,
how about you?***

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The seriousness of our time calls us to prayerfully discern when choosing leadership in any arena and when making important decisions that affect the common good. May we be blessed with wisdom, courage and grace as we exercise our voting right and privilege. 2012 may be ending but more importantly, something new is beginning. What radiant and beautiful transformations await the faithful who stake their lives, work and hearts on the belief that all are ONE! ●

*“We are waiting, we are ready, we are willing
to dawn a brand new day for all of Earth.
For all people and places and all living creatures
everywhere. We are waiting to dawn your day
of peace.”*

from “Bits of Light and Grace” © 2007 K. Sherman, CSJ



Sister Kathy Sherman, CSJ, is a composer, singer, poet and recording artist. Her original music and song invite people to recognize the sacredness of their own life stories and our common hopes and dreams for one another and all of Earth. In addition, she directs retreats across the country and in Canada and she coordinates the directors of the congregation’s CSJ Associates Board.

To order Sister Kathy’s CDs, log onto www.csjoseph.org, and click on “Ministry of the Arts” icon on the lower right of the homepage.



Look for the signs in the *water*

by Sister Kathleen Durkin, CSJ

*“The water that I
give will turn into
a spring inside...
welling up...”*

— Jn 4

In our Fall/Winter 2011 issue, Sister Ginny Jones, CSJ, wrote in her article, “Water is becoming ‘blue gold,’” about our history of sacred and practical relationships with water and called us to act now to protect access to fresh water resources for all people. She cited escalating corporate and consumer demand — specifically the mammoth bottled water market and privatizing public water systems for business profit — as two of the most immediate threats.

For this article, Sister Kathleen Durkin, CSJ, interviewed four people whose work involves other growing threats to the fresh water supply, especially in the area of the Great Lakes and places where Mountain Top Removal (MTR) and natural gas drilling have destroyed or threaten to destroy wide areas.

What does this have to do with us as people of faith? This 50th anniversary year of the Second Vatican Council reminds us. The introductory statement to the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” reads, “... the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs-of-the-times and interpreting them in light of the Gospel. ... We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its expectations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics.”

When Vatican II met from 1962-1965, world awareness of environmental destruction began emerging as a sign-of-our-times. Rachel Carson’s book, “Silent Spring,” came out in 1962, causing ripples across the planet about water and ground contamination by the widespread use of chemicals.



Carol Warren



Dr. Ben M. Stout



Joellen Sbrissa, CSJ



Tom McCaney

Vatican II was a transformative experience for the Church and for women religious in particular. The call to read the signs-of-our-times in light of our congregation's mission and charism — all-inclusive love of God, the *dear neighbor* and all creation — compels us to do what we can today to protect access to fresh water as a human right. The following people, whose work gives them insight into growing threats to our fresh water supplies, were kind enough to agree to this interview for *imagineONE*:

- **Carol Warren**, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, Marcellus Gas Drilling Concerns Coordinator
- **Ben M. Stout III, Ph.D.**, Professor of Biology, Wheeling Jesuit University
- **Joellen Sbrissa, CSJ**, peace and justice coordinator, Congregation of St. Joseph, LaGrange Center; member, Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes; member, Water and Environmental Groups at Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR).
- **Tom McCaney**, leads Socially Responsible Investment efforts for the Sisters of St. Francis, Philadelphia; through the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, he is the lead filer on resolutions with Alpha Natural Resources.

Kathleen: For decades we believed water was plentiful and cheap and we used it with little care. Why are we so worried now?

Joellen: The demand for water is doubling every 20 years, twice as fast as population growth. The "UN Report on Water" notes that four main areas of human activity create the largest demand for water: agribusiness, energy production, industry and human consumption. Out of all the water on Earth, only 2.75 percent is fresh water. 2.05 percent is frozen in glaciers; 0.68 percent is groundwater; and only .011 percent is surface water in lakes and rivers.

Carol: I think in today's world, with so many people competing for resources, we can no longer consider water plentiful or cheap. First of all, we're polluting large amounts of the limited fresh water we have. Drilling for natural gas will remove untold billions of gallons permanently from the water cycle. Privatization, too, gives corporations control over water that should properly belong to the citizens. In addition, climate change is already straining water resources in many areas of the world. Christian Parenti's book, "Tropic of Chaos," details how climate change (particularly regarding water use) is contributing to violence in many equatorial areas.

