

# *imagine* ONE

THE CONGREGATION OF THE  
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

SPRING/SUMMER 2012 ■ VOL. 4 ■ NO. 1



The time of the  
singular leader is past

*We are the ones we have been waiting for*

*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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Photo by Sister Caroline Benken, CSJ



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The message on the front cover is a paraphrase of the wisdom from "The Hopi Elders Speak."

Photo by Ann Hultgren



#### 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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#### Reclaiming their dignity. Women create gowns that preserve patients' dignity

If you guessed LaGrange Park, Ill., you are right! This striking depiction of our Congregation's patron saint was created by resident artist and sculptor Sister Mary Southard, CSJ. Entitled "Joseph on the Journey," it stands next to the main entrance, greeting all those who live or work at, or visit the center.

## Sister Pat Bergen, CSJ, reflects on...

### *Leadership*



Our country is about halfway through the Republican primaries and caucuses and, then, comes one of the most difficult presidential elections in our history. The nation is in debate. The big question is, "Who can best lead?" Leadership is a significant question, not only in U.S. politics, but in every arena of life.

Perhaps the question of "Who can best lead?" is outdated. What worked at one moment of history may not work at another. Perhaps the real question needs to be, "What time is it?" Unless we read the signs-of-the-time, we may miscalculate and miss our opportunity. The breakdowns we see in so many of our systems (education, religion, government, etc.) are announcing something; but are we listening? Are we recognizing that breakdowns usually announce breakthroughs? What is it that is coming to birth in our midst?

One of the great breakthroughs that has come to light in recent history is the story of the unfolding, interconnected universe. This revelation in science corresponds to the story inherent in all the major religions of the world. It is changing the way we look at everything. In an interconnected ecosystem, everything that breathes leads and influences every other being here now — and those yet to come. Each smile or rolled eye, every thought, decision, word or action has an effect on everything forever.

We know that no one person or small group can lead alone. The time of the solitary leader is ended. Leadership is an act of the whole. Each member of society is called to be responsible and accountable. A good question may be, "What vision inspires our leadership?" Since we know that everything is interconnected, is our vision large enough to include everything that exists? Do our decisions support the common good of the whole cosmos now and in the future?

In an effort to discern the answer to this question, we sisters and associates gather specifically to share the movement of the Holy Spirit in each of our lives. We listen deeply to one another, paying attention to what happens within us as we listen. We each share what God seemed to stir within us as we listened. We name what God seems to be inviting of our community as a next step to living as one with God and the whole created universe. We acknowledge that the Spirit of God is the leader of the unfolding universe. It is our calling to magnify that leadership of the Spirit in our lives.

We invite you to experiment with this model of leadership. The world desperately needs every person to participate in leadership, focusing on a vision of the whole, so that the children of every species will flourish and thrive because of our love and vision. We believe that this is the vision of Christ and we are privileged to participate. May this be our gift and our legacy!

With gratitude and love for your partnership in this vision,

*Sr. Pat*

Pat Bergen, CSJ

Congregation of St. Joseph Leadership Team





Photo by Josh Hallett. Courtesy of Hyku.

## Preventing human trafficking *during Super Bowl XLVI*

A group of 11 congregations of sisters in Indiana and Michigan that invests in various businesses in order to affect social change – in this case, the lodging industry – collaborated to prevent human trafficking during the days of festivities surrounding Super Bowl XLVI in February. A form of modern day slavery, sex trafficking spikes wherever major events, like the Olympics, the World Cup, the Super Bowl and huge national conventions take place, to meet the high demand for commercial sex.

The Coalition on Corporate Responsibility for Indiana and Michigan (CCRIM), of which the eleven congregations are members, coordinated the effort. Sr. Rosie Coughlin, CSJ, of Tipton, Ind., initially took the lead and arranged a meeting last September with others working against trafficking, including the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA), the Office of the Attorney General of Indiana, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney of Indiana and the Indianapolis Police Department.

“Human trafficking is a tragic violation of human rights that devastates its victims, strips away their dignity and security and tears at the fabric of global society,” Sister Rosie said. “It is a form of imprisonment and oppression that demands a compassionate response to the cries of the victims who long for a future with hope. This is what is at the heart of the CCRIM Super Bowl 2012 Anti-trafficking Initiative.”



Beginning last year, CCRIM developed a database of some 220 hotels and inns in the area, the names of their general managers, contact information, and which hotels are affiliated with chains that already have signed the “End Child Prostitution and Trafficking” (ECPAT-USA) code. Those who have signed the Code of Conduct in the hotel industry are Hilton Worldwide, Wyndham Worldwide, Millennium Hotel in St. Louis, Mo., and the Carlson Companies, which include chains such as Radisson Hotels and Country Inn and Suites. *(In our last issue, Fall/Winter 2010, imagineONE reported that the U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph was instrumental in the Millenium Hotel – St. Louis signing the ECPAT-USA code.)*

More than 40 sisters from the participating congregations took part in training and practice before contacting the hotels. Those who participated from our congregation were Sisters Rosie Coughlin, Caroline Benken, Marlene Schemmel, Mary Anne Dalton, Nina Rodriguez and Mary Ellen Gondeck, all CSJs; and Germain Tackett and Dot Masterson, CSJ Associates. They asked the following:

- Have your hotel employees received training to recognize potential occurrences of human trafficking in your hotel?
- Is there a protocol in place for hotel employees to document and report possible incidences of trafficking?
- Are hotel employees/managers aware of local groups working to end trafficking?
- Is the hotel willing to make anti-trafficking information available to guests?

In addition, women religious from different congregations in Illinois sent letters in the name of the Illinois Women Religious against Human Trafficking to the hotel managers in greater Indianapolis reinforcing the same process and commitment.

Of the 220 hotels that the women contacted, 200 hotel mangers provided responses to questions asked by members of the religious orders. As a result of these phone calls, seven hotels requested training prior to the Super Bowl to help their employees recognize trafficking situations and how to assist victims. In addition, 99 hotels asked for informational materials.

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“Human trafficking is a tragic violation of human rights that devastates its victims, strips away their dignity and security and tears at the fabric of global society.”

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Just prior to Super Bowl weekend, a Cleveland NBC affiliate WKYC-TV investigative reporter interviewed Sisters Nancy Conway, CSJ, and Marilyn Nickol, CSJ, as part of a larger segment on human sex trafficking during the Super Bowl. Earlier, leadership team members Sisters Nancy and Pat Bergen, CSJ, each had Op-Ed pieces published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and Chicago Tribune, respectively. These and news releases sent out by CCRIM member congregations received tremendous coverage and were picked up online as far and wide as the LA Times, USA Today, the Associated Press, International Business Times, and too many more to list. To see some of the coverage, visit our website at [www.csjoseph.org](http://www.csjoseph.org) . ●



*Doing something about it: Sister Rosie Coughlin, (l), delivers a package of human trafficking awareness materials to Anderson, Ind., Fairfield Inn manager Amanda Millions.*





# Sister Bee Jay

## crosses cultures to teach teachers

*Nsukka teachers listen intently as Sister Bee Jay, CSJ (left), explains ideas that can be incorporated into their curriculum. Photo by Vito De Frisco*

We all know that teachers open our minds and help us explore worlds beyond our own. That is exactly what Sister Bee Jay Ciszek, CSJ, principal of the Cardinal Bernardin Early Childhood Center in Chicago, is going to be doing when she travels to Nsukka, Nigeria, Africa, to share her knowledge of the Montessori method of education with teachers from the Diocese of Nsukka.

Sister Bee Jay's venture is part of *Vision 2020*, which is a collaboration between the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago and those of the Diocese of Nsukka. Its purpose is to generate a viable Catholic school system in Nsukka to meet the needs of the 21st century for quality education.



One of the challenges for the Nsukka schools is getting supplies that the teachers desperately need — like desks, text books, even paper — to teach. Another is educating the teachers to improve their teaching methods. Currently, they stand in front of the students and teach by repetition and yet, that is all the teachers can do because of the lack of resources and because it was the way they were taught.

