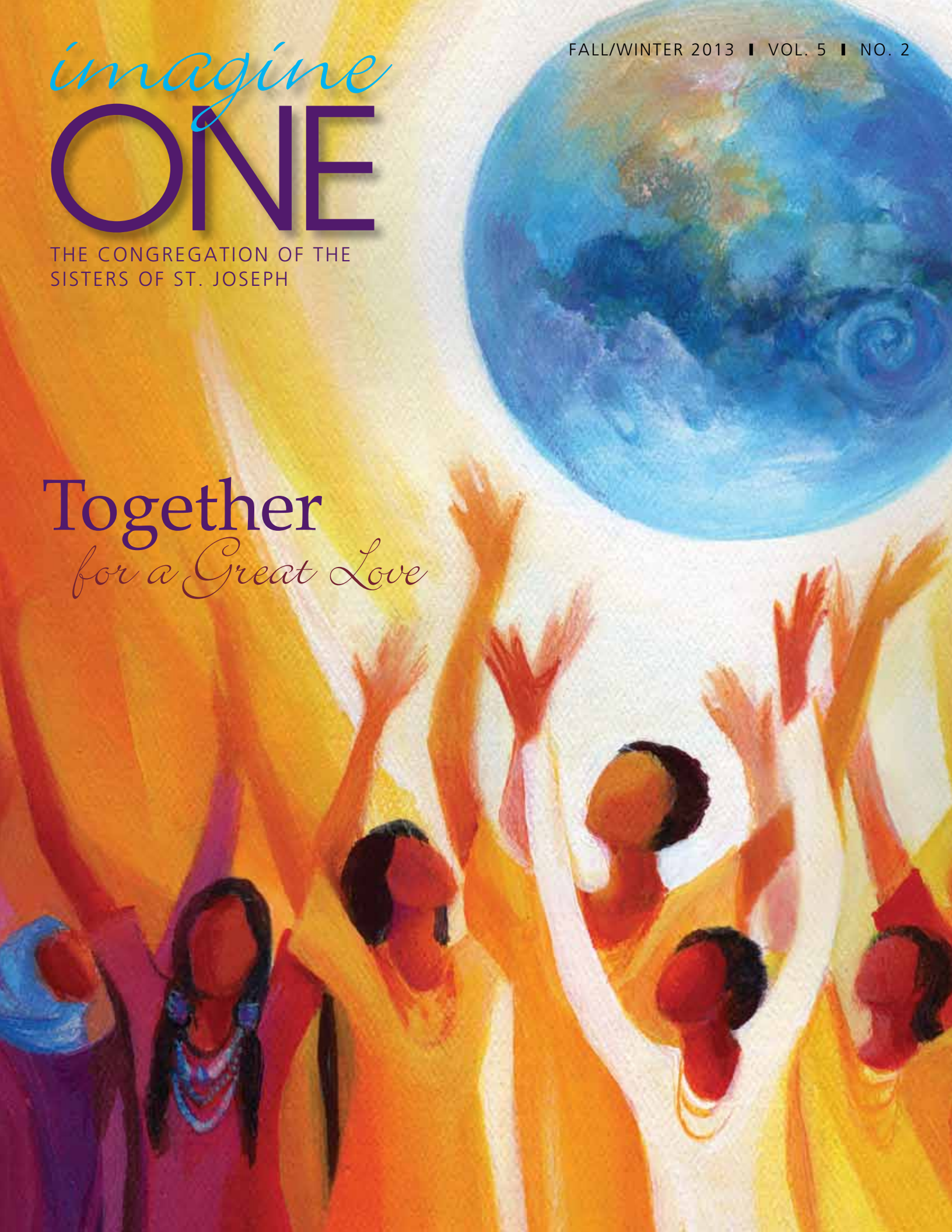


imagine **ONE**

THE CONGREGATION OF THE
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

FALL/WINTER 2013 | VOL. 5 | NO. 2

Together
for a Great Love



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.

- ⊕ 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 through the use of recycled paper manufactured by windpower and printed using soy- and vegetable-based inks.



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Sister Joan Kreyenbuhl, CSJ
Sister Jeannie Masterson, CSJ
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by Sister Kathy Sherman, CSJ



On the cover:

"Together for a Great Love," we are all called to bring Christ forth in the world, to collaborate in living out the Christ-spirit among us in our thoughts and actions. In her cover art, Sister Mary Southard, CSJ, reflects unity in that endeavor. Working together for the Common Good on Earth is found in the Gospel: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

imagine
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Sisters Barb McCartney and Paula Terese Pilon have fun at the reception following Barb's profession of final vows on June 22. Sister Paula Terese professed final vows on September 21 (see story on pages 5 & 6).

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Together for a Great Love

Do you remember as a child using your two hands to show “here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and see all the people”? This simple child’s play told me, even as a youngster, that “church” is so much more than a “building.” As I’ve matured in faith, I’ve also come to understand that “Jesus the Christ” is so much more than a historic individual, the Son of God.

As an historic individual, Jesus the Christ showed us in his flesh and blood the Great Love of God for all creation: to become one with us, to imbue all of creation once again with divine presence, to weave Love through every miniscule aspect of existence. Jesus lived, ministered, and died; the Christ continues to live, love, die, resurrect, redeem every day... through us. Jesus was the great connector, bringing in the outcasts, the unclean, the socially unacceptable. These love connections continue...through us to every kind of neighbor, where Jesus lives in disguise.

We are all both bearers of the Christ, and seekers of the Christ, who is the manifestation of God. When the eyes of our hearts are open, we recognize God everywhere. This recognition leads us into places we would not choose to go, to engage with people we would not have sought out, to work tirelessly for the benefit of those we will never meet, because our hands are the hands of God and our hearts are intertwined with all the hearts loved by God. Life isn’t about “just us;” we are clear that “just us” isn’t “justice.” Together because of and for this Great Love, we cross all boundaries that become barriers to the unity for which God longs.

Does all of this sound too heady to be real? Look around you at the people you most admire, and consider what you find so attractive. Chances are strong that they collaborate widely for the benefit of something much larger than themselves, changing the world around them (attitudes and actions) a little bit at a time. Their vision is wide and deep, recognizing similarities rather than differences. Their collaborative efforts stretch beyond their previously known contacts to address global issues, out of their understanding of Great Love.

How does this Great Love to which we are all connected, call to you? Every response will be different, but a response is invited from each, for all.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. Jeannie".

Jeannie Masterson, CSJ
Congregation of St. Joseph Leadership Team

In August, 2013, a new leadership team began serving the congregation for their five-year term. They are Sisters Pat Bergen, CSJ, Nancy Conway, CSJ, Joan Kreyenbuhl, CSJ, Jeannie Masterson, CSJ, Marguerite O’Brien, CSJ, Christine Parks, CSJ, and Rita Ann Teichman, CSJ.



