



imagine
ONE

CONGREGATION OF THE
SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

FALL/WINTER 2018
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TOGETHER
WE ARE STRONGER

imagine ONE

FALL/WINTER 2018
VOL. 10 | NO. 2

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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, with one another, and with all creation.

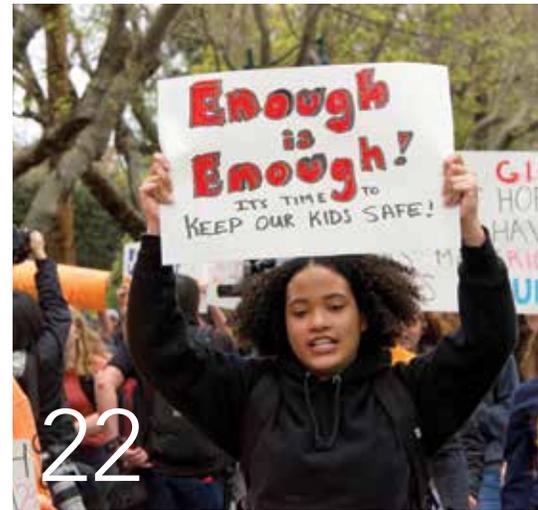
We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, living out of our common tradition, witness to God's love transforming us and our world. Recognizing that we are called to incarnate our mission and charism in our world in fidelity to God's call in the Gospel, we commit ourselves to these Generous Promises:

- 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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ON THE COVER

This issue calls us to collaboration in our efforts to work towards peace, unity and healing. We know we can do more together than alone. When we join with others, our unique gifts, talents and voices are woven together, and we become stronger and more able to change the world for the good of all.

All issues of *imagineONE* are available for download at www.csjoseph.org/publications.

Dear Readers:

We are very happy to offer you the latest issue of *imagineONE*.

As the newly installed members of the Congregation of St. Joseph Leadership Team, we are grateful and excited to be leading our dynamic congregation of sisters into a future full of possibilities. We are thankful for the leadership of the previous team who served before us and we hope to continue the sacred work that they envisioned and brought forth.

Standing on the shoulders of all the women who have led us so well during our 165-year history in the U.S., we hope that we will deepen our faithfulness to our mission and continue our service to all our *dear neighbors*.

This magazine is one of our many efforts to share our vision, our thoughts, our work and our lives with you. As we strive to unify the world with great love, we hope you will join us. In this edition, we explore many issues that have polarized conversations and our country. We cannot let this divisiveness continue without trying – as Dr. Steve Millies says “to do better.” We encourage you to read the articles here, think about where you are being called to act or pray in a new way or with new energy. As newly elected leaders, we find ourselves being called to many new ways of thinking, working, praying and loving.

Thank you for reading our magazine and for your support of the Congregation of St. Joseph. We look forward to the future and the many ways that we will all change and grow in love and unity.

Standing on the shoulders of all the women who have led us so well during our 165-year history, we hope that we will deepen our faithfulness to our mission and continue our service to all our *dear neighbors*.



Leadership Team

Clockwise from left,
Sister Pat Warbritton, CSJ
Sister Kathy Brazda, CSJ
Sister Sallie Latkovich, CSJ
Sister Marie Hogan, CSJ
Sister Jacqueline Goodin, CSJ



Two New Candidates Enter Novitiate

On August 1, 2018, the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph welcomed candidates Jennifer Berridge (left) and Sarah Simmons to the 2018/2019 Sisters of St. Joseph Federation Novitiate. Sarah and Jennifer traveled to Rochester, New York where they will spend the next 10 months in prayer, study and discernment. For Sarah, who lives and works in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Jennifer, who lives and works in Wheeling, West Virginia, this is the next step towards becoming a vowed sister with the Congregation of St. Joseph. They are joined by four other women who are also discerning vowed life.

“I am excited to see what God has ready for me. I don’t know where this journey will lead, but I’m on my way!” said Jennifer about the discernment process. Sarah said she began considering religious life out of a desire to be a part of something greater than herself. “As I discerned

I am excited to see what God has ready for me. I don’t know where this journey will lead, but I’m on my way!

JENNIFER BERRIDGE

with the Congregation of St. Joseph, the community began to feel like home,” she said. “I decided to enter because of the relationships I’ve developed that have helped me feel welcomed, supported, and challenged to continually grow into my best self.”

The novitiate is a 10-month program that will conclude in May 2019. Please join us in praying for these women during this sacred time in their lives. ■

A Consistent Ethic of Solidarity

WE NEED TO DO BETTER



▲ Sister Sallie Latkovich, CSJ, a member of our Congregational Leadership Team, and Dr. Steve Millies in front of a portrait of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin at the center which bears his name.

In an effort to encourage thought and reflection on the areas of polarization among us, including gun control, abortion and the death penalty, Sister Pat Kozak, CSJ, who has written for *imagineONE* on Catholic Social Teaching, and Editor Eileen Biehl reached out to Dr. Steve Millies, Director of the Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union, as a source of information on the Consistent Ethic of Life, sometimes referred to as the 'seamless garment.' The following interview with Dr. Millies was informational and inspiring and encourages all of us to look more closely at the interplay of values involved in critical life decisions.

EB: There's some confusion out there about what the 'seamless garment' is or what a consistent ethic of life is. How would you explain this approach to life issues?