In June, Sister Bee Jay will train nursery school teachers in the Montessori method. "When I introduced ideas to the teachers the last time I was there, like making some of the materials for the classroom, they were fascinated and excited. They began to listen in a different way. I could see them start to put the wheels in motion," she said.

During her last two visits to Nsukka, Sister Bee Jay was impressed with the enthusiasm the students and teachers have for education. It was obvious that everyone was happy to be at the school. "They really value their education," she said. Students wear uniforms, are expected to have a pencil and a notebook, and their family is required to pay a fee.

Unfortunately, not all families are able to offer their children this opportunity.

The Congregation of St. Joseph's Generous Promises Grant Fund has awarded two grants to *Vision 2020* because the Archdiocese's vision perfectly reflects the mission of the Congregation of St. Joseph that "all may be one." Our Generous Promises call us to work for systemic change — that the hungers of the world might be fed. This effort contributes to bringing about a shift in the global culture from institutionalized power and privilege in a part of Africa to a culture of inclusivity and mutuality. Catholic school children in Chicago also support the partnership through their *Dollars for Dreams* program each spring. For more information, log onto [www.archchicago.org/Nsukka](http://www.archchicago.org/Nsukka) . ●

## ACADEMY ARTS CENTER

# *Brings balance to academic excellence*



*Spring Dance Concert  
Photo by Kacie Fuselier*

How exciting! St. Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge, La., will have its brand new Academy Arts Center completed in July and ready for the fall semester of 2012. But instead of thinking of opening nights and glamour, think about students developing their talents and abilities, not only for their own enjoyment, but in service to others, as well.

"The three pillars of our mission," St. Joseph's Academy President Sister Adele Lambert, CSJ, explained, "are academic excellence, faith development in the Catholic tradition and personal growth. This is the personal growth part that complements our students' academic work."

St. Joseph's Academy's consistent history of academic excellence earned its three-time designation as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. As such, the Academy actively supports a wide array of evolving technology for education applications. In fact, anyone interested in sampling the Academy's technology can take a virtual tour of the Academy Arts Center on the school's website: [www.sjabr.org](http://www.sjabr.org). At the top of the home page, click on "Mission Advancement," then, "Capital Campaign," and finally, "Renderings and Virtual Tour" for a "real feel" tour experience.



*Photo by Kacie Fuselier*

St. Joseph's Academy Principal Linda Fryoux Harvison explained that, "In addition to the Academy's investment in technology to support academics, our feasibility study in 2003 revealed the need for greater balance with the arts and performing arts."

Today the Academy offers — and the new Academy Arts Center will house — dance classes from ballet to modern and jazz; choir, chorus and choral jazz; band and keyboard; theatre I-IV; and visual and fine arts with drawing I-IV and painting I-III. The new space and facilities will optimize these curricula.

Approved in 2008 by the Academy's board of directors, the Academy Arts Center has been part of a long-term master plan.

*The new Academy Arts Center also will house visual arts classrooms and a gallery area to display students' work.*





*The new building's cornerstone is laid. From left, Leadership Team members Sisters Nancy Conway, CSJ, Marguerite O'Brien, CSJ, and Jeannie Masterson, CSJ; Academy President, Sister Adele Lambert, CSJ, and Leadership Team members Sisters Jeanne Cmolik, CSJ, Pat Bergen, CSJ, and Kathleen Durkin, CSJ.*

Planners designed it to provide for the practical needs of the visual and performing arts curricula and chose not to duplicate other facilities in the surrounding community.

"We are only 15 minutes from two large theatres that are available to us," Principal Harvison explained, "so ours will be a basic 'black box' theatre; that is, an enclosed room with no actual stage. But it has theatrical lighting and sound equipment and room to set up seating for about 200 people." The Academy Arts Center will also house a spacious dance classroom, a choir room and four additional classrooms.

"Moving our performing and visual arts from existing space to the new center will free up space for some of our academic classes and

athletics," Sister Adele pointed out. "Almost every department will benefit."

"We see the building, also, as an entrée for encouraging other schools in the area to have performances here and as a venue for teachers who develop special holiday and summer experiences for their students," she added.

The opening of the Academy Arts Center will be the culmination of a \$6-million capital campaign chaired by long-time friends of the Academy, Sue Turner and her late husband, Bert, who contributed a major gift of \$1.1 million themselves. The Academy added generous gifts from other benefactors, volunteers, alumni and parents and the congregation. Nearing its goal, the campaign continues to receive contributions and gifts.

"Now, in August," Principal Harvison observed, "the fulfillment of the learning experience in the visual and performing arts begins for our students." ●

*Artist's  
Rendering*





John McCusker / The Times-Picayune

# Young lawyer works for social justice

## ON HER WAY TO BECOMING A NUN

*Alison McCrary works as a legal observer at the city's Sunday brass band parades. She watches out for abuse of participants at the hands of police.*

**These excerpts from an article by Sheila Stroup are printed with permission from the New Orleans Times-Picayune.**

Alison McCrary starts her mornings with prayer and meditation. ... She thinks about what grace she wants to ask for that day. ... Humility is a big one," she says. "I ask, 'How can I increase God and decrease me?'" ...

McCrary graduated from Loyola Law School in May and is in formation to become a nun in the Congregation of St. Joseph. She lives with a group of sisters ... and every night at 6 p.m. they sit down to eat together and share after-dinner prayers. ...

McCrary tries to strike a balance between prayer and ministry. The young lawyer, who will be 30 in February, has a Soros Justice Advocacy Fellowship and spends her days as an advocate and organizer, working with Safe Streets/Strong Communities, a grassroots group ...

She sees her role as a lawyer fighting for social justice meshing perfectly with becoming a nun. "People have such a misconception of what nuns are," she says. "We're supposed to run into the world, not out of it. Our eyes are wide open, and our sleeves are rolled up." ...

During an internship with the PeaceWomen Project at the United Nations in 2005, she met impressive women doing the kind of work she wanted to do. ...

After living in New York ... McCrary decided to move to New Orleans. She filled out job applications with The Innocence Project and other justice groups and arrived in the city in August 2005, just before Hurricane Katrina struck. ...

Instead of going to job interviews, she ended up working at a food pantry at St. Augustine Church with some Tulane students. ... While she was at St. Augustine, the Rev. Jerome LeDoux, who was pastor of the historic church in Tremé, invited her to come to Mass. ...

That Sunday, in the old Catholic church built by free people of color in 1842, she found an answer ... "I could really feel the spirit in that church, back to the time of the slaves, back to the time of Homer Plessy and A. P. Tureaud," she says. ...

She spent a year studying scripture and Catholic doctrine and then joined the Catholic Church. ...

In 2006, McCrary became a paralegal with the Capital Post-Conviction Project of Louisiana, where she worked with indigent defendants and began visiting people on Death Row. ... During her work as a paralegal and volunteer activities as a law student, she met several Sisters of St. Joseph and saw the important work they were doing, and she felt called to become a nun. ...

When her fellowship is over in April, McCrary will begin the second step in becoming a nun. She will go from her busy ministry in criminal justice reform and cultural rights advocacy to a two-year novitiate.

She looks forward to finishing her novitiate and making her first vows in April 2014. ●

To read the complete article, go to [www.csjoseph.org](http://www.csjoseph.org) and click on "Headlines".



# *Sisters' Charitable Fund extends health and wellness*



Photo by Connie Dale

*People associated with The Gathering Place provide fresh vegetables as part of their Health and Wellness program.*

The Sisters of St. Joseph Charitable Fund (SSJCF) hosted a luncheon earlier this year for 50 nonprofit organizations to which it awarded grants totaling \$900,000 for their roles in promoting holistic health and wellness in the Mid-Ohio Valley. The area includes eight counties in West Virginia and three in Ohio that were formerly served by the sisters' St. Joseph Hospital. The SSJ Charitable Fund was established in 1996 with proceeds from the sale of St. Joseph Hospital to the Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), in order to continue making health and wellness services available to the *dear neighbor*.

Among the organizations that received grants in 2011 were Camden-Clark Medical Center, Washington County Free Clinic, Community Food Initiatives and the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department, which serves a six-county area.