Sister Barb McCartney, CSJ, (center in white), celebrates with sisters after her final vow ceremony this past June. From left are Sisters Kathleen Durkin, CSJ, Jeannie Masterson, CSJ, Marie Hogan, CSJ, Nancy Conway, CSJ, Barb, Marguerite O'Brien, CSJ, Jeanne Cmolik, CSJ, and Pat Bergen, CSJ.

Sister Barb Professes Final Vows

Congratulations to Sister Barb McCartney, CSJ, who made her final profession of vows on Saturday, June 22 during a Eucharistic liturgy in the chapel at our Center in Wheeling, W.Va. The joyful celebration was live-streamed throughout our congregation so sisters, associates and friends could join in this special moment.

Sister Barbara entered the congregation in June 2004 and entered the novitiate in January 2006. She professed her first vows on February 2, 2008, and then went on to earn her bachelor's degree in social work with academic honors from Bethany College in Bethany, W.Va. During her time in the novitiate in Orange, California, Sister Barb volunteered at Mary's Kitchen, a soup kitchen for people who are homeless. She says it is there that she discovered a real love and passion for working with and being with people who are poor and it is ultimately what led to her getting a degree in social work. Following graduation, she served as a missionary in Lima, Peru, for a month and then moved to Charleston, W. Va., to minister as patient/family representative at St. Francis Hospital where she continues to serve today.



Sister Barb signs the community book during her profession of final vows as Rev. Christopher Turner looks on.

Here is what Barb had to say about the occasion: "It was a sacred day for me. On Friday night after everyone had gone to bed or home, I went down to the chapel. I thought about all the things that had transpired in that space over the years: worship, Entrance Ceremonies and Final Professions for many of our sisters, Funeral Masses, the prayers spoken, the tears shed. I invited all of that into my heart. When I stood before God, my friends and sisters the next morning, I felt so humbled to be responding to such an extraordinary call. I was making my Final Profession of Vows for myself, but felt I was also professing and reaffirming the "Yes" of everyone who has responded to God's call in their life. It was an awesome day!" ●

CSJ Candidate Honored

by Wheeling Jesuit University

On June 22, Wheeling Jesuit University President, Richard A. Beyer presented Erin McDonald with the Rev. Pedro Arrupe, S.J. Distinguished Alumni Award for living a life in service to others. Erin, a 2003 graduate of Wheeling Jesuit will begin her novitiate year on October 12 as her first step toward becoming a Sister of St. Joseph.



Erin McDonald

During the summer of 2000, Erin came to Wheeling, W. Va., from Massachusetts and connected with the Sisters of St. Joseph when she participated in the Volunteers in Mission Program. She later moved to Wheeling to complete her bachelor's degree in psychology at Wheeling Jesuit and then received her Masters of Social Work degree from West Virginia University.

Erin returned to Wheeling last summer after two years of ministry in Rwanda with Jesuit Refugee Services and worked for Catholic Charities West Virginia in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. "After serving two years as a humanitarian aid worker with the Jesuit Refugee Service in Rwanda, I have seen and experienced, first hand, the brokenness in our world that is crying out for unity and reconciliation. As an aspiring Sister of St. Joseph, I am called to be a catalyst for positive change and healing in our wounded and fractured world," she said. ●

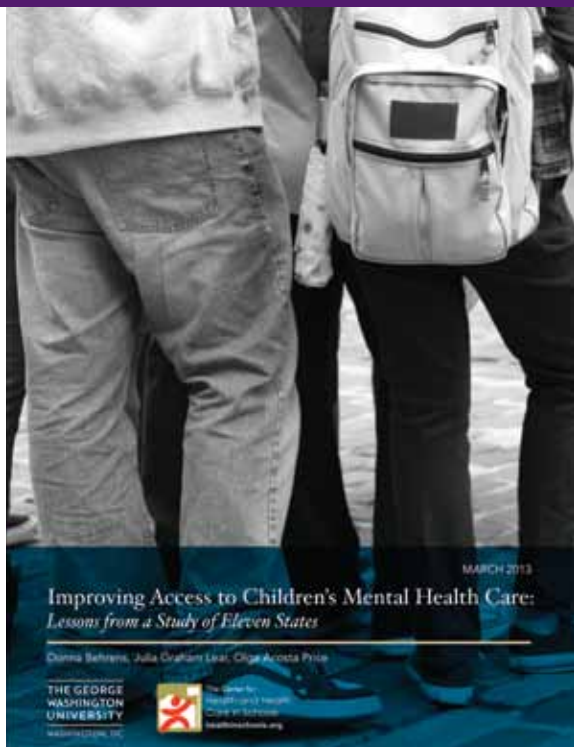


Sister Paula Terese Pilon, CSJ, (left) with her Formation Director, Sister Christine Parks, CSJ, who is now part of the Congregation Leadership Team.

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE...

Sister Paula Terese Pilon, CSJ professed final vows with the Congregation of St. Joseph on September 21st at our Nazareth Center. Please look for a full story and photos in the next issue of *imagineOne*.

"I now stand at a place of transition as I prepare to make this commitment to God and to the Congregation of St. Joseph," she said prior to her profession. "As women religious, we are continually asked to be aware and attentive to the ways we are invited to continue the Gospel mission in our church, our world, and the universe." ●



SSJ HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOUNDATION PLAYS KEY ROLE IN IMPROVING

School-Based Mental Health Care for Children

A new report detailing the accessibility to mental health care for children in schools acknowledges the Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation's efforts toward improving that access for children in West Virginia.

"Improving Access to Children's Mental Health Care: Lessons from a Study of Eleven States" is the second in a series of studies from George Washington University's Center for Health Care in Schools. The study reports on strategies to sustain children's mental health services and prevent the onset of problem behaviors. The report discusses the SSJ Health and Wellness Foundation.

The SSJ Health and Wellness Foundation, which was created in 2001 from the sale of the remaining half of St. Joseph's Hospital in Parkersburg, W.Va., works to address the wholistic health of children in West Virginia. Reflecting the congregation's long history in education and health care, it has adopted the focus of supporting school-based health centers, a program providing health access for many children, especially in rural areas.

Also making news was Sister Helen Skormisley, CSJ, co-executive director of the SSJ Health and Wellness Foundation. Sister Helen was interviewed for a story on babyboomer nuns. The story was posted on the CNN

website. Sister Helen discussed with CNN reporter, Jen Christensen, how many sisters in the babyboomer age group helped to revolutionize health care. She went on to talk about her life in the health care field in West Virginia. "I took care of many people who didn't have any idea I was a sister, but that was OK. I was more focused on giving compassionate care and alleviating people's suffering."

She also discussed the school-based health initiative that is a focus of the SSJ Health and Wellness Foundation and the importance of mental health care for children.



Sister Helen Skormisley, CSJ.