SM: Not only is there confusion, there's inaccuracy. The first and most important thing to do with the definition is to try as hard as possible not to use the phrase 'seamless garment' at all. Cardinal Bernardin evoked the image of the seamless garment during a question and answer session after he introduced the consistent ethic in a 1983 speech at Fordham, and the *New York Times* published it. The problem with calling it the seamless garment is that it tends to feed directly into the most common myths and apprehensions about the consistent ethic, which is that it equalizes all issues. So the terminology problem is one that the consistent ethic never particularly recovered well from. What the consistent ethic is about is, in a comprehensive way, always valuing the dignity of human persons first. When Cardinal Bernardin first proposed it in 1983, it was not only in the context of Roe vs. Wade abortion politics, but it was also in the immediate aftermath of the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter *The Challenge of Peace* that addresses the threats of the nuclear age.

The question Bernardin raised was, 'what is the purpose of a baby being born into a world that could see civilization ended by nuclear annihilation moments later?' The nuclear question begged a consideration of the dignity of all human persons. It certainly doesn't mean that all issues are equivalent. Some things are more important than

others. And Cardinal Bernardin and many others have struggled with the right way to formulate that.

EB: So understanding the history of this is important?

SM: Yes and the reason is that history is never irrelevant. We have been derailed by the ways that partisan political arguments have infected how Catholics have talked about these issues for the last 50 years or so. We have to deal with that history—whether we want to or not—to get past the baggage of it. Christian faith tells us first not to worry about the political fights in the world. But, the idea of winning, especially in politics, has become so ingrained in how many evangelical Christians and Catholics think; we don't even reflect over how we got to this point. We have absorbed this so deeply for two generations. There's an opportunity now to reflect on the history and take the time to ask some questions, especially when our

country is led by a controversial figure like Donald Trump.

EB: How do you assure people that they are not out of sync with the church if they support a consistent ethic of life?

SM: There's no short answer for this. As a church, we have failed to absorb what the Second Vatican Council said about the apostolate of the Laity and as a result, we do not attend very much or very well to the process of adult formation. However, recently, there has been progress. Cardinal Blaise Cupich of Chicago has reframed the consistent ethic of life as a consistent ethic of solidarity.

Reframing or changing the name might seem trivial, but it opens the opportunity to talk about this in a new and fresh way. A consistent ethic of life remains vulnerable to the possibility of saying that it makes the issues equivalent. By calling it solidarity, we



▲ Cardinal Blaise Cupich of Chicago.





▲ *The painstaking process of lacemaking, which our early sisters did to help support themselves in Lepuy, France.*

have a deep root in our Catholic Social Teaching to how we think about applying a consistent ethic of life comprehensively and consistently. I think that's a positive development because of this rooting in our traditions and teachings on solidarity. And, I think that with this there is no question that you are called to recognize in yourself that solidarity as a relationship of mutual responsibility for every other human person. This shift to emphasizing solidarity helps escape the argument that we are making issues equivalent to one another and proposes the responsibility and challenge of being responsible for and with each other.

PK: This shift to solidarity is exciting to me and it makes an incredible amount of sense in that all the issues wind up on the spectrum. I have this image of lace making from our congregation's own historical foundations and all the many strands that come together become interconnected to make a piece of lace. Solidarity and the demands of it force me to put my feet down somewhere, maybe I put them down on the death penalty. Or abortion. Or birth control. Or education. Or poverty. Or the environment. There's a judgment that has to be made because I only have one set of feet. So, this ethic of solidarity recognizes that if everyone

puts down their feet on whatever value, I should be able to see that everything is attended to and everything is connected.

SM: I think that's exactly right. This is the best thing about the consistent ethic of solidarity. Bernardin always emphasized that it isn't about policy solutions or about what to vote for. That's a matter of prudential judgment. Make up your own mind and understand how to think through the ethics of an issue. You've got to cultivate an attitude towards making decisions that honor how persons are always first, and accepting the interconnectedness of all these issues

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* says we all have to live in this world together. So we should act that way.

DR. STEVE MILLIES

is part of your obligation to others. It's an ethic. Not a set of solutions. Not a 'to do' list.

Yes, we inherit history and we must deal with it. Passivity will not make the problems go away. We have to do better.

People make mistakes, we all make mistakes, and we all seek forgiveness and forgiveness is available to all of us. A consistent ethic of solidarity helps us resolve the hardness of our hearts to enable us to empathetically imagine our way into someone else's circumstances. A consistent ethic of solidarity enables each of us to be agents of grace and, possibly, to prevent mistakes and grievances. When we talk about an ethic of solidarity versus an ethic of life, we are responsible to and for each other. Solidarity always comes back to the two greatest commandments: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul, and Love your neighbor as yourself.

We are in several moments of transition in America and in the church. Thanks to Pope Francis and Cardinal Cupich, we have a new opportunity to take a fresh look at Cardinal Bernardin's legacy. Looking at a consistent ethic of solidarity is something we need to take advantage of.

PK: There is a power in solidarity and our relationships to one another. It may take years to realize it but there's something powerful to it.

SM: My work at the Bernardin Center enables me to develop the legacy of Cardinal Bernardin. I see that there are possible partners and conversations everywhere. If we are to take the consistent ethic of solidarity seriously we cannot afford to exclude anyone from the conversation.

PK: Basically, the only person you would not want to have a conversation with is somebody who doesn't want to have a conversation.

SM: Those are the people who I personally seek out with the most determination! That's where the work really is.