Photo courtesy of Wood County Schools

*As part of their L.I.F.E. (Lifestyle Improvements in the Family Environment), Wood County Schools conduct student health screenings.*

"While the far-reaching effects these organizations have on the lives they touch cannot be fully measured, they benefit many people," Congregation Leadership Team member Sister Jeannie Masterson, CSJ, said. "Like a stone thrown into a body of water, the ripple effect continues."

According to SSJ Charitable Fund Executive Director Sister Jane Harrington, CSJ, "The grants specifically go to organizations that promote healthy eating, physical activity, oral healthcare and other initiatives that advocate improving holistic health and wellness for the people in the Mid-Ohio Valley. Eligible organizations must be a non-profit, public agency with tax-exempt status or a community-based group sponsored by such an agency, with a project or proposal consistent with the fund's guiding principles."

To learn more about the fund and its application process, visit the website at [www.ssjcharitablefund.org](http://www.ssjcharitablefund.org). ●

# Our Church Needs Leaders for the 21st Century

Last fall young adults gathered in Lake Charles, La., and Mobile, Ala., for the first retreats offered by our congregation as partners in the Charis Ministry Retreat program. Charis Ministries was founded by Father J. Michael Sparough, SJ, and others with the support of the Jesuit community to foster continuing spiritual development on topics of importance for adults in their twenties and thirties. Charis Ministry Retreat partners gather the team of young adults who will offer the retreat to their peers and assist the team in its formation as spiritual leaders and facilitators.

Our congregation's vocation team believes that this collaboration would be an excellent way to reach out to and form relationships with young adults who are finding new pathways into spiritual growth and parish life — and for whom social networking through digital media is the norm. These retreats offer young adults a unique opportunity to learn and understand their Catholic faith better, build community with peers and participate in our congregation's mission and charism. Team members plan to work closely with parishes and dioceses in supporting their efforts to foster leadership in the Church among this age group.

Sister Ileana Fernandez, CSJ, helped Emory Desonier, a young adult professional in Louisiana, to bring the

experience to Spring Hill College in Mobile, from which Emory graduated, and to her home diocese in Lake Charles. Approximately sixty young adults attended the two retreats, saying afterwards that it was a "wonderful, amazing experience; we need more opportunities like this for young adults!" They also spoke of having the opportunity to grow in faith, have spiritual direction, and realize why their Catholic faith is such a gift.

Sister Lois O'Malley, CSJ, hosted a Charis Retreat at the Magnificat Center in Wichita, Kan., February 24-26. Sister Celeste Cotter, CSJ, will coordinate with the Joliet, Ill., Diocese to offer a retreat March 24-25.





Sister Ileana and a young adult team will give a retreat April 22-23 at Louisiana State University for graduating LSU seniors. Sister Ily's team members include alumnae from St. Joseph Academy in Baton Rouge.

Sister Celeste found a willing collaborator in Paul Jarzembowski, young adult coordinator for the Joliet Diocese and also executive director of the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association. Paul was very excited to bring Charis Retreats to the Joliet area for the gifted adults he works with who are part of his diocesan young adult commission.

"Our Church needs leaders for the 21st Century," Paul said, "especially among the young adult population. But in order to tap into leadership, we need to get people more engaged with the Catholic faith."

Please pray for the young adults who commit themselves to make this experience available to their peers and for all who attend, seeking God's will in their lives. For additional information about the Charis retreats, contact Sister Celeste Cotter, CSJ, at [ccotter@csjoseph.org](mailto:ccotter@csjoseph.org) . ●



*Staying in touch with young people, who are the future of the Catholic Church, Sister Celeste Cotter, CSJ, (left) met up with volunteer Kevin Comben at the Archdiocese of Detroit's Rainbow CYO Youth Rally in February.*



## SSJ Health and Wellness Foundation awarded Bishop's Cross

Since the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling, W.Va., founded the SSJ Health and Wellness Foundation in 2001, it has provided more than \$7-million in grants for school-based health centers, especially in rural areas of the state. In recognition of that commitment, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, W.Va., will present the distinguished Bishop's Cross award to Co-Executive Directors of the foundation, Sisters Janice Landwehr, CSJ, and Helen Skormisley, CSJ, at the annual Catholic Schools Dinner on March 25.

In his letter notifying them of the award, Bishop Michael Bransfield wrote, "Your nomination and selection reflect the outstanding qualifications you have demonstrated and the high esteem in which you are held by the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston." ●

# Congregation enjoys growing interest in the *CSJ Associate program*



Associate Pat Gibbons (l) and Sister Kathy Sherman, CSJ, team up to collect goods for local shelters in LaGrange Park, Ill.



Associate Rita Bowen from Cleveland, Ohio with her sponsored child during a mission trip to India.



Associates Ann Miller (l) and Monica Rosa volunteer at the annual Nun Open golf outing in Tipton, Ind.



Associate Mary Ann Fischer has worked at Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland, Ohio, for more than 40 years.

Whether in smaller towns or larger cities, CSJ Associates are of one mind and heart in partnership with the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Their enthusiasm for the mission and spirituality of the CSJs is growing.

CSJ Associates are women and men age 21 and over, who share the CSJ commitment to the Gospel and resonate with the congregation's charism and spirituality. The most common reasons people become CSJ Associates are:

- To deepen one's personal relationship with God, neighbor and all creation;
- To intentionally live the mission of unity and core values of the community;
- To serve the *dear neighbor* within one's own lifestyle and occupation; and
- To bring one's gifts, life experiences and hopes to share in community.

Associates make no binding financial or legal commitments to the sisters and continue to live in the lifestyle they have been called to by God. Today, our congregation of about 700 sisters also has more than 500 lay associates, both men and women who bring their gifts, life experiences and hopes to sharing in the CSJ mission of unity, "that all may be one." In 2011, we welcomed 18 new associates. This year more than 60 men and women are participating in the inquiry stage of associate relationship.

Associate inquirers move through a formation process, learning the history and practices of the congregation that facilitate building mutual relationships with one another and with our *dear neighbors*. This relationship assists all of us in feeding the hungers of the world. The yearlong process culminates with a formal Rite of Commitment.

If you are interested in exploring an associate relationship with the CSJs, please send an email message to Sister Kathy Sherman, CSJ, at [ksherman@csjoseph.org](mailto:ksherman@csjoseph.org) or call her at (708) 482-5061, and she will connect you with the CSJ Associate director closest to the area where you live. ●



### *Doctors appreciate CSJ values – professionally and personally*

As parents of nine children, Brooke and Tom Whitten are testament to a life of giving. Both Tom and Brooke are physicians living in “Small Town,” Indiana after serving on a Navajo reservation in Arizona for several years.

Their days are vastly different now. Brooke feels called to stay home with her children and educate them through a home-school system... not so different than life on a reservation, after all. Tom is a surgeon at St. Vincent Mercy Hospital.



*The Whitten family*

Tom and Brooke became CSJ Associates because of their relationship with Sister Rosie Coughlin, CSJ, who served as Chaplain at St. Vincent Mercy Hospital when Tom began serving there. Tom credits Sister Rosie with changing his perspective on life. “Rosie helped me to more fully understand human dignity and dignity in death. She helped me to do the best I could, but to ultimately put each patient’s life into God’s hands and let go.”

Tom and Brooke lovingly attribute the formation of their family to the sisters, especially Sister Rosie and Sister Wanda. Sisters Rosie and Wanda Wetli, CSJ, spend many pleasant hours with the parents and the nine active children. This experience of being one with the family has given the parents a strength and confidence to walk their faith journey with the certainty that the sisters are an ever-present part of their lives. This family not only gives financially to the congregation, but they offer their time and bring their children for visits with the sisters.

Their prayers for and

with the sisters bring peace and comfort to all.

“The sisters have certainly given more to us than we have even begun to give,” Brooke said. “The spirit that is within the Sisters of St. Joseph is so peaceful and gentle; it is so inviting, who couldn’t love them all? I want our children to know them all and learn how to love and serve as they do.” ●

### *Hope... a future of possibilities*

The generosity of our friends and benefactors brings hope to the Sisters of St. Joseph as we envision a future full of possibilities. Your gifts can help us live our mission, to provide a hopeful future for people in need.