The SSJ Health and Wellness Foundation is a sponsored ministry of the Congregation of St. Joseph located in Parkersburg, W. Va. ●

Congregation continues to *Neighbor aNew*

In August 2007, our seven founding congregations of St. Joseph united and became one Congregation of St. Joseph for the sake of our shared mission. In 2009, in a natural next step in our coming together, we began a congregation-wide planning and strategic development process we call *Neighboring aNew (NaN)*. (You may recall information about this in the Spring 2012 issue of *imagineOne*.) This process reflects our commitment to a comprehensive, realistic, implementable, and sustainable future for our mission, ourselves, and those who will share this mission with us and after us.



Neighboring aNew (NaN) is a commitment to a vision that honors the Generous Promises our sisters made to each other:

- To risk our lives and material resources for systemic change
- To create with others a culture of inclusivity and mutuality
- To respond to the emerging needs of our world

This is an ongoing dynamic and cyclical process that calls us to research, educate, engage and co-create. At different times and in different ways, ideas, potential partnerships, and possible strategies are emerging that lead us to further research, exploration, conversation and engagement. For example, we might find that what we engage in stimulates feedback and new questions that lead us to more research; or, that what we are researching leads us to engage in further small and large group conversation with our members and with others who share our values. It encompasses multiple layers — looking at land and building resources, identified and new

community needs, neighborhood partners, and phases based on our demographics — engaging the community as well as the congregation.

Our prayer for *Neighboring aNew* is that it will enable us to co-create a future that is desirable and sustainable and one that will continue to:

- provide quality care for our sisters;
- embrace expanding realities of our CSJ mission, life, and future together;
- honor our Promise to care for Earth and reduce our carbon footprint for the sake of the planet;
- guide our ministerial response to the current and emerging needs of the *dear neighbor*; and,
- allow our mission and charism to thrive!

We are grateful for the attention, openness and energy that you share with us. We will continue to keep you updated, and we hope, engaged as we move together into our future, full of hope. ●

RELATIONSHIPS ARE AT THE HEART OF Mirabeau Water Management Plan

For many years, Sisters of St. Joseph made their home on Mirabeau Avenue in New Orleans. Here they lived, prayed and worked with the purpose of doing whatever they were able in order to make love of God and neighbor more present and recognized in this city. Eight years ago Katrina rushed into New Orleans causing extensive damage to the motherhouse and in the aftermath it had to be deconstructed. This sacred land consecrated by years of prayer laid fallow as the Congregation of St. Joseph kept vigil waiting for a purpose that would provide us with an opportunity to neighbor in a new way ministering to the healing and health in New Orleans.



Sisters Pat Bergen, CSJ; Annie Ramagos, CSJ; Doris Vigneaux, CSJ; Nancy Conway, CSJ; Caroline Brady, CSJ; Joan Laplace, CSJ and Adele Lambert, CSJ, gather near the Mirabeau property proposed design before the press conference.



David Waggonner and Sister Pat Bergen, CSJ.

In 2011, that purpose emerged through Sister Alison McCrary's connection with David Waggonner, a gifted architect inspired with a dream. David came to the congregation sharing a vision that involved using our land as a sort of living laboratory that could change the city's relationship to water. As we listened to David, we knew this proposal offered a new way to manage water that could provide protection to the homes of others and help people relate to water as a source of beauty and healing.

On September 6, several members of the Congregation joined with hundreds of people from the Greater New Orleans business, political and environmental community for the unveiling of the Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan. This plan, designed by a team of local, national and

Dutch experts led by Waggonner and Ball Architects, is a milestone in a multi-year study supported by substantial state, federal government, and neighborhood support. It includes the congregation's commitment to use the property it owns on Mirabeau Avenue to implement one of seven demonstration projects that offer creative strategies to address the region's water management needs.

In her remarks Sister Pat Bergen, CSJ, said, "The Sisters of St. Joseph are delighted to use our sacred land to fulfill a promise our sisters made to collaborate with others to bring about systemic change around issues affecting our neighbors and to contribute to the healing and renewing of earth."

For more information on the overall plan you can go to: www.livingwithwater.com ●

Ministry of the Arts Calendars

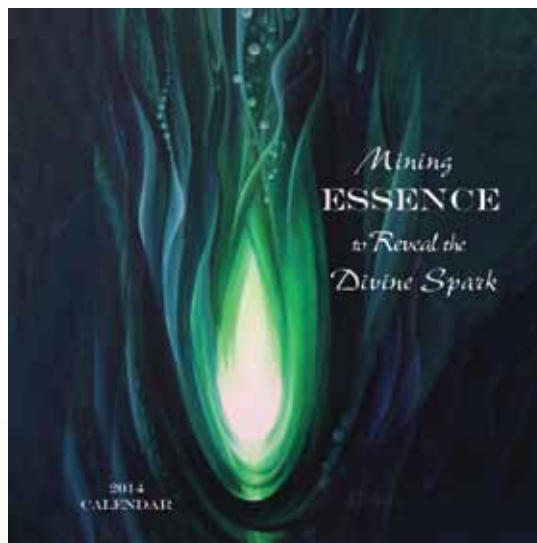
bring inspiration to prison inmates

About four years ago, Ministry of the Arts (MOTA) received a request from a prison chaplain asking whether there were any extra copies of its inspiring wall calendar that could be donated to inmates. "We had some and decided to donate them," says Flo Christiano, director of MOTA, "and this simple act of sharing became another segment of the ministry."

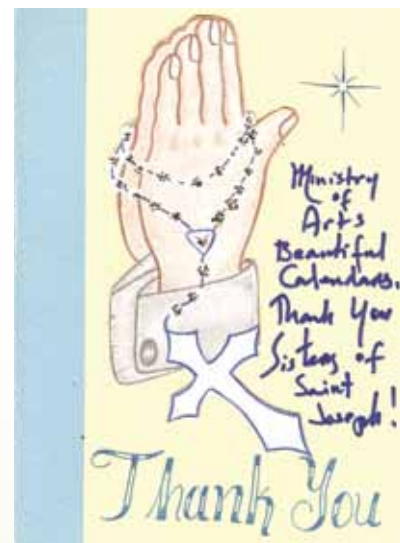
Now almost 2,000 MOTA customers are participating in this new ministry by contributing to the cost of calendars for inmates; this collaboration has enabled the calendar distribution to expand to 10 prisons across the country. Doris Lewis, who manages customer service for MOTA, talks with each chaplain personally to determine the quantity needed, and this year 4,500 prison inmates are using the 2013 edition of the calendar.

The chaplains say that the calendars bring beauty and hope and offer inspiration for these *dear neighbors* who are serving time. Those who receive the calendars write to share how much the art and short daily reflections mean in their lives. One inmate wrote, "...your calendar keeps coming to my mind. Hopefully something good will come out of this, since my life is full of bads and wrongs. ..." A federal chaplain wrote, "The reflections provide the men (and women) with much-needed daily refreshment."