PK: I love the line that you said earlier; we can do better.

SM: We *have* to do better. Our job, my job, is to tend to things here in the world for as long as I can and to bring about as much mercy and justice as I can. This goes back to the idea of why I think solidarity is such a good way to approach things. Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* says we all have to live in this world together. So we should act that way. I would rather concentrate on what we share, which includes history and the needs of the planet and the societies in which we live and the responsibilities that we have to each other. Pope Francis, over the last five years, has given us documents that frame things in this way and demand that we pay attention to how inescapably related we are to and through one another. ■

Dr. Steve Millies is the Director of the Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union and the author of the book, Good Intentions: A History of Catholic Voters' Road from Roe to Trump, in which he reflects on the political actions taken by Catholics across five decades that converged in the election of the current President. He shows how evangelical Christians and American Catholics found themselves allied for a candidate who answered their need for security and helped to foster polarization and isolation. Dr. Millies synthesizes a complicated but important history of the development of Catholic thought, policy and political influence in the last 50 years.



WHAT IF?

BY SISTER PAT KOZAK, CSJ

During the interview with Steve Millies on the previous pages, he and I discussed the concept of *supply and demand* as it could be applied to issues and concerns. *Supply and demand* as a concept is pretty basic when applied to business and the economy. It also seems relevant as one way to look at some current and divisive issues.

Let's allow first, that as Catholic Christians, we do not have a right to impose our doctrinal beliefs on all citizens of a pluralistic society. Such a view would assume an arrogance of sorts—that our "Catholic conscience" is the only valid moral view for everyone; or that inspiration is restricted to Catholics, or that the Spirit of Love is unable or unwilling to work in and through Methodists, Jews, Muslims, or Quakers. Our country was founded on the right to religious freedom—and a belief in and commitment to the common good. This right to religious freedom demands a profound respect for the faith and religious expression of all people of good will.

So what does this have to do with supply and demand? Let's take a risk and explore two hot button topics in hope that we can *reflect together* rather than *react against*.

CONSIDER ABORTION:

How might we significantly reduce the number of abortions? In a pluralistic society, couples — and women — might have multiple valid reasons for being unable to welcome or receive a child into the family at a given time in their lives.

WHAT IF
a married couple understood they had easy access to reliable, safe birth control methods and could take steps to avoid an unwanted pregnancy?

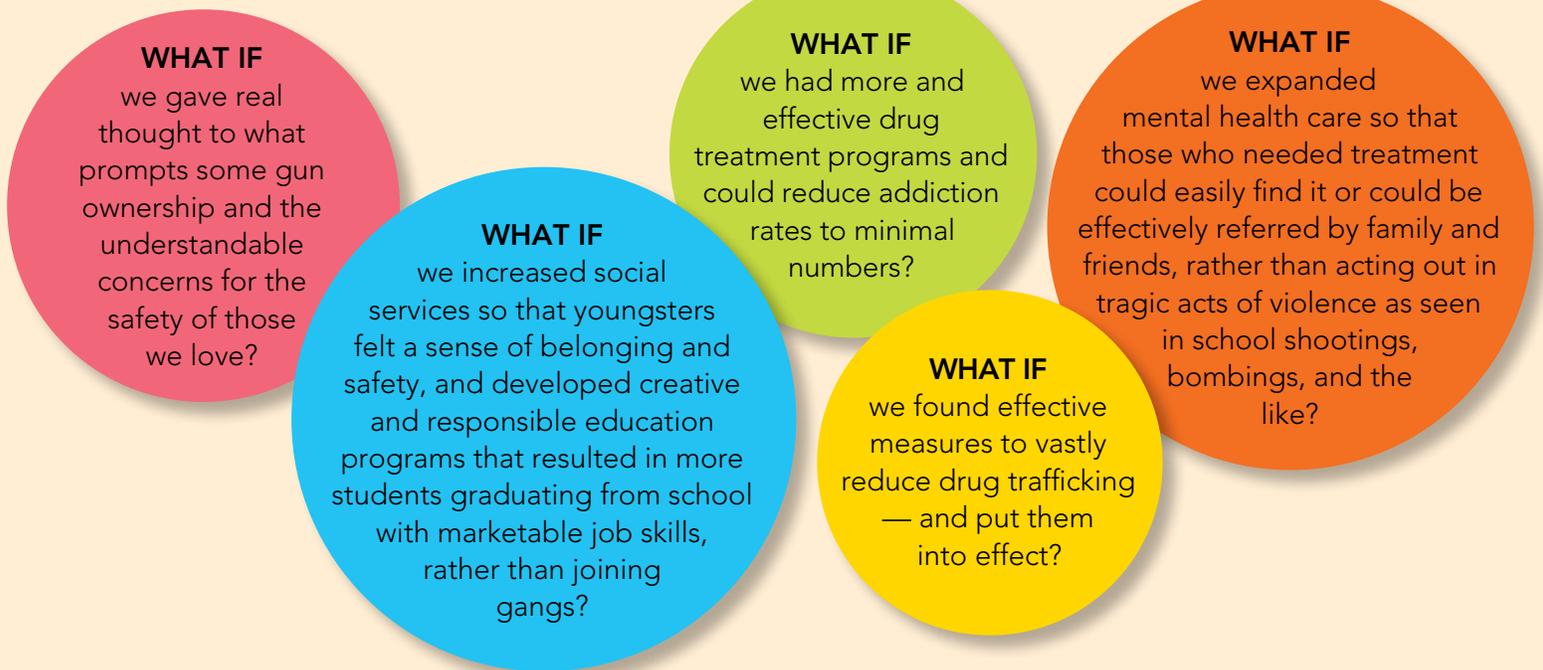
WHAT IF
there were sufficient public funds to support pre- and post-natal care, children's health care, support for needy families — enabling people to believe there would be a strong safety net for their efforts to raise a child?