There are many ways you can help support us, including a direct gift or a planned gift through your will, life insurance, stock, IRA or a gift annuity. To learn more, visit [www.csjoseph.org](http://www.csjoseph.org) and click on “Make a Gift.” Or, for more information, please call Gary Mulhern, our gift planning specialist at (304) 232-8160.

# LESS LEADERSHIP AND

# *More in the Name of Sophia*

by Peter Block



## *Introducing Peter Block*

*In his observations of a new kind of leadership emerging in our times, Peter Block draws a direct connection to the qualities that the old wise men of Israel attributed to Sophia in the Old Testament. They held her up as the model of wisdom and gifts of the feminine –a role model he recommends for leadership now and the future.*

*In his article, Peter elaborates on a collaborative leadership that emanates from those who make up a group – “the membership, sisters, citizens and ordinary people whose common goal is the common good.”*

*Is it living proof of an emerging leadership, then, that our Congregation’s Generous Promises (See page 2.) direct us to work for the common good, and that we strive to nurture a participative and inclusive style of leadership for all members and associates?*

*Peter has committed himself to a similar way of being and serving. He is an international speaker, consultant, writer and futurist who has been a featured speaker for our Ministry Board and Leadership Convocation and the Transformations Spirituality Center in Nazareth, Mich. He also has met to pray and converse with the Congregation Leadership Team on several occasions during the last five years.*

*In this article, he speaks to the need for a participative leadership that truly can “feed the hungers of the world.”*

*– Joyce DeShano, CSJ*



The eternal interest in the question of leadership stems in part from our recognition that it matters and also from our long-term disappointment in people with power. We witness in our own lives and in the public arena people from all walks falling from grace...the church, sports coaches, financial barons, elected officials, corporate executives.

We have spent decades now thinking that it will help if we put qualifiers in front of the word “leadership”: Servant Leadership, Relational Leadership, Situational Leadership, People-Centered Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Collaborative Leadership. This expresses the romantic belief that if we can define leadership carefully and train people to that definition, we will produce human beings that can use power with more humanity and grace.

Suppose that instead focusing on the functions, definitions, and actions of leadership, we reconstruct our basic notion of leaders, maybe even allowing our interest in leadership to wane.

### Reconstruction and Ordinary People

This reconstruction begins with getting more interested in *membership, citizenship, sistership* and *the actions and role of ordinary people*. This was the original intent of the innovation called Democracy. We have left much of that intent behind and democracy has devolved into electioneering and the vote. Better to have a vote than not, but we need to awaken the widespread experience of participation that modern life has diffused. We have abandoned the commons, the neighborhood, and substituted a virtual world.

There are, however, signs of a renewed interest in membership, citizenship, and sistership:

- The **Occupy** movement is all about ordinary people. It has serious protocols for how citizens gather--hand signals to govern the way of interrupting, expressing boredom, disagreement, agreement, enthusiasm, consensus. It organizes effort through assemblies, councils, and trainings. It is a democratization movement that is more interested in the nature of participation than making a point. In fact the major criticism about it, aside from some instances of people

acting violently, is that Occupy has made no coordinated demands for traditional leaders to argue with. Smart.

- The innovation of **Large Group Methodologies** movement has for three decades found ways that groups can gather that emphasize listening, all voices present in the room, constant reflection, a focus on the future over the past, seeking areas of agreement rather than conflict. It has moved leaders (people in authority) away from the podium and put them into a small group, where they belong. The methodology goes by many names: Art of Hosting, Future Search, America Speaks, Whole System Strategy, World Café, Open Space, Circle Way. These all place leaders in the position of convening, a brilliant alternative to the traditional invocations of leadership.
- A third example of reconstructing leadership comes from certain **indigenous and spiritual communities**. In these traditions the focus is on listening. Listening to God. Listening to one another. Hearing all voices, and listening action into existence. Quaker. Native American. First Nations. Mennonite. Angeles Arrien, a cultural anthropologist, brings questions that cross all these cultures to give a taste of what this kind of leadership evokes: What touched or moved me? What inspired me? What challenged me? The task of leader here is to hold a container and open up intimate and sacred space with questions. Very different from leader as role model with answers.



Occupiers in New York City.

## Hurry Up, Save Money, and Find Somebody to Blame

The arguments against these plebian and membership forms of leading are always the same: Takes too much time. Blurs accountability. Costs too much. Maybe we are ready to put these arguments in their place. Speed, cost, and accountability are always the language of Patriarchy and Empire. From Pharaoh to Donald Trump, we ask citizens to surrender power in the name of speed, cost, and accountability.

Here are some sleeping pills to the restless productivity of empire:

**Speed.** For anything that matters, there is time enough. Time is just an idea, not a fact. We made up how long an hour is, how long a day is or a year. It is a fiction that we finally agreed upon for the sake of convenience back in the sixteenth century. Thank Pope Gregory. Before then, every culture had its own way of thinking about time, days, seasons. It was commerce that needed consensus on time. Businesses needed measures to function. When speed, in the service of business, defines our way of being together, our souls and relationships pay the price. Urgency is the argument for insensitivity. If our goal is the right use of power in service of the commons, let's bide our time.

**Cost.** Cost consciousness and a bottom-line orientation are an expression of a scarcity mentality. That outlook is cost *un*consciousness. As if there were not enough of anything to do all that is needed. It is a construction of the dismal science, economics. This endearing profession is fundamentally organized around scarcity. It believes that what is abundant has no value. Scarcity is the justification for patriarchy and centralized control. If we choose abundance, then there is time for everything. Everything in its time. Cost then gets spread out, amortized over eternity. It evaporates as an excuse.

**Accountability.** Another seduction and tool of empire. Accountability is the code word for always asking, "who is in charge and who do we blame." As if caring for the commons is moved ahead by centralizing power and pinpointing fault. Accountability is the instrument

of individualism. In a communal world, we are not worried about where the buck stops. In caring for the common good, we twist the language of accountability and decide that citizens and sisters are beholden to each other. They are beholden because of their relatedness to each other, not out of fear of authority. Citizens are as capable of honoring their word to each other as they are of becoming "team players" and surrendering sovereignty to the leader.

## Everyday Living

Unfortunately these communal ways of thinking are too often the exception instead of the constant way of organizing human effort. We know that in a crisis, everyone pulls together. But the approach we use regularly is the aging *Robert's Rules of Order*, which is a conflict management tool that relies on voting. In the way it is commonly used, it becomes a deterrent to more authentic participation.

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When speed, in the  
service of business,  
defines our way of  
being together, our  
souls and relationships  
pay the price.

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The movements concerning how to gather are minimized by being thought of as how to run a meeting. Their communal intent is more than that. What will revive leadership is to make it *all* about convening members, citizens, sisters. Convening for the sake of all voices. Convening for the sake of relatedness, first and foremost. Convening to make sacred the space we occupy. Convening to be together and move at the speed of nature, which is always medium to slow. Convening to

honor and reveal the abundance in the world and in our community. I will trade you one hundred role model leaders for one who knows how to convene.

Once in a while speed *is* authentically needed, and we will all know this and act quickly. This is proven by the universal response to a crisis, in which all pitch in selflessly and do what can be done.

Once in a while money, or its lack, *is* decisive. This just means that we will have to move forward without it. There is much we may not be able to afford, the roof may continue to leak and life will go on.

And once in a while, *someone errs and acts to harm another*. Breaks a promise. Betrays a trust. This should not be cause for more policy, patriarchy, and control.



This is an expression of the fact that we are all human. Leaders do not have to solve this problem; communal bodies have always known how to deal with it. They ostracize the person and enforce sanctions much more powerfully than authorities would ever dream of. Human error can not be a justification for more Empire. Knowing that we are fallible deepens our commitment to each other, not to the need for more legislation and policy.

So, since you are still reading and interested in new forms of leadership--if you are intrigued by the idea of leadership in service to the commons--then I have some evidence for you.