In its catalog and online, MOTA is asking customers to consider making an investment in a prisoner's life by making a donation to



Left, The 2014 Ministry of the Arts wall calendar, which is distributed to 10 prisons across the country. At right, one of the many thank you notes received from grateful inmates.



help print extra calendars AND by keeping inmates in their prayers. "People are supportive and generous," according to Flo. "They often contribute more than the requested \$1.00 donation."

For information on how you can help bring light into someone's life through this prison ministry, go to www.MinistryOfTheArts.org and scroll down the home page to read more about how to participate.

Ministry of the Arts is a sponsored ministry of the Congregation of St. Joseph that collaborates with artists and writers to create resources and gifts that reflect the CSJ spirit and mission. They are offered through a catalog, gift shop at the congregation's LaGrange Park Center in Illinois and via their website. ●

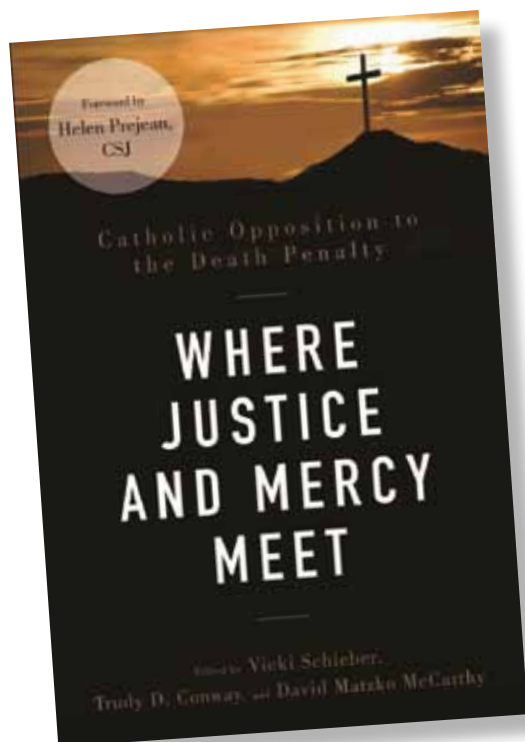
A True Story:

What Would Jesus Do?

A month or so ago, Sister Marianne Race, CSJ, approached a friend with the intention of asking for a donation for the work of Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN), a project of the congregation's Ministry Against the Death Penalty (MADP). He had not heard of this sponsored ministry. When he learned that CMN's mission is to educate Catholics about the use of the death penalty, he assured Sister Marianne that he was actually very much in favor of the death penalty. In Sister Marianne's own words, here is what happened next.

We discussed some pros and cons without either of us budging from our position. I offered him a copy of "Where Justice and Mercy Meet". He promised to read it, and I knew he would. A few weeks later he called me; "I read your book," he said somewhat gruffly. I waited. He continued, "With each chapter I was lining up my arguments until I got to the one on what would Jesus do. I knew Jesus would not be in favor of the death penalty, so ... neither am I." I thanked him for the time he took to read, think about and discuss with others the book's content and for his thoughtful and honest response. "By the way," he said, "Where can I get more of these books? There are some friends of mine that need to read it."

Marianne Race, CSJ



If you would like to fully understand Catholic opposition to the death penalty, Sister Marianne recommends **Where Justice and Mercy Meet: Catholic Opposition to the Death Penalty**

In a collection of highly readable and factual essays, including personal testimony, "Where Justice and Mercy Meet" educates readers about the history and the grim reality of state executions and the devastating roles racism and poverty play in determining who lives and who dies. One of the editors of the book, Vicki Schieber, works with the Catholic Mobilizing Network to end the use of the death penalty. You can order the book from www.MinistryOfTheArts.org or from Liturgical Press at www.litpress.org or by calling 1.800.858.5450. It is also available for downloading to electronic readers.

The congregation's Ministry Against the Death Penalty (MADP) was established by Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ, whose calling to this ministry was documented in her book, "Dead Man Walking" and in the 1996 Academy Award winning film by the same name. This year marks the 20th anniversary of that bestselling book. ●



From left, Sisters Carol Weber, OP, and Judy Blake, CSJ, listen as Michigan Governor Rick Snyder speaks during the N.E.W. Life Center press conference.

Center fosters **New Life** for Women

Founded and led by **Sister Judith Blake, CSJ** and Sister Carol Weber, O.P., St. Luke N.E.W. (North End Women) Life Center in Flint, Michigan grew out of a parish food pantry and over the past 12 years has grown into a faith-based program that incorporates education and workplace training to help women become self-sustaining providers for their families. The program has developed to include literacy and computer skills classes, employment preparation, a little bit of catering, workplace training to help women become self-sufficient, and now an expansion of the small business they started about two years ago to make custom, quality, hospital gowns and scrubs.

“St. Luke N.E.W. Life Enterprises” trains and employs women who were formerly at risk in a business they created to produce hospital “dignity gowns” that provide full back coverage, mammography gowns and other products. Their earnings provide them and their families more financial stability. The business is a model for others that exemplifies how change can happen through perseverance.

Recently, Michigan Governor, Rick Snyder, set aside \$10,000,000 dollars for government and private partnerships to help unemployed individuals pursue career opportunities in Flint and other economically challenged Michigan communities. In February 2013, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) welcomed N.E.W. Life into its Community Ventures program and pledged \$800,000 to the business to fund the development of up to 100 new jobs in the scrubs business over the next year. Many committed local entrepreneurs and collaborators are committed to working with them to get a larger location up, equipped and running; to assist with transportation costs, and to help with marketing for new customers. One female MD on their board has gotten 80 medical personnel to purchase scrubs from them and a major entrepreneur in Flint runs a specialty pharmacy company with 500 employees whose work attire is business casual UNLESS they wear scrubs bought from N.E.W. Life! ●

Congregation's three academies

REAP BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

Collaboration among our congregation's sisters and academies has generated several projects that have inspired new possibilities for those involved.

At Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland, Sister Joyce Joecken, CSJ, was serving on the academy's Mission Effectiveness Board. Because the sisters were no longer teaching at the Academy, Sister Joyce and Sister Thelma Gerhardt, CSJ, now deceased, developed a "Prayer and Presence" ministry several years ago in which the sisters could once again be present to the faculty, staff, and students. Two sisters paired up with each grade level, and other sisters joined various faculty groups. The school staff invites these sisters to attend significant classroom events such as inductions into the honor society, blessing the boats for the crew teams and tree plantings. The sisters are delighted to continue to be part of academy life. Faculty and administration, who have faithfully incorporated the charism and mission of the congregation, believe the students have learned the sisters' values by the sisters' very presence among them.