WHAT IF
there were effective measures that prevented the abuse of women where such abuse resulted in unwanted pregnancy?

Efforts to make these ifs a reality would almost certainly significantly reduce the demand for abortion. As the demand decreases, so too the need to "supply" them.

OR CONSIDER GUN CONTROL:

If the only reason for lobbying for gun ownership is that people have a right to possess a gun, and a right to walk around and flaunt this right — we would be looking at immature, even adolescent and dangerous thinking. More importantly, such arguments disrespect the reasoning of serious and responsible advocates for gun ownership. There are reasonable arguments for gun ownership that deserve serious consideration, whether one ultimately agrees with them or not.



All of these social innovations for the common good could reduce the demand for gun ownership because the understandable fear is reduced and desire for safety is satisfied. The choice to own weapons for issues of self-defense could be respected while admitting that assault weapons do not fall into this category. The perceived need or demand for a full arsenal of weapons is reduced; so too the incentive to supply them.

Whether the issue is abortion or gun ownership or any number of social issues, the argument against this supply and demand notion is that it may necessitate a compromise or balancing of values—perhaps the “acceptance” or tolerance of birth control, or taking time and energy from ardent anti-abortion efforts and placing time and energy instead, on a vast and effective safety net for children and families. It could mean not judging gun ownership as wrong in itself; it might mean recognizing the real and human fear that results in the desire for gun ownership as a path toward personal or family safety. And it might demand putting concerted efforts into developing a vast array of social programs that will diminish the reasons and causes of fear that propel a desire for gun ownership.

Reducing the demand is a practical and real way of “doing something” to further our goals of protecting life at all levels, in every context. And it does so by honoring our responsibilities as citizens in a pluralistic society. It also recognizes that neither we nor our society are perfect.

Years ago, when I was in doctoral studies in the area of ritual and worship, I had a professor who described a procession that took place in medieval cathedrals. Dr. Adams described the assembly moving forward in procession while singing a hymn that expressed their commitment as believers as well as their frailty as human persons. And so the procession would take three steps forward, then one back. Or two forward and one back. And so

on. Around the cathedral the community moved, publically proclaiming that neither they nor their society were perfect, but they were committed to moving forward.

I think there is a lesson in this for us. Martin Luther King, Jr. expressed it well when he said, “The arc of history moves slowly, but it bends toward justice.”

Going backwards is not an option. But I believe that working with others of good will and diverse faiths in a pluralistic society may require a dance of humility and respect. In the end, after what may be a very long hymn, and still longer walk, we may have discovered a much more direct path to the common good. ■

THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC IN AMERICA

IN LOVING MEMORY

James, age 20, died from an accidental overdose on Sunday, August 5, 2018. He was the beloved son of Mary and Frank. He was planning to enter college this fall. Friends remember him as smart, caring, funny, and always making others smile. His Catholic faith was very important to him, and he participated at his parish as an altar server and a Eucharistic minister. He was a Cub Scout, enjoyed nature, and loved animals, especially his pets. James is deeply loved and will be missed by all who knew him.

The opioid crisis is a topic that has become all too familiar to many people. It is a national conversation that we see not only in the news, but in our families, among our friends, and in our churches and neighborhoods. The frequent obituaries of young people we read about can leave us feeling sad and bewildered. Why do so many across the social spectrum succumb to this addiction, and still others struggle to recover due to limited services, resources and beds in rehab centers?



300%

Since 1999, the amount of opioids prescribed in the U.S. has **increased 300%**. But the population has only increased 18%.



Americans consume more opioids than any other country.



Each year enough opioids are prescribed to medicate every American adult for one month.



\$78.5 Billion

The total U.S. economic burden of opioid use disorder is **\$78.5 billion a year.**

115

More than **115 Americans die** from opioid overdose each day.



21%

The total number of U.S. **drug overdose deaths rose 21%;** from 52,898 in January 2016 to 64,070 in January 2017.

10%



Only about **10% of people** experiencing a drug use disorder receive specialty treatment.

Sources:
www.businesswire.com
www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org
www.rollcall.com



PARTNERSHIPS IN HEALING

There are signs of hope! Staying alert to the needs of the times, several congregation sponsored ministries are working to help. Two ministries in particular in West Virginia, which is a microcosm of the issue going on around the country, are partnering with others around the state to address this crisis.

THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOUNDATION

The Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation, faithful to its mission to strengthen the holistic health of children and families in West Virginia, is involved on several fronts. Sister Helen Skormisley, CSJ, Executive Director of the Health and Wellness Foundation, noted that "...a grant of \$3 million from the WV Department of Health and Human Services will allow a local faith-based group, Serenity Hills Life Center, to transform the former Paul VI Pastoral Center into a long-term care center for approximately 100 women suffering from drug addiction." Sharon Travis, President of the Serenity Hills Life Center, said her group hopes to use the facility to expand its work to combat the opioid epidemic and other drug problems. This past spring, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services staff distributed almost \$21 million for nine anti-substance abuse programs throughout the state. The Serenity Hills facility is one of the recipients. The epidemic of addiction to opioids and other drugs in West Virginia and Ohio is well-documented. Travis said there are multiple treatment centers



▲ Staff of the Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation and Serenity Hills Life Center meet to discuss area needs. From left to right are, Rev. Marcie Allen, Tonya Jackson, Clara Crinkey, Susan Knight, Sharon Travis, Tina Morris and Sister Helen Skormisley, CSJ.

throughout the Upper Ohio Valley; but few, if any of them, offer the long-term care Serenity Hills facility plans to offer. According to Travis, the center will be open to women who have completed a detoxification program. She said those entering the

center will include mothers of minor children, pregnant women, and military veterans. "Priority will be given to those who have overdosed within the last 30 days or are active intravenous drug users," Travis said. "Some could spend up to 12



▲ Recovering addicts learn job and life skills at Fruits of Labor, a culinary and agricultural training ministry in West Virginia. Here, students are harvesting fresh produce.

months, or even more, depending on the circumstances.” The center is anticipated to open in 2019.

The creation of Serenity Hills is the latest opportunity for one of our sponsored ministries to exercise our commitment to expand collaborations with others to bring about life-giving change in our neighborhoods. Sister Helen reported that the Foundation Board approved a one-year grant to hire the Clinical Director of the Mothers’ Program component of the recovery center.

Health and Wellness Foundation grants have also extended to Lazarus House and Mary and Martha House in Wheeling. These local homes offer support and care on the journey of recovery from addiction. Many families don’t want or are not ready to take back the recovering

addict. The houses offer a chance for residents to re-connect after treatment and to continue to build on the successes of treatment. The Foundation’s support will provide life-rebuilding opportunities for those seeking healing.

Additional grants and support have gone to Fruits of Labor, a southern-West Virginia ministry founded by Tammy Jordan that works to improve lives of at-risk youth/young adults and adults in recovery from addiction. The staff of Fruits of Labor provides training opportunities, mentoring, life skills and encouragement. Tammy and the staff have developed a culinary and agricultural training curriculum. This program provides industry relevant educational opportunities in a safe environment, as well as intensive personal and professional

development to improve future job opportunities. The Health and Wellness Foundation also partners with Marshall Health-Healthy Connections in Huntington to support a collaborative community response providing services for women facing addiction, their infants, children and families through the use of Health Navigators and Recovery Coaches.

THE SISTERS HEALTH FOUNDATION

The Sisters Health Foundation, another one of the congregation’s sponsored ministries, provided support for Your Voice Mid-Ohio Valley Community Forums on the opioid and addiction issues. These forums, held in Parkersburg, West Virginia as well as Belpre and Marietta, Ohio during July 2018, were a media collaborative,



engaging local judges, probation officers, lawyers, reformed felons, recovering addicts, teachers, medical professionals, and parents of those still facing addiction and legal troubles. News outlets in the Mid-Ohio Valley listened to local residents discuss the addiction crisis so they can better represent their thoughts and solutions in their reporting. Residents were asked to describe the addiction crisis in their community, what they think the causes are, and possible solutions. Many in recovery reported this was the first time they felt heard. As a follow-up, an Addiction Action Summit will be held in September bringing all the parties together once again to share and address needs.

The Sisters Health Foundation also funds a number of organizations focusing on recovery. The Mid-Ohio Valley Fellowship offers five safe, sober homes, 24/7 staff support, on-site recovery programming and community support services. They serve individuals as well as single parents. They are the only organization in West Virginia serving men with children. Grants were also awarded to Recovery Point in Parkersburg, an 80-bed residential recovery program for men, to the Public Defender Corporation of the Fifth Judicial Circuit, and to the Fourth Circuit Public Defender Corporation for a Recovery Coach or Mental Health Substance Abuse Treatment Coordinator, and to the Parkersburg Re-entry Council that works to provide wraparound services for those recently released from jail or prison – many of whom are recovering from addiction.

PARTNERING FOR HOPE

Recently, Sister Kathleen Durkin, CSJ, a St. Joseph Retreat Center staff member and board member of the Health and Wellness Foundation, met with other members of the Health and Wellness Foundation, the Sisters Health Foundation and River Valley Health Foundation to learn and talk more about Serenity Hills Life Center. The group explored ways in which these organizations might expand partnerships with each other to promote the health and healing of women and in some cases their unborn children and infants. Sister Kathleen reflected that, “A number of our sisters served as spiritual directors and retreat leaders at the former Paul VI. Now, as this site is transitioning into a new form we at the retreat center can offer support and collaboration with Serenity Hills. There are many possibilities yet to be explored.”

In addition, St. Joseph Retreat Center in Wheeling is collaborating with local groups who are dealing with the opioid crisis by offering them space and support. Last May, the retreat center hosted “On a Journey Together: Making Connections in Our Community.” This event was planned and led



▲ Sister Kathleen Durkin, CSJ

by Youth Services System, Lazarus House, and Mary and Martha House – A Community Impact Coalition. The goal of this two-day training was to make connections between substance use and mental illness with overall well-being. Presenters included a pediatrician, nurses, psychologists, social workers and addictions counselors.