### Communal Leadership in Practice

I know an alternative to conventional leadership is possible because I have witnessed one. A new, emergent leadership model is being created by a group that holds leadership governance for the Congregation of Saint Joseph. This group oversees the integration and future of seven congregations of Catholic sisters.

The members of this team are elected by their congregation who agreed to merge, as full equals. They spend a great deal of their time traveling to be with their members. They know in the fabric of their being that they are accountable to their communities. When they meet as a team, it is in the context of serving God, and they mean it. They pray. They sing. They meet to listen. They take the time to deepen relatedness among themselves and with their membership. This is their "leadership style."

In their practice, they are inventing what might be called a feminine-form use of power. And it is working in face of tough times. They have been challenged with an Apostolic Visitation from the Vatican. The Vatican is not happy with the Sisters in America. The sisters engage in various prayer styles, support each other to minister in all the ways that respond to the needs of the world, support people living in diverse situations. In the face of the Visitation and its questions about these practices, this leadership team continues to hold to their communal ways. In the face of the investigation, they resist the heroic fight instinct and spend time with their congregation in dialogue and reflection about how to respond. When their communal ways are questioned, they do not respond with heroics, they respond with more community.

They refuse to answer survey questions that are not really questions, but devices of accusation. They welcome the visitors. They decide to use the investigative process as an opportunity to reaffirm their charism and beliefs and live with the consequences.

In this communal way of responding they hold the power of the patriarchy in right and small perspective. In the end, they know that no one outside of the congregation has the power to divert them from their own purpose and way of living in and serving the world. They dis-empower the traditional leadership, which may really be what is most needed for us all. When they meet with the Vatican visitors they greet them with kindness. They pray with and for them. They say that they want the visitors from the Vatican to know them, what they stand for and what forms their commitment to God takes. So there is no defense. No lawyers present. A dialogue, which is a form of sacrament, is what occurs.

Who knows the outcome, the bottom line, the results? "Did it work?" is not a leadership question. The true leadership questions are: What did it mean, and who were they in the face of a turbulent world? That is the promise of emergence.

The emerging form of leadership for the common good may be to have as little leadership as possible. Keep it in the container called "convening." Use the Quakers as a role model. No paid professionals in charge of our relationship with God. Teachings are all around us. There is plenty of time. Seek what costs very little and opt out of the consumer culture. Let relatedness to other members, citizens, sisters be all the accountability we need. Let power be with others, always.

And in moving this way, let all the accusations of weakness, or lack of control fall on deaf ears. Proudly stand accused. Receive these cries as the last gasps of colonization and the dying emperor. It is only out of those ashes that the common good will be cared for. And Mother Nature will be happy also. Let Sophia, holder of the gifts of the feminine, be the role model for leadership and let the sisterhood, including us all, produce the leadership form of the future. ●



Photo by Gina Sullivan

## READING THE SIGNS-OF-OUR-TIMES

In a social environment that often operates from a “have and have-not” perspective, sisters, associates, employees, donors and friends of the congregation have been working to change unjust social systems that perpetuate poverty and oppression in our neighborhoods here and around the world. The key is that it’s critical to educate and involve those who need help, in order to empower them to assume leadership and speak and act for their own common good.



Toward that goal, the Congregation of St. Joseph has initiated a Leadership Development Program to nurture a style of leadership that will help us to midwife a culture of being one with God and all others in areas where people live in poverty and oppression.

“Reading the signs-of-our-times is very important to any leadership program,” Sister Pat Bergen, CSJ, explained. “We began our leadership program by presenting situations of social breakdowns and breakthroughs.”

### Engaging All Members

One big breakthrough is understanding our dynamic, interconnected and sacred universe and how it relates to our Catholic tradition. This has led theologians in our time to present an awareness of God as intimate and revelatory in the universe — corresponding to the mystical aspect of the Catholic tradition.

“We know that our leadership and our mission, ‘that all may be one,’ need to be grounded in current theology, Christology and ecclesiology,” Sister Pat continued. “Hence, we invited Georgetown theologian Ilia Delio, OSF, to open the leadership program.”

With this commitment to a leadership development program, our sisters and partners intend to develop a style of leadership where every person’s gifts are needed, respected and engaged in systemic change that will bring about a universe of compassion and justice for all.

In Wichita, Kan., for example, *Dear Neighbor Ministries* offers a program called “Bridges Out of Poverty” to educate service providers and others in the community how economic class differences impact the ways providers communicate and interact with service recipients.

As a result, *Dear Neighbor Ministries* initiated a training program called “Getting Ahead in a Just-Getting-By World,” for eight of its clients living on limited resources.



*These sisters are just some of our members who are participating in leadership development that will encourage all people to contribute their skills and gifts, always for the common good.*

“The people participating felt that they had learned a lot about how to navigate in a middle class environment,” commented Kit Lambertz, executive director and CSJ Associate. Four women, who are all over age 50, became close friends, meeting at least once a week to support and encourage each other. Two, who had no source of regular income, now have part-time jobs and are learning the value and responsibilities of living a self-sustaining lifestyle.

### Enabling Better Parenting

In Kermit, W.Va., *ABLE Families* established a “Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker Program” to address the critical needs of families living in poverty. This family education program was developed and accredited by Vanderbilt University. It delivers training and assistance in the home, rather than having parents travel to a central location.

Paraprofessionals, who are knowledgeable about pregnancy, childbirth, infant feeding, child development and positive parenting, visit the homes and develop trusting relationships with the families. This unique program also provides mentors and a curriculum to guide the paraprofessionals as they respond to each mother’s unique strengths and needs. Through the outreach workers’ examples, participants gain confidence that they, too, can grow in new ways.

"Ideally, the relationships of the paraprofessionals and the mothers span three years, beginning during the pregnancy," Executive Director Sister Patricia Murray, OSF, said. "Currently, there are six outreach workers with an average of six years of experience serving 70 families in rural Mingo and Lincoln counties in West Virginia.

## Voices for Peace and Justice

On a national scale, it is the vision and work of the congregational peace and justice team that informs sisters, associates, employees and friends how they can help change major social ills in support of poor and disenfranchised people in the U.S. and abroad.

According to Sister Mary Ellen Gondeck, CSJ, of the CSJ Peace and Justice team, the congregation educates people on how they can help through weekly newsletters posted on our website ([www.csjoseph.org](http://www.csjoseph.org)), in our Centers and outside work places. Working in support of our *Ministry Against the Death Penalty*, the Peace and Justice team's attention to changing laws has contributed to the repeal of the death penalty in Illinois and is working toward ending this great injustice in Ohio, Indiana, and Kansas. Throughout its history in the U.S., the death penalty has proved to be unjustly administered with racial bias and bias against people who are poor and uneducated.

On a world scale, the team works against human trafficking. At this time, focus is on the trafficking of young women and children all over the world for the sex trade, and child slavery in the Ivory Coast. Sisters and friends have written letters to the chocolate companies

asking them to investigate the source of the chocolate and how it is produced. In the United States, the congregation has been working with several other religious communities to focus efforts on human trafficking in and around events like the Super Bowl. (See article on page 5.)



Sister Marybeth McDermott, CSJ

Our sisters and volunteers have also taken a strong stand in support of immigrants to the U.S. In the Chicago area, sisters meet to pray weekly at the immigration detention center. And Sister Marybeth McDermott, CSJ, has obtained permission from the McHenry Jail Administration to meet one-on-one with immigrant detainees to provide them pastoral care. In Wichita, Kan., the *Family Support Network* has engaged pro bono attorneys to work with immigrants.

Another way peace and justice team members work to influence corporate policies is by being in contact prior to annual shareholder meetings, submitting proposals, and attending the meetings and dialoguing with senior management, particularly on human rights and environmental issues. In addition, sustainability committees at each of our Centers provide multiple opportunities to change the way we use energy and dispose of waste materials.

## Transforming Leadership

Our Nazareth, Mich., Center's *Transformations Spirituality Center* offers "Transforming Leadership," a workshop series designed to empower people in creating a future distinct from the past. Author and consultant Peter Block, whose article appears in this issue (See page 16.), will lead the first session of this series. The focus is on a future based on possibility, rather than on deficiency — a future in which we each admit our roles in what is and commit to using our gifts to transform isolation into connectedness and self-interest into caring.