Sister Pat Bergen, CSJ, brought the idea for the Prayer and Presence Ministry to Deborah Tracy, principal of Nazareth Academy in La Grange Park, Ill., shortly after and it has continued to develop. Mrs. Tracy points out that Nazareth Academy has Sisters Terry Middendorf and Mary Jo Curtsinger, both CSJs, on staff, but she also welcomes the value of more students and more sisters knowing one another personally, especially since half the Nazareth student body comes from public education with little exposure to women religious. Ms. Tracy recognizes that many sisters either graduated from or taught at Nazareth Academy, so they have strong feelings of support for the school and understand the issues of education. Through



At Rivergate Park boathouse in Cleveland, Sister Jane Ockuly, CSJ, celebrated the official "Blessing of the Boats" at the beginning of the season for Saint Joseph Academy students in the varsity sport of Crew.





this ministry, sisters now pray for students on retreat and work with students and staff on service projects, field trips, class board meetings, and social or fundraising activities. The sisters are welcomed and acknowledged at student events and received with great respect. Mrs. Tracy notes that the three academies have been collaborating with one another in new ways by sharing best practices and employment issues, celebrating good times and networking on projects.

Faculty and administration,
who have faithfully
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among them.



St. Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge, La., has enjoyed the loving presence of numerous sisters on staff, presently including Sister Joan Manuel, Sister Joan Laplace, and Sister Chris Pologa, all CSJs. Sister Adele Lambert, CSJ, who recently retired as president of the academy, has been enthused about the "great-hearted love" and "leadership from the heart" that she has witnessed in the students, and she continues to see congregational values and mission in action at the school. St. Joseph Academy students from Baton Rouge have joined the Cleveland academy for their annual "Serve Together" week, and have worked with the Nazareth Academy students in New Orleans. In addition, the schools have done service in, Arizona; Jackson, Miss.; Wichita, Kan.; Kermit, W.Va.; Labadieville, La.; and abroad in Nicaragua and South Africa. ●



Top Photo, Sister Sandra Blanchard, CSJ, talks with a student following a guest speaker assembly at St. Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge, La. Middle photo, students with Sister Virginia Coldren, CSJ, (front row left), Sister Joan Lang, CSJ, (front row center), and Emily Hanson, Assistant Principal at a Prayer and Presence Luncheon at Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland, Oh. Bottom photo, Sister Mary Jo Curtsinger, CSJ, teaches Theology at Nazareth Academy in LaGrange Park, Ill.

SPRIT OF GIVING

Sustaining Donors Inspired to Give



The work of sustaining our mission and ministries, and the care of our retired sisters, requires a long-term commitment. Generous donors graciously share their resources with the sisters in response to appeals and publications, but some donors go beyond responding by sending a monthly gift.

When Florentino Muñoz moved from Chicago to a nearby suburb, he first met Sister Laurina who ministers to Hispanics at St. Alexis Parish in Bensenville, Ill. Muñoz became friends with Sister and her housemate, Sister Jeanne, helping the sisters with little house projects that came up. "The sisters are very generous," says Muñoz. "I do a little something for them and they make me feel like I did some great thing. But they are very human, and I like helping them."

For six years, Muñoz has sent a monthly gift to support the sisters and their ministry. "The sisters are great people, they work very hard. What I give is very little money, but they inspire me with their actions; they are dedicated totally to helping people in the community. I am thankful to God for having met them."

Muñoz and some others say they give a little bit each month because they recognize that the sisters need financial support in addition to friendship and prayers.

The **CSJ Circle of Friends** is a new monthly giving program that provides a foundation of financial support to sustain the

day-to-day costs of mission, ministries and care of our retired sisters. By joining the circle, you are making a commitment to the sisters, allowing them to continue to live in their mission of profound love of God and the *dear neighbor*. You will also be joining us in taking steps to steward the earth's resources responsibly as we reduce the paper used to maintain our relationship with you.

A monthly gift of \$10 or more, set up as a recurring gift through your checking account or credit card, will be a convenient way for you to continue your support. You will receive an annual tax statement, instead of acknowledgement letters for each gift, and you may opt out of our biannual appeal mailing, actions which will help us use our resources to better support our mission.

Please consider joining with Mr. Muñoz and our other sustaining donors in the CSJ Circle of Friends. ●


To join the CSJ Circle of Friends, you can visit www.csjoseph.org. Click on the "Give Now" button and set up a recurring gift. Or for assistance, call Karen (708-482-5037). You can also check "Join the CSJ Circle of Friends" box on the envelope contained in this magazine.



Our lives need to be models for children **surrounded by violence**

by Jean McGrath, CSJ

The myriad of photos that appeared after the horrific events at Sandy Hook elementary school last year, and the Boston Marathon bombing earlier this year, were heart wrenching. For me, as principal of an elementary school in Chicago, none was more profound than the beautiful child, Martin Richard, who was the youngest victim of the Boston Marathon bombing, with his “lost my first tooth” grin, holding his First Communion banner. A photo meant to commemorate a momentous time in his faith journey.



thought of the hundreds of toothless smiles I have experienced and of the sometimes sequined, sometimes sticky glued banners I am privileged to see each year. "How could this happen?" was my next thought.

Like so many others who read the tragic accounts of those days, I struggle to know what I can do to help make our world safer, more peaceful and more reflective of God's presence. What can we as educators, as parents, as citizens of the richest country in the world do to put an end to the violence that is ravaging our cities and disrupting even our most tranquil communities?

Each day school administrators find their mailboxes filled with invitations to purchase books, provide programs, hire experts, secure the resources to remedy the "bullying behaviors" that some identify as the underlying cause of violent acts in later life. Yes, even our youngest scholars are exposed to hurtful, unkind words and the "sticks and stones" mentality that helped most of us get through awkward stages in our lives just do not seem to work anymore.

After attending a seminar where the presenter described bullying as mean-spirited behavior, I asked an astute and "wise beyond her years" fifth grader if she understood what mean-spirited behavior might be. After a few seconds of thoughtful reflection she responded, "I think kids are bullies because there might be something wrong in their homes or at school. They are angry or upset and feel bad about themselves and think they need to take it out on someone else so no one knows they are sad." Asked what schools could do to eliminate bullying she suggested: "Try to help them. Ask what is wrong. Why do you need to be so mean? I would try to make everyone know that school is a good place to be and that no one should be afraid to come because they are scared."

I sometimes wonder if ours has become a culture of mean-spirited behavior. Is it the movies and TV shows our kids watch? The

thoughtless, cruel words they too often overhear? The direction and pace of a society that puts little value on compassion and "simple acts of kindness" and too much energy into competition?

In specific cases such as a first grade classroom at Sandy Hook or a movie theater in Colorado, or a college campus in DeKalb, Ill., we wonder, usually too late, how did we miss the offender's cry for help?

Beyond the terrible incidents that grab headlines, we are almost numb to the violence occurring with horrifying regularity in our cities. It is not unusual for the Monday morning headlines in Chicago to report the number of fatal shootings that occurred that weekend....37 shot, seven dead. These are young lives robbed of their potential, their future. These are sons and daughters of grieving mothers, not just statistics for the daily news report. The toll on families is incalculable.