Tom: Where the coal industry has adopted its mountain top removal process, there are two big ramifications — burying streams and creating slurry ponds, which can overflow.

Kathleen: Whose responsibility is it to make sure that all people have access to enough fresh water?

Joellen: The notion that water belongs to the people is an old one found consistently even in early emerging communities around the world. Maude Barlow, former senior advisor to the president of the U.N. General Assembly regarding water and author of many books on water concerns, maintains that water belongs to the commons — to Earth, other species and future generations, as well as our own.

Ben: Generally it's been the responsibility of local governments. In the last decade some government officials have moved to privatize many things such as letting business buy into city water supplies and delivery systems and sell water for huge profits.

Carol: I think it is up to people, beginning at the local level. We also have to be ready to demand support from state and federal agencies. We must be ready to stand up for our rights and, especially, the rights of people who have no voice — those living in poverty — and animals, birds, reptiles, plants, etc.

Tom: From a global perspective, the World Health Organization says a lot about the human right to clean water. With access to clean water, people have a reasonable expectation of health. The U.N. also has put out a statement on the human right to water. In my work, we use principles from international organizations.

Kathleen: What does the Church say?

Joellen: Catholic Social Teaching maintains that water is a universal and inalienable right. And it is an urgent and growing need of people living in poverty. Pope Benedict XVI said, "... limited access to drinkable water affects the well-being of an enormous number of people and is frequently the cause of illness, suffering, conflict, poverty, and also death."

Fresh water is precious to begin with

Kathleen: Joellen, I'd like to spend some time with you on the main sources of fresh water in the U.S. What are they?

Joellen: Fresh water resources include lakes and ponds, rivers and streams, reservoirs, wetlands, and aquifers or groundwater. Fresh water is only .007 of one percent of all the water on Earth. The water we have on earth has existed from the beginning of time. We cannot make more water. It is a closed system — a constant quantity.

Kathleen: How much of America's fresh water needs do the Great Lakes serve, and how many people benefit from them?

Joellen: The Great Lakes ecosystem is the largest fresh water ecosystem in the world. The five lakes hold more than 20 percent of the world's surface fresh water. More than 40 million people live and work in the Great Lakes basin and they rely on the lakes for all their fresh water needs — commercial and private fishing, drinking water, cooking, bathing, etc. The lakes are the economic center at the heart of the continent.

According to U.S. Geological Survey reports, agribusiness is the main user of surface and ground water in the U.S., using about 70 percent of the available fresh water. Industry uses about 22 percent and municipalities and households account for about eight percent.

Kathleen: We remember a crisis of pollution when Lake Erie was declared dead in the 1960s. What is the condition of the Great Lakes today?

Joellen: Several of our sisters belong to the Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes (RCGL), which collaborates with organizations like the Alliance for the Great Lakes, Freshwater Futures, and other local groups, to keep informed and take action to help preserve the Great Lakes. The coalition worked diligently with legislators from the eight states bordering the Great Lakes on agreements set forth in the Great Lakes Compact. The legislatures approved the compact, adopting certain water conservation plans and specific rules for cleaning up pollution and managing the use of Great Lakes water. Then, the U.S. Congress approved it and President

Bush signed it in 2008. The compact recognizes the Great Lakes as a shared resource, which no single state owns, and that all of those states are stewards of its waters.

Kathleen: What is the best action citizens can take to preserve the Great Lakes' vital resources for the common good?

Joellen: Keep informed of any news about them, especially new cases of pollution or governments wanting to privatize local water supplies. Get involved in protecting them. Subscribe to online newsletters like www.foodandwaterwatch.org; www.water.org; and www.freshwaterfuture.org, and call or write to your congressional and state legislators about introducing and voting for protective legislation.

Kathleen: Other parts of the country get their water from rivers, dams, streams, aquifers. How healthy are these sources of fresh water and what are some of the threats they face?

Joellen: The Ogallala aquifer is one of the largest sources of fresh water in the world. It stretches about 174,000 square miles across all or portions of eight states, generally from north to south including South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. If it is drained, it would take more than 6,000 years to refill naturally. More than 90 percent of the water drawn from the Ogallala Aquifer irrigates crops for agribusiness, and it also supplies drinking water for the area from Nebraska to Texas. The proposed Keystone pipeline would go through portions of the aquifer, endangering the water in this area if there were ever a leak.