Michele Gossman, director of the spirituality center, explained that, "Many of our workplaces and communities have become places of isolation and self-interest. While deeply connected by information, we are often estranged emotionally, spiritually and psychologically. 'Transforming Leadership' will inspire and empower others to make core changes in life choices."

There are many, many agencies and ministries that provide hot food, shelter, clothing, emergency funding and other necessary aid. Then, there is the crucial need to change the systems that create impoverished families and communities. So, in addition to addressing immediate needs, the Congregation of St. Joseph is living its commitment to explore and employ methods that will transform the future for individuals and families who may currently lack the skills and tools to make enabling changes. Creating leaders and ministries with this aspiration in mind is one way to inspire lives of peace, lives of hope and lives of unity. ●





# Sisters practice the leadership of

yes

by Janet Roesener, CSJ

When our congregation articulated its Fourth Generous Promise five years ago – “to be mutually responsible for leadership in the Congregation” – some of us had already seen it happening in many situations, and we were delighted that we were articulating it for our new congregation. Some of us call this shared leadership or distributed leadership, when individual sisters step in where they see a critical need and decide they can and are going to do something about it, always with others. Many of our sisters have joined already existing sponsored ministries like *StepStone*, *River’s Edge Spirituality Center* or *School and Tutors on Wheels*. Other opportunities for shared leadership have been found in ministries such as being pastoral associates where priests are in short supply, hospital chaplains, tutors, meeting facilitators, spirituality program providers and more, to help bring unity to God’s people in our time.

Responsibility – the ability to respond – is a hallmark of leadership in ministry for many CSJs. Our sisters see needs and respond. Sister Kathleen Bahlinger, CSJ, and up to her recent death, Sister Lory Schaff, CSJ, were doing this in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, La. In 1969, they



Photo by Ann Hultgren

*Catching up academically is hard work, but Sr. Kathleen makes it pleasant for her students.*

started tutoring young adults 19 years old and older, whom our educational and social systems failed. They deliberately chose to work in areas where home life was wanting and the educational system ignored poor students or others with a variety of problems.

“Separate but equal was never equal,” Sister Kathleen told me. So she and Sister Lory felt that they were educating future parents, present parents, grandparents and citizens in a population that is usually written off by our society.

Sister Mary Urban Aranyos, CSJ, has been ministering and living in a rural setting east of Cincinnati for nearly forty years. She works in three parishes with various parish committees, serves on a parish council and is instrumental in creating community spirit over a

geographic spread of many miles. At two of the three parishes, Sister is regularly a lector and Eucharistic minister. She ministers to people at home, in nursing homes and in the area hospital with her presence, by praying with them and bringing the Eucharist to them. They know and appreciate that without Sister Mary Urban there would be no one else in her place. This is true particularly with veterans at the large county veterans’ complex built just eight years ago. The veterans have been incapacitated for many years and generally have few visitors. Her leadership in faithfulness to the people she serves speaks louder than words.

Leadership also can be taking on responsibilities one has never had before. Sister Ruthann Scherer, CSJ, did this when she accepted responsibility for overseeing the health care of our sisters in northern Minn. She had to learn how to relate to the various departments of St. Vincent Villa, a Benedictine care facility in Crookston, Minn., where our sisters live. She also is an advocate for them and has to deal with Polk County regarding their housing, finances and Social Security. “I find that developing a culture of inclusivity and mutuality is a challenge,” Sister Ruthann told me. “It means respectfully involving the sisters in as many ways as possible and supporting them individually in all ways.”



Photo by Cindy Hulst

*Sister Maureen Suprenant, CSJ (l), welcomes Sister Ruthann’s faithful visits.*



She has worked with many groups – such as county social services, financial services, case workers and nurses – to bring about changes for the sisters and others at the Villa.

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**Sister Ruth Kettman, CSJ**, is the Director of the Mount Notre Dame Spirituality Center in Cincinnati, sponsored by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. For nearly seven years she has invited presenters and welcomed participants who value inclusivity and mutuality in their lives. She works with a planning committee that chooses topics and presenters through mutual sharing and decision making, implementing her belief in shared leadership. In this way the committee members, presenters and the participants all play a leadership role in providing programs to deepen spirituality in the lives of women and men through workshops, spiritual direction, a spiritual book club and “Mornings of Spirituality.”

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In a New Orleans parish of predominately senior African Americans of low- to middle-income, **Sister Kathleen Pittman, CSJ**, has ministered for the last 16 years. Since Hurricane Katrina, this includes helping the beloved pastor, Father Douglas Doussan, search to find and relocate parishioners as more continue to return. “Even though most are retired and many are elderly, they are very active and vital,” Sister Kathleen explained. “They love their parish and are a people of deep faith.” With Katrina, they lost everything, but they felt and said that, “God is with us through it all.”

Sister Kathleen’s primary ministry is to facilitate the development of ministries and to train and develop leaders. “A strong Pastoral Council and more than 40 ministry leaders are training now to take more and more responsibility to help the parish to grow and develop,” Sister Kathleen said. “We’ve made it a parish priority to plan and celebrate a vibrant eucharistic liturgy every Sunday, not only to feed and nourish the parishioners, but also to inspire and motivate them to live their faith in their everyday lives and to advocate



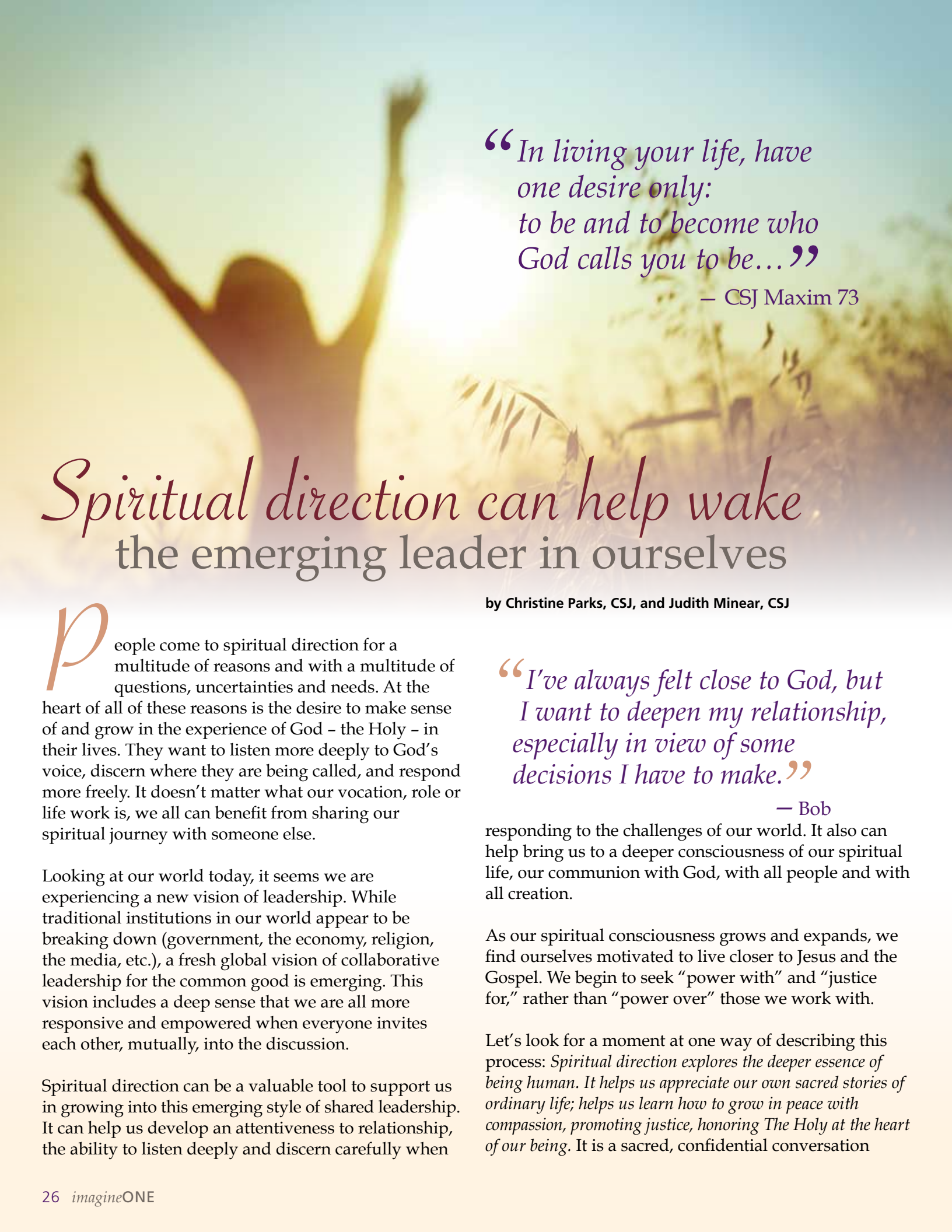
*Sister Kathleen assists at the baptism of a brand new parishioner.*

for a just and peaceful world.” The parish vision is, “to build a kingdom of truth, justice, peace and love in this world for all people.”