As sisters and associates of the Congregation of St. Joseph, our charism calls us to unity and reconciliation, to "gentleness, peace, and joy". How do we reconcile and respond to the senseless violence to which our children are exposed?

Statistics may touch the minds of many interested in nonviolence. Stories change the hearts of all who yearn to create a better world for our children. Two have recently come to my attention.

Bridget Sperduto is director of The Well Spirituality Center at the congregation's La Grange Park Center. The Catholic Schools Office in Chicago recently invited her to design a program for principals on how the universe story might complement teachings on nonviolence. Building on the popular Earth Day Program that The Well already provides for school children and tapping the rich resources of each young participant's



imagination, creativity and sense of wonder, Bridget and colleague Sister Kathy Sherman, CSJ, planned activities that helped children understand that “All are One” because each of them is a part of the sacredness of all of creation. When children understand at a tender but vulnerable age that “We are the Body of Christ,” they also understand the importance of taking care of each other and of all of creation. Sister Kathy reminds each participant that “whatever you are good at, you are an artist at” and taps the natural compassion that children seem so ready to share.

That compassion was felt very deeply this year when the parents of Anne Smedinghoff, the young diplomat recently killed in Afghanistan as she traveled to deliver textbooks to school children, were invited to share her story with the participants in The Well’s Artists of Peace program. Children sat spellbound and at the end asked very innocently, “If Anne did everything right, why did this bad thing happen?”

Through the poignant retelling of their daughter’s story, Mr. and Mrs. Smedinghoff told the children that Anne’s life and wholehearted desire to be a peacemaker echoes the call each of them has to be part of the fabric of life, the fabric of love. Anne reached out in compassion and love to the children in Afghanistan. Despite the violence and unrest in that country, her life touched the hearts and lives of countless others, including the children who responded with great tenderness and hugs at the completion of the Smedinghoff’s story.

Dan McGrath, my brother and the former sports editor of the Chicago Tribune, has a unique understanding of violence and its consequences.

Dan is a graduate of Leo High School in Chicago’s Auburn-Gresham neighborhood, now one of the toughest areas in the city. Dan was truly grateful for the education, support and genuine interest the school’s faculty provided for him as a Leo student. When our dad died, Dan was in eighth grade and Leo complemented our mother’s effort to provide the stability so necessary to any young man at a difficult time in life. Dan stayed connected with his alma mater through committee work and financial support, and three years ago, agreed to take over as the president of the school.

As a longtime journalist, Dan was privileged to witness some historic moments in sports, but nothing has touched his heart as deeply as the daily encounters he now has with the students at Leo. One transferred in from a nearby public school, and the grandmother who is raising him had no objection to paying the tuition Leo must charge as a Catholic school.

“It will be cheaper than a funeral,” she said, a grim acknowledgement of the pervasive violence students come to Leo to escape.

At Leo, there are no policemen roaming the halls and no metal detectors guarding the doors, but there are high standards and expectations for the students who know they will be looked after, loved, and respected.

Leo though is not immune to the random violence that plagues Chicago. In October 2012, senior football player Miles Turner was shot five times within a block of his home as he sought to protect his cousin during an encounter with gang members. The cousin, Modell McCambry, died en route to the

hospital. Miles spent two months in intensive care, undergoing five operations, and another three months at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. He was discharged in time to graduate with his class. Miles recently accepted a job as an antiviolence strategist in Illinois Governor Pat Quinn’s office. His relentless determination to resume a normal life and his family’s courage in the face of tragedy have become rallying points for the Leo family, symbols of one school community’s resilience.

Maria Montessori once said, “Establishing peace is the work of education. Politics can only keep us out of war.” Poverty, a lack of educational opportunities, a lack of jobs and a lack of hope are among the causes of much of the chaos in our cities and must be a priority for citizens and legislators. But until the stories like those of Anne Smedinghoff and Miles Turner become part of the fabric of our lives and of our love, violence will continue to dominate the fears and spoil the dreams of our children.

Education must be about encouraging every child to dream and never be afraid. ●



Sister Jean Anne McGrath, CSJ, is an educator who serves as principal at St. John Fisher School in Chicago.



"Presence of Love," by Mary Southard, CSJ

We are responsible for *bringing Christ forth in all creation*

by Pam Young, CSJ

Sūs·tān´a·bil´i·ty, a frequently used word these days that, depending on the situation, can evoke feelings of satisfaction, guilt, wonder, sadness or concern.



With the advent of our awareness that the manner in which we humans use the earth's resources determines the quality of life for all creatures, human and non-human alike, our use of the term "sustainability" has become value-laden. When we perform an action for the purpose of contributing to the earth's ability to endure — recycling, for example — that action can be accompanied by a feeling of satisfaction. When we use more gasoline than we intended, we may feel guilty about our dependence on and over-use of fossil fuels. When we see a restored forest, we may experience wonder at earth's resilience. When we realize that an animal species such as the American buffalo has been nearly eradicated because of human greed, we may feel sad. Whatever our feeling, we should act out of concern for the well-being of all.

One of our main emphases is on recognizing and cultivating our relatedness with all of creation. Our congregation's commitment to sustainability is one facet of our mission to bring about unity in the universe we inhabit.

imagineONE, the name of this magazine, reflects the charism or special gift of the Congregation of St. Joseph: unity. We vowed members and associates believe that we are called by God to live in such a way that our lives honor the interconnectedness of all of creation. In other words, we act out of concern for the wellbeing of all. One of our main emphases is on recognizing and cultivating our relatedness with all of creation. Our congregation's commitment to sustainability is one facet of our mission to bring about unity in the universe we inhabit.

Presently we are engaged in serious study of our centers. We are attempting to assess how each of these facilities contributes to and also detracts from the sustainability of our planet. How many persons reside in each center? How many individuals are employed there? How many people come there for meetings, retreats, or other services? How large is the carbon footprint — the amount of greenhouse gases, and specifically carbon dioxide, emitted by human activity — at each center? Can that footprint be reduced without negating the services that we provide for our members, our associates and our guests? If so, how? If not, what needs to occur? Do we need to put a center to another use and house our members



in a smaller setting? The questions are serious and the true answers may not be what we want to hear.

We are actively pursuing environmentally sustainable ways to better use our property. In New Orleans, La., we are collaborating with others interested in using water as an asset rather than treating water as an enemy as we repurpose property that was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Native plants and grasses, which require less water than hybrid varieties, have been incorporated into the landscape design of the front entrance to our center in LaGrange Park, Ill. Recycling has become a way of life in each of our centers. We are in conversation with Dr. John Ikerd, an agricultural economist, who invited us to lend our support to young adults who desire to engage in sustainable agriculture. We are not unique in these efforts. Congregations of women religious across the country, as well as ecologically conscious individuals, families, communities and businesses are finding creative ways to be environmentally sustainable.