Gas drilling is another threat to the water supply

Kathleen: Thanks to advertising by gas companies, more people are becoming aware of a new kind of energy harvesting: hydraulic fracturing. How widespread is this across the country?

Carol: First, I need to correct a common misperception. “Hydraulic fracturing (fracking)” is merely one part of the shale gas production process. The fracking itself occurs very far underground, and if done halfway correctly, should not have a huge impact. The dangers are more from incorrect procedures or human error during other parts of the process — inadequate cement casings (which can lead to underground ruptures or blowouts and explosions); chemical spills on site; spills during handling the wastewater; improper disposal or leaks from trucks; etc. Of course, there are some instances in which water does seem to have been polluted due to migration of chemicals below the surface. These hydro-geologic links are difficult to make, however, and this is why the gas companies get away with saying there is no solid evidence of pollution or earthquakes caused by “fracking.” They could certainly not say the same if they were to include the entire extraction and production process.

Colorado, Wyoming, Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas have been devastated by gas drilling. The same is true in New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and now West Virginia. In Wyoming, for example, there are massive areas where there is a well every 1,000 feet in any direction. Citizen activists say the number of wells is beginning to overwhelm parts of Pennsylvania. Ritchie and Wetzel counties in West Virginia are



beginning to have large numbers of wells in concentrated areas, which creates a serious health risk due to invisible volatile organic compound emissions in the air. The concentration also increases the likelihood of spills and other toxic accidents. Many of these chemicals are so toxic that if the gas industry did not have an exemption from the federal Clean Water Act, they would have to be Superfund sites if spills occurred.

Kathleen: This kind of gas production is a difficult issue, because it provides vitally needed jobs and additional gas and oil that are in high demand.

Carol: Typically, the jobs do not even go to local people. I went to a public hearing in Clarksburg, W. Va., and saw that the cars and trucks in the parking lot were largely from Texas and Oklahoma. Bringing in workers from other states creates disturbances to the local communities by suddenly swamping them with out-of-town people who flood the hotels and put pressure on local infrastructure. So “jobs” is a poor argument for allowing unbridled gas development.

Currently, the Department of Environmental Protection is working on a proposal to allow the companies to make large pits all over West Virginia for the disposal of waste water instead of making the companies foot the bill to use better, safer processes. This is possible because the federal Resource Conservation and Restoration Act (RCRA) exempts oil and gas waste from classification as hazardous waste — even though the very same chemicals are classified as hazardous when being disposed of by any other industry. These proposed pits are toxic dumps, pure and simple. Once again the citizens of our state will be left holding the bag for an extractive industry that will leave nothing behind but ill health and environmental degradation. Not worth it!

I’ve never heard of one of the companies wanting to cooperate with the community. I attended a conference in Pittsburgh about a year ago and people from out west, many of whom had horror stories of having to leave their homes, or of being extremely ill, stated that the

relationship with the companies was, basically, always adversarial. There always are problems, and the companies don't want to address them. To do so would be to have to admit they have polluted, ruined people's health, forced them out of their homes. Any such admission would be grounds for a huge lawsuit, some of which are happening anyway.

Mountaintop removal and water "don't mix"

Kathleen: We now know that the damage the coal industry has done through Mountaintop Removal (MTR) in West Virginia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania and other mining states has devastated the land, rivers and streams and the lives of people in mountain communities. How would you summarize it?

Tom: The effects are profound and comprehensive. Everything from the quality of the air, water and human health, down to the biodiversity of the forests, and the impact on wildlife, has been bad. Even the beautiful landscape is gone. It has changed the quality of our lives and our livelihoods, all in the name of cheap energy.

Ben: It has become total ecosystem destruction. Blowing up the mountain takes away all the natural pathways, and when the company rebuilds it, trees won't grow on mountaintop removal sites. The topsoil has been buried, the water cycle is distorted.

Kathleen: How does Mountaintop Removal affect the rivers and streams?

Tom: The rivers and streams are not just sources of water, they are living organisms. They are entire ecosystems,

and introducing toxic and nontoxic foreign substances can't help but have a devastating effect. This is a human rights issue. The people in Appalachia, particularly around the mountaintop removal sites, no longer have the basic right of clean water and the expectation of a reasonably healthy environment that we all expect.