Like most issues people are struggling with and suffering from, the opioid crisis doesn't have an easy fix. But it is one that we know needs prayer, wisdom, compassion, understanding and collaborative action to solve. ■

The Sisters of St. Joseph Health and Wellness Foundation and The Sisters Health Foundation are sponsored ministries of the Congregation of St. Joseph. The Sisters Health and Wellness Foundation was formed in 2001 as the result of the sale of St. Joseph's Hospital in Parkersburg, WV. The Sisters Health Foundation (formerly the Sister of St. Joseph Charitable Fund) was formed in 1996, using funds from half the sale and joint venture between St. Joseph's Hospital and Columbia HCA, a national healthcare company.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR PEACE

What does blue stand for to you? To the students and faculty of St. Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the color blue now awakens them and calls them to action against the horrors of sex trafficking going on in the U.S., particularly in their hometown. What does P.U.L.S.E. stand for? To the students and faculty of Nazareth Academy in La Grange Park, Illinois, it stands for Peace, Unity, Love, Service, Everywhere. These are the qualities the students were trying to convey when they engaged primary school students of all races in a program to dissolve potential racism. What can the values of inclusive love, focused zeal, wise discernment and warm hospitality do? Students, faculty and families at Maria Reina Academy in San Juan, Puerto Rico, experienced that putting these values into action created a profound experience of community as they addressed the crises following Hurricane Maria. >





▲ *St. Joseph's Academy, Baton Rouge, students who are members of the Congregation of St. Joseph's Community Builders for Peace program gathered last December to video-conference with their counterparts from sister school Nazareth Academy in La Grange Park, Illinois, and students from Academia Maria Reina in San Juan, Puerto Rico. They were joined by Sister Ily Fernandez, CSJ (center).*

These actions and responses are the results of Community Builders for Peace, a program that brings together students from our sponsored high schools, as well as high schools sponsored by other Sisters of St. Joseph. During the week they spent together in the summer of 2017, twenty students participated in Community Builders for Peace. Students served in a variety of ministries with the sisters and reflected on their service in light of the Congregation of St. Joseph's spirituality and mission of unity. The students were asked the following questions: "What is preventing oneness with God and all of creation from happening in your geographic area? What project can you create to build community and peace and address injustice in your area?"

The response to these questions was astounding. The girls at St. Joseph's Academy were enraged by the evil of sex trafficking. They learned about an app which was created through a collaboration of the Congregation

of St. Joseph, Exchange Initiative, and Washington University in St. Louis in order to address human sex trafficking. The app allows individuals to take pictures of hotel rooms they're staying in. These pictures are sent to the FBI to help them identify the location of victims, who are often trafficked in hotels. Armed with this knowledge and their passion to address this evil, the students began raising awareness, inviting prayer, and calling forth a community of faculty, friends and family to engage in contacting hotels to ask permission to take pictures of rooms. Undertaking this ministry evoked the depth of compassion, courage and confidence in these young women, and all those who participated in building relationships with the hotels in order to gain their support in trying to end this modern day form of slavery. The students are part of a larger movement against sex trafficking. Thanks to the work of the FBI, anti-trafficking activists, and students like ours, the FBI was able to close down a website that advertised sex trafficking victims.

Students from Nazareth Academy hear of the violence that is evoked by racism in the news every day. Why not address violence before it can take hold? This was the vision that led Nazareth Academy students to plan a program, which they named P.U.L.S.E., to build community among young children of various races. It sounded so easy, but students learned that their plan would take a lot of effort. First, community had to be built with various schools and agencies where these children were located. Then, community needed to be built with the children and families in these schools. Next, more volunteers, primarily students and chaperones, had to be recruited to help. Finally, community needed to be built with businesses in the area, inviting them to participate by supplying needed materials for the program. The pay-off was huge. One student said, "The little ones taught us. They entered right into the play. They gave themselves to the whole event without holding back, which led us to give ourselves to the experience and quit being nervous.

I learned that I can do something big. I will never be afraid to dream big and set out to use my gifts to accomplish something big again.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS FOR PEACE PARTICIPANT

They were the ones who engaged us in sharing from a very deep level.” Another Peace Builder participant said, “We knew our event was successful when one of the moms called school to tell us that her little boy made LEGO people and put them all around the globe at home—“because we won’t have peace in the world, Mom, until everyone in the whole world can hold hands and be friends like this!”

Students from Maria Reina realized divisiveness is a concern where they live. So they intended to integrate the values of the Sisters of St. Joseph spirituality into the everyday lives of students, faculty and families in order to bring deeper unity in all areas of life. Then Hurricane Maria came. They knew these values could help them address this crisis. These students were inspired to build community in order to address situations all over their city. They led the prayer that helped bring about unity for the PTA and led Monday morning prayer over the PA at their school, focusing on the values of the Sisters of St. Joseph. They gathered parents, faculty and students in an out-pouring of love to clean up the neighborhood after the hurricane. As they continued listening to the inspiration of the Spirit, they developed projects all year to put love into action. Projects ranged from gathering needed materials for those who are severely developmentally challenged, to providing clean water

for neighbors, to raising depressed spirits by expressing gratitude, and pointing out goodness in unique ways to a variety of groups. Their zeal was contagious and led the community to spend this next year focusing on mission integration in all their schools.

The engagement of all of these students for the sake of something much bigger than themselves evoked gifts they never imagined possible. Pursuing this adventure together opened them to energy beyond each group. The students transcended

themselves, leaving behind “their plans” and moving instead in the direction that they were called, which made the projects so much better than they had dreamed.

As they gathered to reflect on these experiences a year later, one student was heard saying, “I learned that I can do something big. I will never be afraid to dream big and set out to use my gifts to accomplish something big again.” Another student shared, “I learned that the world is full of goodness.”