Sustainability is a necessary but difficult goal, despite our best efforts. Why? The easy response is greed. Throughout history, and the current time is no exception, individuals and groups have caused harm to others and to the environment directly and indirectly in an attempt to amass personal or corporate wealth and/or power. This is an old story that we see repeated time and again.

Another response is progress, and this answer leads us to begin to acknowledge the complexity of working toward sustainability. In attempting to improve life in one way, we may unintentionally cause harm in another. For example, the invention of the automobile facilitated transportation in ways that have undeniably improved the quality of human life. At the same time, the automobile's dependence on fossil fuels has created heretofore unthought of environmental problems, including related health problems in human beings, that today need immediate solutions. Fracking (hydraulic fracturing), a process by which oil can be forced to the surface, offers the promise of cheap oil from underground sources here at home rather than expensive oil imported from other countries. Oil company owners and investors champion fracking; environmentalists oppose the process. But the situation is complex: fracking will deliver cheap oil to our automobile-reliant culture, and in Williston, N. Dak., alone the oil boom resulting from fracking is projected to cause the average salary to double. Environmentalists contend that the use of tremendous amounts of water in the fracking process and the destruction of nature in the long-term outweigh the short-lived benefits of cheap oil and 20 or 30 years of economic prosperity in the area.

Fracking and other environmental concerns such as the Keystone Pipeline, farmland irrigation that depletes the



The cycle is vicious; the solution is difficult. Striving for sustainability for its own sake is only part of the solution.

Ogallala Aquifer, and coal-powered electric plants have serious detrimental ecological implications. Obviously these issues will not be resolved immediately because too many economic interests are at stake. For example, even if a western Kansas farm family wanted to cut back on irrigation, the corn on which a significant part of their livelihood depends cannot survive on the amount of precipitation that generally falls in that part of the country. Farmers depend on the crop that depends on the irrigation that is depleting the aquifer. The cycle is vicious; the solution is difficult. Striving for sustainability for its own sake is only part of the solution. Working toward systemic change helps break the cycle. The corn is grown to feed the cattle that ranchers sell to people who love to eat beef. So, what needs to change? Our desire to eat beef? Ranchers' belief that corn is an affordable option for feeding their livestock? Farmers' choice to grow a high water-need cash crop such as corn in an arid geographic region? If the aquifer means anything to us, then all of us are involved in the systemic change needed to resolve this situation.

Jean Pierre Médaille, the Jesuit priest who founded our congregation, gave us a series of Maxims, rules for living the life to which God has called us. One of these rules reads:

Advance good works until they are almost finished; and then, whenever possible, let them be completed by someone else who will receive the honor.

In this Maxim, Fr. Medaille directs us to focus on the work itself rather than on gaining recognition. Today this rule gives us hope as we struggle to live in ways that respect all of creation. Why? Because we know that sustainability is a goal to be striven for, not an end that will be accomplished once and for all in our lifetime. We have a moral obligation to do all that we can today to live sustainably, teaching and modeling for future generations to carry that responsibility as well. ●



Sister Pam Young, CSJ, attributes her love of nature to her parents, each of whom appreciated nature in different ways, and to a next-door neighbor who, when she was age five, let her become his "helper" in the garden.



The Congregation's efforts to care for creation are grounded in scripture and based on the wisdom of the Church as conveyed to us through our tradition and through our church leaders, including the recent call by Pope Francis for all of us to be protectors of creation, of one another and of the environment. We invite you to pray with us so that together, we can be a light for those around us, modeling deep commitment to the well-being of all creation.

Creator God,

Inspire us to recognize that the choices we make impact the environment and our human family around the globe;

Grace us with the ability to live simply, sustainably and with reverence for Earth,

Give us the vision and the courage to risk what makes us comfortable; trusting that, in doing so, we can birth a world of justice and peace.

God of grace and love, we bring our prayer, our commitment, our gifts to you this day. Let us, with our strong dedication and awareness of your creation and all that it offers, join with others to contribute to the sustainability of Earth.

Amen

We recognize that we share a common vision with many others who seek to make choices for a healthy, sustainable future. Here are a few of the many resources you might find valuable:

Ecojesuit: www.ecojesuit.com - an online communication connecting Jesuits and their partners to understand and share in the critical work of reconciliation and ecological concern.

Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good: www.catholicsinalliance.org - promotes public policies and effective programs that enhance the inherent dignity of all, especially the poor and most vulnerable.

Catholic Climate Covenant: www.catholicclimatecovenant.org - launched by The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change this site provides resources to help Catholics take action in our families, parishes, schools and communities to reduce our carbon footprint and raise our voice on behalf of Creation and the poor.



Kim Ritter of Nix Conference & Meeting Management receives a blessing from sisters at the Congregation's Chapter, in April, 2013.

Because I Knew You

by Kimberly Ritter

EDITOR'S NOTE:

At different times, in different ways we are called to something that gives our life more meaning or a new purpose because of the people we meet and the relationships we have. "Because I Knew You" offers a first-person account from Kimberly Ritter about how she became deeply involved in anti-trafficking efforts after meeting and getting to know the Sisters of the Congregation of St. Joseph.

Nine years ago, I accepted a position at Nix Conference & Meeting Management. It was time to leave hotels and country clubs after nearly fifteen years in that side of the industry. I am a meeting planner and was assigned Catholic organizations as my primary clients. It's rather funny how pivotal decisions change the course of how we operate and how it prepares us for the next step in our process. It brings new meaning to the phrase, "God works in mysterious ways." And now, I have embarked on what has been the most life-changing, Holy Spirit-filled journey...Because I Knew You.

After a year of training with Nix on religious groups with existing clients, I was assigned my first new group, with all the details that go with figuring out the new client's needs, program details and details specific to the new group. In 2006, that group was The Congregation of the Sisters St. Joseph. The sisters were more than clients. They showed me that we were "Together for a Great Love." What strong, amazing, loving women. The sisters impressed me with their unassuming influence and the manner in which they carried themselves with an outward love and caring for all people. I saw how clearly they demonstrate their charisma, which made me wonder how much more effective and powerful we could be if we approached everything with that same love and caring. How could I not change my own actions and the way I live my life? I did not feel like I was "just" their meeting planner. This changed my heart, my vision of women and the strength they possess, and my ability to openly share my inner Spirit...Because I Knew You.