Kathleen: How seriously has the health of local residents been affected?

Ben: In some "cancer hollows" in southern West Virginia, the incidence of disease is remarkable. Mountaintop removal generates vast quantities of coal slurry that the companies dispose of in impoundments that are leaky or by injecting them underground into the worked out mines.

Tom: Measuring the health effects is difficult because each mine has its own unique chemistry. Some have high selenium or high arsenic, and others don't.

Coal dust from mining and processing affects air quality. A survey in Mingo and Boone counties (W. Va.) revealed that more than half the homes had hydrogen sulfide gas measurements as high as 21 ppm (parts per million) compared with the standard tolerable concentration of 0.071 ppm.

Kathleen: What can be done to reclaim the land and rivers and streams?

Ben: In order to sustain the coal economy, we need to slow it down and use it for the unique resource that it is. We should stay with traditional mining, which would create more jobs and be far less destructive. Beyond that, the world

needs to diversify its energy sources from wind power, solar power, and less and less coal.

Tom: Short of banning the practice of mountaintop removal mining, we need to hold the protective agencies accountable for enforcing laws already on the books. We need to hold politicians accountable for passing more stringent rules on environmental matters and require coal companies to honor their social contract to be good environmental stewards and responsible neighbors.

Kathleen: That's where people in this country could make a difference by keeping informed and contacting legislators on issues that destroy natural resources, communities and citizens' health in order to maximize business profit. In the end, working for the common good is the only thing that will work. ●



Sister Kathleen Durkin, CSJ, is a member of the Congregation Leadership Team. Her lifelong interest in gardening and love of Earth stems from growing up in West Virginia, the heart of Appalachia, and from her love of her grandfather's garden. She also treasures two pastorals from the Appalachian bishops that have influenced her – "This Land is Home to Me" (1975) and its follow-up, "At Home in the Web of Life" (1990).

Reflection

Considering the needs of others

by Sister Pam Young, CSJ

A woman traveling from one village to another encountered several delays on what she thought would be a two-hour trip. The narrow dirt road meandered through the area, adding extra miles to the journey. The sun seemed to beat mercilessly on the roof of the bus. Although all of the windows were open, only a small breeze offered any fresh air to the passengers. Several times the driver brought the bus to a complete stop while a herd of animals grazed along the roadside and spilled out onto the road itself seeming unaware of the vehicle and its passengers.

After several hours the woman began to feel twinges of hunger. She thought about an orange that lay in the bottom of her bag, but decided not to reach for it. If she pulled it out and others saw it, they would probably feel even hungrier than they already were or, worse yet, someone might take it from her. No one on the bus seemed to have brought along anything to eat or drink.

Another hour elapsed and the woman reached into her bag. She drew out the orange, peeled it carefully, separated the sections, placed them on her open palm, and offered the orange to those seated near her. People accepted her hospitality, each gently taking a section of the orange and leaving the last slice for her. As the fragrance of the orange wafted



through the bus, other passengers withdrew from their traveling bags pieces of fruit, chunks of bread, a handful of nuts, and shared them.

This story reminds me of the four gospel accounts of Jesus feeding several thousand people. In each account Jesus blesses a small amount of food, gives it to others to distribute, and excess food remains after all have been fed. Perhaps the reason for the excess is that following Jesus' example of sharing, people reached into their satchels for the tidbits they brought on the journey, and in sharing them with others they not only enhanced the food that Jesus had multiplied, but also offered hospitality to those around them. They had some food all along but were too selfish to admit