Each of these sisters in her own way is living out the congregation’s Fourth Generous Promise — to be mutually responsible and accountable for leadership in the congregation — and learning how to help others do the same. ●



**Sister Janet Roesener, CSJ**, (formerly Sister Mary Thomas) is a group facilitator and volunteers in the congregation’s Cincinnati area office as medical claims administrator. Previously she taught and was administrator at the elementary and secondary school levels. She served at St. Mary of the Woods in Russell’s Point, OH, Guardian Angels School in Cincinnati and Archbishop McNicholas High School in Cincinnati. She also served in province and congregation administration.



*“In living your life, have one desire only: to be and to become who God calls you to be...”*

— CSJ Maxim 73

## *Spiritual direction can help wake the emerging leader in ourselves*

by Christine Parks, CSJ, and Judith Minear, CSJ

People come to spiritual direction for a multitude of reasons and with a multitude of questions, uncertainties and needs. At the heart of all of these reasons is the desire to make sense of and grow in the experience of God – the Holy – in their lives. They want to listen more deeply to God’s voice, discern where they are being called, and respond more freely. It doesn’t matter what our vocation, role or life work is, we all can benefit from sharing our spiritual journey with someone else.

Looking at our world today, it seems we are experiencing a new vision of leadership. While traditional institutions in our world appear to be breaking down (government, the economy, religion, the media, etc.), a fresh global vision of collaborative leadership for the common good is emerging. This vision includes a deep sense that we are all more responsive and empowered when everyone invites each other, mutually, into the discussion.

Spiritual direction can be a valuable tool to support us in growing into this emerging style of shared leadership. It can help us develop an attentiveness to relationship, the ability to listen deeply and discern carefully when

*“I’ve always felt close to God, but I want to deepen my relationship, especially in view of some decisions I have to make.”*

— Bob

responding to the challenges of our world. It also can help bring us to a deeper consciousness of our spiritual life, our communion with God, with all people and with all creation.

As our spiritual consciousness grows and expands, we find ourselves motivated to live closer to Jesus and the Gospel. We begin to seek “power with” and “justice for,” rather than “power over” those we work with.

Let’s look for a moment at one way of describing this process: *Spiritual direction explores the deeper essence of being human. It helps us appreciate our own sacred stories of ordinary life; helps us learn how to grow in peace with compassion, promoting justice, honoring The Holy at the heart of our being.* It is a sacred, confidential conversation



between us and our spiritual director in a spirit of shared seeking for the ways God might be touching and working in our life.

While spiritual direction can take many forms and cover a breadth of experience, there are three primary goals. The first goal invites us into a stance of **deep listening** in order to grow in relationship with God and self. What are the “voices” we listen to? We experience glimpses of God all around us, in nature, scripture, news broadcasts, conversations, and culture. Attending to God through deep listening allows us, over time, to learn to recognize God’s voice in the ordinary moments of our lives.

In sharing with a spiritual director, we also grow in recognizing and claiming our true self (the self God knows us to be), and begin to outgrow, let go of, a public self we often present to others. Growing into this integrity and authenticity enables us to live in more honest, and loving relationship with those around us. Collaborative leaders are also anchored in the deep listening of mutual conversation; they radiate this inner freedom, and joyfully place the common good in the forefront.

Another goal of spiritual direction is learning to live with a **discerning heart**. Discernment is much more than making a choice between right and wrong or good and bad. More often, we are asked to make a choice between two or more good circumstances. Collaborative leadership calls us to practice discernment intentionally, as a way of approaching decision making. As our regular conversations with a

spiritual director awaken us to our authentic selves, and to where we are finding God in our lives each day, the practice of bringing God into our decisions, through true discernment, becomes a way of life.

The third goal of spiritual direction is **responding** to God’s invitations in our lives through our well-

*“I don’t know who or what I believe in anymore. I’ve drifted away from church – and my faith. I think I believe in something more, something holy. I want help in finding out/reconnecting with what I believe in.”*

— Carol

discerned “yes!” In responding, we discover our own particular call in the vast array of relationships and possibilities that lie before us. Mutual conversation with our spiritual director allows us to be attentive to shifts, changes and nuances in our spiritual life. It can rekindle our faith, open up our vision to new possibilities, lead to greater freedom in our life. This, in turn, can lead us to be more collaborative and compassionate in both our business life and family life.

So, would the practice of spiritual direction assist you to be a better collaborative leader? Only you can answer that; however, you might want to consider it. Spiritual direction provides someone outside of your normal family and business experiences who is committed both to listen with you for your deeper

truths and to respond objectively to what is heard. A well-trained and experienced spiritual director can be trusted to listen with you — without judgment — to where God is leading.

Finally we might want to look toward Jesus as our model for leadership — the one who turns our old models upside down. Instead of “lording over,” Jesus “stood with” the people. “He did not cling to being God’s son, but rather emptied himself...” (Phil.2:6).

Jesus’ leadership style is demonstrated in an attitude of heart. It is this same attitude that forms the foundation for spiritual direction — a practice that can enhance and deepen our exercise of a more collaborative leadership that is essential for responding to the needs our time. ●

**Christine Parks, CSJ**, is retreat/spiritual director and program coordinator for “Transformations Spirituality Center” in Nazareth, Mich., and a spirituality director, as well. She earned certification in spiritual direction from Beech Grove Benedictine Spiritual Direction Internship program in Beech Grove, Ind., a graduate certificate in pastoral counseling from Emmanuel College in Boston, and a MA degree in Educational Leadership/Community Development from Western Michigan University (WMU).

**Judith Minear, CSJ**, works with the Mission Advancement Department for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph as social media manager. She recently completed training as a spiritual director through the Haden Institute in North Carolina. Her background includes seventeen years as a Catholic School principal and Diocesan Superintendent, hospital chaplaincy, and leadership in the SSJ Health and Wellness Foundation. Her relationship with her own spiritual director spans 15 years.



# Reclaiming their dignity

## *Women create gowns that preserve patients' dignity*

A smart, simple idea to make hospital gowns more “dignified” has “taken off” for women in St. Luke North End Women’s (N.E.W.) Life Center in Flint, Mich., and it continues to bring newfound meaning to their lives. The women are “at risk” – former prisoners, drug and alcohol addicts and others – who are working in a three-year “Program for Life Change.”

Sister Judy Blake, CSJ, and Sister Carol Weber, OP, manage the N.E.W. Life center, and they explained that the program teaches women about nutrition and exercise, computers, anger management, budgeting, goal setting, parenting, job preparation and basic life skills, including sewing and cooking.



*(Left to right:) Victoria Hardy models the wraparound gown; Lynn Washington is decked out in a scrub outfit and a lanyard that the company also sells; and Rose Huddleston shows the versatility of the side and shoulder snap gown. They also offer gowns that are specially designed for mammography and MRI tests.*

*Photos by Mildred Werner, CSJ*



"When we started the program, we hoped that the women who completed it would find jobs that build self-esteem and offer good pay for an honest day's work," said Sister Judy. But shortly after the program began, General Motors pulled out of the area taking thousands of jobs with it. The sisters felt they had to find some other source of jobs in a very depressed business area.