Five years ago, the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph came to Nix asking us to research hotels that fought child sex trafficking because it is an important issue to them. Our goal is always to assist our clients to achieve their goals. We researched the issue and it became clear that the mission of the Federation to heal the neighborhoods of God's sacred universe was a

mission Nix could assist with through our influence and contacts at the corporate level. Nix became the liaison to the Federation and the Millennium Hotel St. Louis to facilitate the signing of the ECPAT-USA Tourism Child Protection Code of Conduct. Since that request in 2008, Nix has used our professional resources to combat child sex trafficking in hotels. We have reached hundreds of hotels through correspondence and face-to-face meeting with the hotel managers. Nix did not meet the criteria to sign the ECPAT-USA Tourism Child Protection Code of Conduct at the time that the Federation executed the signing for the Millennium Hotel St. Louis. As a woman-owned-and-operated company, in our hearts we knew that we could help these children. Nix worked with ECPAT-USA and created the Tourism Child Protection Code of Conduct for Meeting Planners and became the first signatories to the newly formed code. As a consequence of working closely with the Code organization, headquartered in Thailand, and ECPAT-USA, Nix now encourages corporations with travel and meeting divisions to also sign and implement The Meeting Planners Code. The Sisters of St. Joseph were the catalyst for where Nix Conference & Meeting Management is today. Our next project is truly ground-breaking. Nix will be



From left to right, Father John Steingraeber, C.Ss.R. – CMSM; Sister Janet Mock, CSJ – LCWR; Sister Grace Hartzog, SC – LCWR; Sister Ann Scholz, SSND, PhD – LCWR; Kim Ritter with her FBI Directors Community Leadership Award, and Sister Annmarie Sanders, IHM – LCWR.



hosting a conference in 2014 that will assemble stakeholders from criminal justice, religious, advocacy, and corporate entities to connect and create action to end sex trafficking. This will be one of the few times, if not the first, that these stakeholders will all come together to weave a common network...Because We Knew You.

The accomplishments and honors we have received due to these initiatives at Nix are not ours alone. We share them with the sisters. Recently, we received the FBI Directors Community Leadership Award which was proudly accepted at the FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C. in the company of representatives from Leadership Conference of Woman Religious (LCWR) and Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) Leadership Staff and others. We have also received such honors as 2012 Women of Achievement for Human Welfare; the 2012 Missouri Athletic Club Women of Distinction Award; and Successful Meetings Twenty-Five Most Influential People in Meeting Planning for 2012. In addition, our work has been covered by more than 169 media outlets with worldwide coverage, including *USA Today* and *CNN*. Truly, these are honors, but more importantly, they are all avenues to inform more people of the sex trafficking that exists and is prevalent in the United States...Because We Knew You.

Personally, I spend my time working with the FBI and other Federal organizations to identify these hotels, assist with girls who have been rescued, and speak and educate the public. Whether I am doing an interview for television or I am on the streets helping girls, I know that this is how I am supposed to bring the world "Together for a Great Love." I know that my actions impact others because of hundreds of emails and phone calls I receive from people wanting to join our fight. I share my inner Spirit with these girls when I hug them, teach them to bake, and hold their sweet babies. I am not afraid; this is why God has put me here, with Nix, with you...Because I Knew You.

I thank you for being radical in your social justice crusade. If you were not, we would not be changing the world and people's knowledge of trafficking. Thank you for being strong, loving, and powerful in your words, actions and support. You have given me the strength and love to proceed. Sisters, because we knew you, we have all be changed for good. ●



Kimberly Ritter is Senior Meeting Planner and the Trafficking Initiative Coordinator for Nix Conference & Meeting Management. Nix, a woman-owned and-operated company, has been in business more than 25 years and plans corporate, association and religious conferences world-wide. Nix devotes a minimum of ten-to-twenty women hours a week to fighting sex trafficking in hotels in the United States.

Because I Knew Kim

Bringing Christ into the world is a collaborative effort, the work of many hands and hearts! And so it was at the Sisters of St. Joseph National Event in St. Louis in July of 2011! As part of the Event Planning Team, I was privileged to work with Kim Ritter. Working with Kim gave witness to the powerful actions that can happen when people who share a common passion for justice work together, in this instance, to end Human Trafficking. Kim facilitated the relationships among the Millennium Hotel, local trafficking agencies in St. Louis and the Sisters of St. Joseph. Our partnership crossed secular and religious boundaries giving witness to a new model of collaboration and what is possible when different organizations focus their time and energy on an issue that matters to all.

Sister Kathy Sherman, CSJ

Reflection

Together for a Great Love

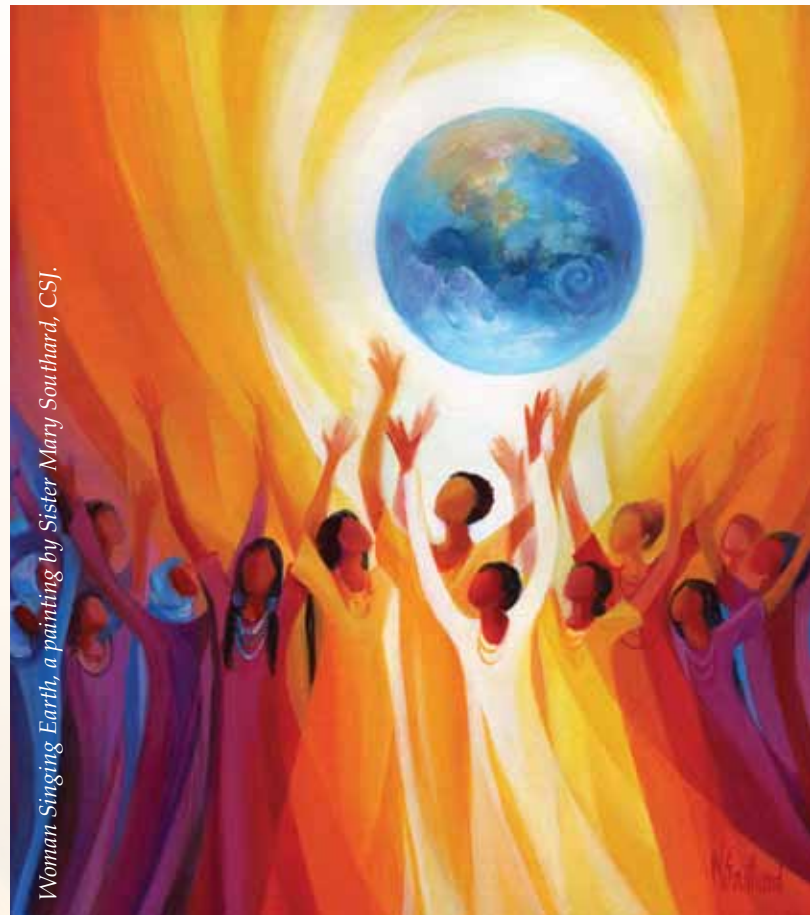
Lyrics from a song written by Sister Kathy Sherman, CSJ

*A Great Love dwells in us,
around us, among us.*

*A Great Love inspires our love
for the world.*

*And one thing we know as we
journey on;*

*we are together forever for a
Great Love.*



Woman Singing Earth, a painting by Sister Mary Southard, CSJ.



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