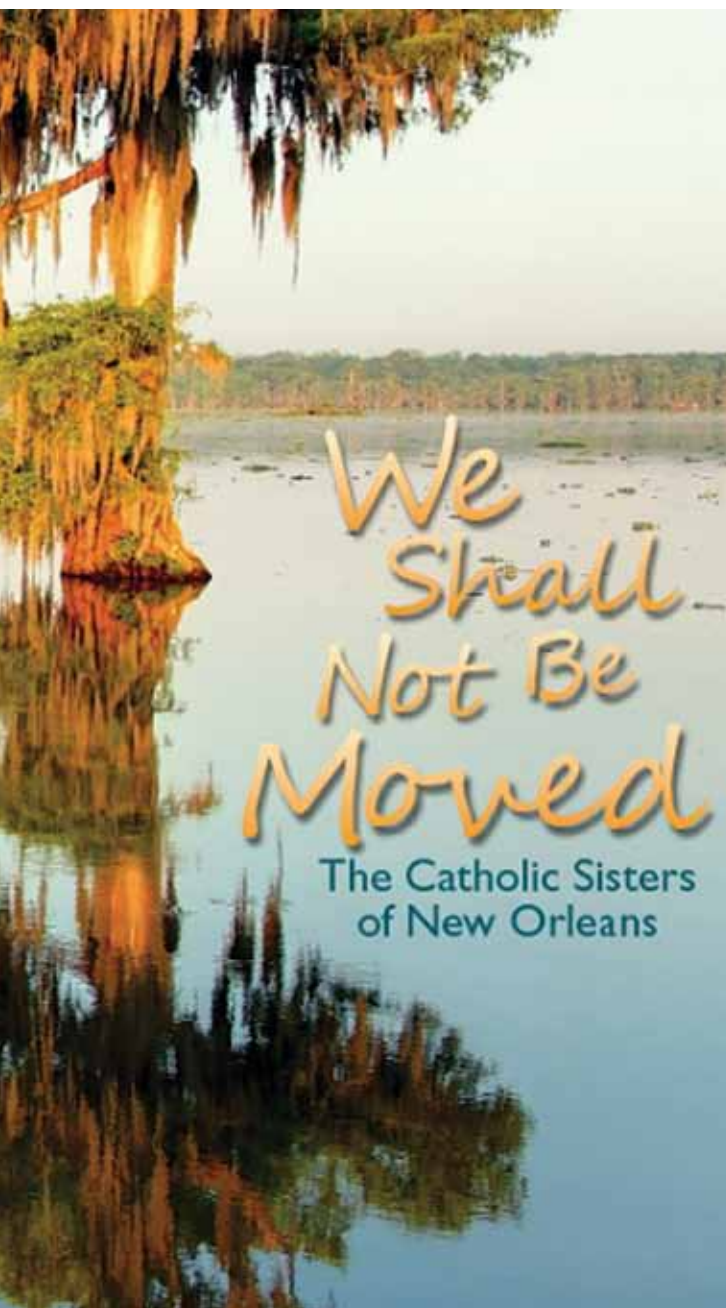
it until Jesus enticed them to share for the sake of the common good.

Seeking the common good seems to be an endeavor that flows into our consciousness, ebbs into the recesses of our mind, then surfaces again at some later time. We have the wherewithal to provide for each other as well as ourselves but often lack the determination to accomplish this aim. Working toward the common good is a challenge because so many factors mitigate against its realization. Theologians use the broad term "sin" to describe our penchant for looking to self-interest first and the common good second.

Futurists tell us that humankind is entering a new phase in its evolution. Our "evolution" or improvement as a species will open us to possibilities. If we humans truly are to realize more of our God-given potential, our goal needs to be the common good. And think of the possibilities: use of natural resources in such a way that all may be fed, clothed and sheltered not only now but also into the future; development of an attitude of reverence, not just tolerance, toward others so that war, dominance and grasping for power become undesirable and unnecessary; deepening of our understanding that all aspects of creation are related and interdependent. What an amazing world this could be! ●



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AFTER THE STORM:

New documentary captures
sisters' resilience in
post-Katrina New Orleans

When Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005, the entire country felt their anguish and loss. Six Catholic communities of Sisters, including the Congregation of St. Joseph, also experienced loss as a result of the disaster - of convents, chapels, and motherhouses, but also ministries that had served the families of New Orleans for decades. The Sisters faced a difficult dilemma: To remain and rebuild – or to walk away. Mindful of their long New Orleans legacies and the massive needs surrounding them, they chose to stay and to continue their service in the city they love. Their stories – of struggles facing the storm and the giant obstacles of rebuilding – have been captured in a poignant, compelling documentary, *We Shall Not Be Moved: The Catholic Sisters of New Orleans*.

We Shall Not Be Moved premieres on ABC stations beginning Sunday, Sept. 23, 2012 in New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Other areas, check your local listings or, visit the film's website www.weshallnotbemovedmovie.com for additional information.

To order a DVD of the film, please contact Ministry of the Arts, a sponsored ministry of the Congregation of St. Joseph, at www.ministryofthearts.org, or call 1-800-354-3504. ●