The efforts of the Peace Builders ripple outward as the students continue to put their experiences and insights into action to make the world better connected and full of love. ■



▲ Community Builders gather for a photo in Chicago.

Special Celeb



Baton Rouge, 150 Years

Our sisters in Baton Rouge are celebrating 150 years of presence in and service to the community. A special Mass will take place on October 21, 2018, at St. Joseph Cathedral in downtown Baton Rouge.



▲ Sisters in Baton Rouge visit the St. Joseph's Academy library in 2013.



rations!



Wheeling, 165 Years

Our sisters in Wheeling, West Virginia, are celebrating the 165th anniversary of their arrival in Wheeling. The sisters will be recognized at the Sisters of St. Joseph Auxiliary's annual Gala and Reverse Raffle in Wheeling on October 4, 2018.



▲ From left: Sister Mary Palmer; Lisa Werner, Auxiliary Treasurer; Sisters Christine Riley and Mary Ann Rosenbaum; Tammy Poppe, Auxiliary President; and Lynn Comerci, Auxiliary Board Member gather at the commemorative site of the sisters' arrival in Wheeling located at Heritage Port on the Ohio River.

Enough
is
Enough!
IT'S TIME TO
KEEP OUR KIDS SAFE!

THE KIDS ARE SO RIGHT

BY GINA SULLIVAN

“He should suffer for this.” I looked into the face of my sixteen-year-old daughter as she uttered these words, and I knew she meant it. As we watched the coverage of the Parkland, Florida, school shooting unfold last February, I was simultaneously watching my daughter. Watching as she registered the horror, shock, and confusion that was playing out on our TV, and came to grips with the reality that these teenagers – kids her own age – were now just....gone.

My daughter, the vegetarian who takes bugs outside instead of killing them, wanted the shooter of these kids to pay for his actions. To suffer for his crimes. Social media had provided a window into the shooting as students posted live video as it was happening, and my daughter had seen it all. I felt her seeking a way for it to be OK, and watched as she latched on to the first instinct we often feel after one human being hurts another – revenge. Although my faith calls me to peace and non-violence, in that moment, I said nothing. I didn’t lecture or admonish her. There would be time for talk later. In that moment, she needed to feel and process her feelings – shock, sadness, anger. But my next thought stopped me cold. Just where had my anger and outrage gone?

Like many adults, I have become numb to these acts of violence that are so tragically frequent. We watch the news, we empathize, we offer “thoughts and prayers,” and then we move on with our lives. We have

things to do after all, and there is always the next story. The news cycle is dizzying. Columbine, Sandy Hook, Parkland, and so many more – names that are now forever etched in our minds. Three hundred school shootings since 2013 alone – almost one per week. But for those left behind – the parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, etc. – there is no moving on or next thing. Their worlds are shattered and irrevocably altered. My daughter reminded me of the outrage I should be feeling that day. That I used to feel. The kind of outrage that, when combined with compassion, would lead me to act in some way to make a difference.

The rise of young people speaking out against violence in our schools in the wake of the Parkland shooting, and the mass media coverage they received, while surprising to some, was not to me. I had only to observe my own daughter that day to realize there was no one better to do it. We adults have learned to suppress



unpleasant emotions and keep moving. Teenagers don't. Adults filter everything through their worldview and political bias. Teenagers haven't learned that yet. Adults rationalize and are busy. Teenagers tell it like it is and have time. Adults are measured. Teenagers are raw. Adults are asleep. It's the teenagers who are awake.

The students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School were forced to be woke that terrible day in February, when they watched their friends and teachers die and had to prematurely face their own mortality. They refused to be quiet about it. Almost immediately after the shooting, a number of the students began to organize. They held press conferences and rallies. Their speeches were covered nationally and went viral on social media. They appeared on major news outlets and talk shows. They organized national marches and school walkouts, and got the attention of high-profile politicians, musicians, and others in the entertainment industry. Their names became known – Emma Gonzalez, Sarah Chadwick, Alfonso Calderon, David Hogg, Ryan Deitsch and Cameron Kasky. They talked to whomever would listen. They found their voices and did something, and in the process became activists who inspired more young people from around the country.

Some of those were students from our own sponsored high schools – Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland, Nazareth Academy in La Grange Park, and St. Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge. Some helped organize and take part in school walkouts or city demonstrations, some wrote articles for their school papers, and others have gotten involved in voter registration.



▲ Grace Brady at an anti-gun violence rally in Chicago last February.



▲ Emily Boudreaux



▲ Claire Sullivan with Sister Mary Schrader at the Saint Joseph Academy Walkout last March.

GRACE BRADY

Grace Brady, now a senior at Nazareth Academy, helped plan a student-led prayer service and walkout on April 20, 2018, the 20th anniversary of the Columbine shootings. She attended the March For Our Lives event in Chicago a few weeks prior, and it was then she decided to help plan an event at her school. She said she was also motivated by the activism displayed by the students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas. "I remember seeing Emma Gonzalez on TV and thinking, 'this is what I want to see people my age doing. This is what I want to do.'"

EMILY BOUDREAUX

Emily Boudreaux, who graduated from St. Joseph's Academy in Baton Rouge this past spring, said the Parkland shooting hit home for her. "I was absolutely heartbroken at the loss of life," she said. It inspired her to write an article on gun violence for her school newspaper. "The country needs to put aside political differences and come together to do something about this violence," she said. "Politicians need to open their eyes to what is really going on. We need to address mental health issues and gun control issues in a real, tangible way."