Coincidentally, or divinely, a grantor for the center's literacy program mentioned how uncomfortable he was during a recent hospital stay because of the flimsy hospital gowns, and that sparked an idea. "We have excellent sewers," Sisters Judy and Carol realized. So they proposed the idea of making better, more dignified hospital gowns to the women, who agreed it was an idea with a future. They named their product line *Gowns 2 Kover* and created a real business, N.E.W. Life Enterprises. They offer a variety of *MI (Michigan) Gowns to Kover* and *MI Scrubs 4 You*, which come in an assortment of fabrics, colors and patterns. They sell to local hospitals and doctors' offices and surgery and imaging centers in Flint. They even received an order from a local veterinary clinic for scrubs for its staff! "We did have to pick up animal print material for those, though," said Sister Judy.

But that's not all. Business students from Baker College in Flint, Mich., entered into an ongoing partnership with the N.E.W. Life Center and helped write the company's business plan. They also redesigned the website, and are creating marketing brochures. Logistics students from Baker are analyzing the company's space in order to maximize productivity.

In only a couple of years, the sewing enterprise that started with four women has grown to nine. Sister Judy attributes its success to faith. "We stand back and see where God wants to take us, and every time we've been faithful to that mentality it's been amazing," she said. "What we do is exciting and it is just wonderful to see lives truly change." Sister Carol's plan includes ownership: "We want to see the women running and owning the company themselves one day."



*Crystal Riggs prepares the material for a special order.*

Crystal Riggs, one of the women in the program, is thankful for her new life. Crystal was a drug addict who made numerous attempts to get straight. Her son would cry for his mother but, try as she might, she just wasn't able to break the addiction cycle until she found St. Luke's N.E.W. Life Center. "It's a blessing. It's so different from being on the streets. This is what I needed to change my life," she said. Now 26 years old, her son is very grateful to have his mother back in his life.

The N.E.W. Life Center story aired on a local television station and, since then, orders come in daily from hospitals, doctors' offices and patients; and a local hospital's lobby gift shop sells them as well.

To learn more about the St. Luke N.E.W. Life Center, go to [www.stlukenewlifectr.com](http://www.stlukenewlifectr.com) . ●

# Reflection

## Jesus' leadership calls us to be one

by Marcella Clancy, CSJ

A new kind of leadership is emerging in our day and, yet, it was modeled by Jesus more than 2,000 years ago. Throughout his life, Jesus exercised a leadership that was counterintuitive. Rooted in his passion that all be one, his leadership was most strikingly symbolized by stripping himself, getting down on his knees, getting dirty and treasuring others.

*Stripping himself* ~ Leadership modeled on Jesus is less about individual authority and more about communal discernment; less about personal ability and more about unlocking others' energy; and less about promoting the leaders' ideas and more about gathering the wisdom of all to assure compassionate care for those whom the decisions will affect. To lead in such a way demands divesting one's ego for the sake of the common good. It is a model that emphasizes "leadership with" rather than "leadership of."

*Getting down on one's knees* ~ Before healing a blind man, Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" Isn't it obvious what the blind man wants? Yet, Jesus did not presume to know, but respected the inner wisdom of the man to name his own needs. An inherent danger of leadership is presumption. Is not



"The Washing of Feet," by Sieger Koder

the leader expected to know the answers? The shift here is from arrogance to humility, believing every person has an inner wisdom that needs to be brought forth. The leader's role moves, then, from providing correct answers to asking the right questions.

*Getting dirty* ~ Leadership is messy. Choices are not always black and white, but rather varying shades of gray. Compromises frequently are

necessary. It seems impossible to please even some of the people some of the time. A leader willingly bears the burden for unpopular decisions, apologizes for errors in judgment, and, when wrong, courageously reverses course.

*Treasuring others* ~ How long does it take an infant to recognize that its foot is part of its own body? In our growing global consciousness, we realize we already are one. To love another as myself is not just a moral imperative, it is a gospel truth. The other IS myself, and I am the other. Leading from this truth moves us from superiority to compassion, from rules to flexibility, from objectivity to empathy and from impartiality to unioning love.

After Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, he said, "Do you understand what I have done to you? I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you." (Jn 13: 13, 15) ●

**Sister Marcella Clancy, CSJ**, formerly Sister Marie Patrick, is administrator of the Cleveland Center. Previously, she held positions in hospital administration and served in leadership positions in parishes.



# Let Your Light...

Among us walk leaders: dynamic, quiet individuals who don't necessarily look for leadership positions, but they see needs that must be met, and they reach out to enlist the help of others. They somehow seem to have the gift of empowering others to take action in ways others might have overlooked.

Below, we offer just a few examples of effective leadership.

## Sister Marjorie Bassett tells of two sisters who took the lead...

*Sisters Grace Scola and Pat Dillon, both CSJs, recognized the need to paint the gazebo on the Nazareth campus. The project proved to be larger and more involved than the sisters could handle. They didn't give up, they involved others. At first, a member from Borgess Hospital's IT Department assisted, then Knights of Columbus from one of the local parishes came another day. Soon, a youth group, whose assistance a Borgess IT person engaged, came to help. Through the combined work of the sisters and all these others, this project was completed. More than that, we all observed a form of leadership that invited others to participate, and, at the same time, will have a positive effect on the lives of everyone involved and those who use the gazebo.*

## Sister Joellen Sbrissa, CSJ, is grateful for leadership among associates...

*Seventeen years ago, CSJ Associates began making a 600-mile drive to Clarksdale, Miss., to build new homes for deserving families. The LaGrange Park Center's late Sister Mary Lavoie, CSJ, requested assistance for Habitat for Humanity – and the rest, as they say, is history. Since that time, four teams of volunteers have made this one-week trip each summer, a total of approximately 80 volunteers. Associate Bill Stauffer, and his wife Janet, along with other associates, continue to shepherd this effort, and the teams are expanding their services with litter hikes, collecting school supplies and books for the children in the community. They even work with the local garden club to provide trees for the new homes they help build. This kind of leadership, in addition to adding beauty, celebrates the interconnectedness of all creation.*

## Employee, Kim Shackleton, recognized the far-reaching effects of leadership...

*Sometimes a big idea starts out as a small way to make a difference. That's how "Butter 'Em Up and Sock It to 'Em" began at our LaGrange Park Center. Several years ago, Sister Kathy Sherman, CSJ, initiated a local project to collect socks and peanut butter – two of the most useful items for families in need. That idea took root and now has branches reaching across the entire congregation. Thousands of socks and jars of peanut butter are finding their way into food pantries in at least seven states! Here in New Orleans, Sister Margaret Maggio, CSJ, spread the word to associates and sent emails to family, friends and neighbors. We offered our collection to the Harry Thompson Center, a day shelter for homeless dear neighbors. The trip to the center last year resulted in one of our St. Joseph Workers being placed in service there this year, and one of our donors who helped us deliver the socks and peanut butter is now volunteering at the shelter one day a week.*

## CSJ Associate, Mary McCormack, shares about one person's leadership...

*It is amazing how special needs among employees are often met. One person, Virginia Click, sees a need and then rallies others to help find a solution. Every day, she becomes aware of how we could pool resources (time, talent, finances) to make a difference in the lives of individuals and families. She does this quietly, but always involves others in the process. In the end, we all benefit from her leadership, and because of her, we know if we are ever in need, Virginia will lead the effort to help.*

Serving others is an amazing testament to Gospel values: "And He will answer and say unto them, 'Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.'" (Matt. 25: 45) If you would like to share a brief account of witnessing someone letting Christ's light shine through an act of God's love in the world, please send your story to [bbrewster@csjoseph.org](mailto:bbrewster@csjoseph.org).



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*Photo by Sister Caroline Benken, CSJ*

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Now there are more ways to stay connected to the sisters, associates, and ministries of the Congregation of St. Joseph.

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