CLAIRE SULLIVAN

My daughter, Claire Sullivan, now a senior at Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland, said that since the shooting she has come to understand the need for more awareness around mental health issues. "I didn't know it at the time, but the boy who did this had a terrible life, many issues and showed a lot of disturbing behavior for years, which someone should have paid attention to," she said. "If you see something, say something. Pay attention and don't be afraid to tell someone. You might save someone's life."

It is impossible to be pro-peace and not also be anti-violence.

SISTER KATHY SHERMAN, CSJ

The Congregation of St. Joseph's commitment to peace, along with our sisters' long history in the classroom and our support of our sponsored high schools and students, have all led to efforts to end gun violence. "It is impossible to be pro-peace and not also be anti-violence," said Sister Kathy Sherman, CSJ, who is from our center in La Grange Park, a suburb of Chicago, a city plagued by gun violence. "Our mission calls us to stand with and for those who are victims, who are voiceless, or who are marginalized. We support the students from our schools, from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, and students everywhere who refuse to let their voices go unheard on a topic that so tragically affects them."



▲ From left to right, Sisters Dorothy LeBlanc, Lois O'Malley and Mary Ellen Loch attend an anti-gun violence rally in Wichita, Kansas.

In the months since the Parkland shooting, sisters and associates could be found alongside young people at rallies, demonstrations and walk-outs in cities across the U.S. The students felt and were grateful for their presence. "During our walkout at Nazareth Academy, the sisters came

to be with us," said Grace Brady (see photo below). "We held hands and the sisters led us in prayer. It was a beautiful moment."

She went on to explain how the support of the sisters and an understanding of their mission





▲ Marjory Stoneman Douglas students hold a press conference on Monday, June 4, 2018 at Pine Trails Park in Parkland, Florida, to announce the March For Our Lives: Road to Change bus tour.

of unity – one with God, each other and all creation – was integral to the day and to her feelings about the issue of school violence. “We are from God. We are taught to love God and each other from an early age,” she said. “These atrocities go against God’s fundamental teachings and disrupt God’s creation and our bonds with one another. We have to use our Catholic faith to perpetuate unity. We cannot let it be disrupted.”

A lot has happened since that terrible day in Florida last February. Tragically, five more deadly school shootings have occurred. With no end in sight for the violence, and still no real common sense gun laws on the books, the students from Parkland took their message on the road.

This past summer, students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School boarded a bus and went on a two-month, 24-state, 80-stop tour, the primary purpose of which was to

register young people to vote and to promote gun law reform. The “March For Our Lives: Road to Change” tour also visited every congressional district in Florida, their home state. At a news conference held before the tour kicked off in June, Cameron Kasky said one of the biggest missions of the tour was to educate voters. “We can march. We can bring our politicians into a new light and make sure they are being held accountable. But at the end of the day, real change is brought from voting,” he said. “The best thing you can possibly do is vote.” David Hogg, who graduated in June, said that his biggest surprise as he traveled the country was that, “there’s a lot more love than hate out there.”

Since that terrible day last February, I’ve had to confront my own

complacency. It’s not a comfortable process. So I started with something I know for sure – that we really are all connected. These are not other people’s kids. They are our kids. What happens to one happens to all.

My daughter recently wondered aloud if the lost Parkland, Florida, teenagers’ bedrooms are still as they left them that February morning. Clothes on the ground, bed unmade, photos in frames. Untouched by mothers and fathers still too wrapped in grief to let go. It is a brutally sad and haunting image. “Everyone deserves to go to school and feel safe, and parents deserve to know that when they’re sending their children to school, that they are going to come home,” she said. “Until that day, none of us should stay quiet.” ■

Gina Sullivan is an Associate with and the Director of Communications for the Congregation of St. Joseph. She lives in Cleveland, Ohio.

Learning to Pray

BY CHRISTINE PARKS, CSJ

I used to pray for God to change the world.
I used to pray for God to change others.
I used to pray for God to change.

I used to pray to a God of magical miracles.
Prayed for small miracles
Like passing tests I hadn't studied for
Like no rain for our picnic—even though
farmers were desperate for rain.

I didn't pray for the big ones like
burning bushes,
multiplying loaves and fish,
water into wine,
lepers cured and demons cast out.

Though I did pray for world peace more than once.

Small miracles were mostly what I wanted—until the day
I met you on a hot summer hillside.
A day when the sky was such deep dark blue
I could fall into it if I didn't hold on.
And there you were talking about love, being love,
being in love...with me.

You taught me that the miracle was in me
that my prayer wasn't changing anyone else
or the world,
it was changing me—into love
that was the miracle.
That would change the world.



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Together, we can make change in the world.

On November 27th, the Congregation of St. Joseph will take part in Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving. While Black Friday and Cyber Monday are about giving to our loved ones, Giving Tuesday is about giving back to our communities.

In a world where we sometimes feel overwhelmed, it helps to remember that we are stronger, together. By uniting to help those in need, we can make a real difference in our cities, country, and world.

We hope you'll consider taking part in this annual day of giving, and think of us or one of our sponsored ministries in your generosity. When you give to the Congregation of St. Joseph, you can be part of the efforts of over 500 sisters who are changing the world together!

Want to learn more about taking part in Giving Tuesday?

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