

*imagine*  
**ONE**

SPRING/SUMMER 2010 | VOL. 2 | NO. 1

THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

Loving God and  
neighbor-  
An enduring  
**yes**



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

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

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

## WE CARE ABOUT ALL CREATION

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

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By purchasing FSC certified paper and partnering with an FSC certified eco-friendly vendor, the Congregation of St. Joseph is supporting environmentally responsible socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.

In addition, our printing process uses soy- and vegetable-based inks exclusively, which are less harmful to the environment than their petroleum-based counterparts.



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Photo by: Gary Mulhern

### Where is this?

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

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If you guessed Mount St. Joseph in Wheeling, West Virginia, you are right! These beautiful wooden gates are a replica of ones that were on the property when the sisters purchased it in 1953. They lead into a tranquil courtyard garden.

# Sister Marguerite O'Brien, CSJ

## Reflects on...



## *Loving God and neighbor - an enduring 'yes'*

Did you ever ask someone for something so important that you held your breath until you heard the answer? Couples about to be engaged experience this; students applying to the college of their dreams know this; all women and men called to serve in self-emptying ways feel this – as parents, as teachers, as ministers.

Whether we say: “Yes” or “Si,” “Be it done unto me” or “Amen,” “You betcha!” or “Hai,” there is mystery contained within this simple response:

**Delight:** Sarah knew it and laughed that she had conceived in her old age.

**Reflection:** Mary felt it deeply and pondered these things in her heart.

**Covenant:** God promised and the Word became flesh and lives among us.

**Pain:** Contemporary martyrs of Central and South America experienced it in their total self-gift.

**Commitment:** Our congregation has lived its “yes” since 1650 and has sent women throughout the world collaborating in mission.

This issue of *imagineONE* focuses on many of the ways we, as a congregation, respond to the invitations of grace and continue to say our “fiat” (Lat., let it be done).

In the lead article, Maria Hill, CSJ, reflects on the movement of the Spirit in and among us. She looks at the enduring “yes” of the congregation and explores the effect of personal and communal discernment in everyone’s life.

Helene Lentz, CSJ, and Betty Granger, CSJ, describe the healthcare ministry that has engaged our sisters in innovative and heroic efforts for more than a century and a half. As co-sponsors of Ascension Health, the largest Catholic healthcare provider in the country, our heritage expands in new ways.

This issue also highlights the changing role of women in today’s society. It is not surprising that women are half of U.S. workers and the primary breadwinners or co-breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of American families. We are committed to preparing women and young girls for today’s world. The article by Eleanor Bernstein highlights a number of current and past efforts.

Altogether, the words of the poet, e.e. cummings sum up this issue’s theme well:

I thank You God for this most amazing day  
for the leaping greenly spirits of trees  
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything  
which is natural which is infinite which is yes.

*Marguerite O'Brien, CSJ*

Sister Marguerite O'Brien, CSJ

*upfront*



# WOMEN & *spirit*

CATHOLIC SISTERS IN AMERICA

In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) presents the exhibit "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America." For those who can't get to see it in person, this article brings at least a piece of the experience to you.

The exhibit is currently on display at the Smithsonian International Gallery in Washington D.C. through April 25th. It comes to **Cleveland, Ohio on May 9** for a summer run through August. For the complete schedule, log onto [womenandspirit.org](http://womenandspirit.org).

## CATHOLIC SISTERS EXHIBIT REVEALS AN ENDURING YES

by Ann Hultgren

A mandolin, a wicker bassinet and a sewing instruction manual are among a diverse assortment of artifacts on display in the "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America" traveling exhibit. Each tells a story.

### Sister Helen Prejean

Translated into 10 languages, sung as an opera, and dramatized in an award-winning film, *Dead Man Walking*, the firsthand account of Helen Prejean, a Sister of St. Joseph, provoked a national debate about the death penalty.



One of the exhibit's panels features Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ

The mandolin belonged to Sister St. Hilde Monnet, a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille, who taught music for 65 years all across the Midwest. The wicker bassinet on the porch of the New York Foundling Hospital, founded by the Sisters of Charity, welcomed abandoned babies, who often came with notes pleading that the sisters care for the child. The Sisters of Providence used the sewing instruction manual as part of the curriculum at their schools in the early 1900s.

These lifelines to the memories of courageous young women who came to the New World beginning in 1727, are a small sample of the exhibit which the Leadership Conference of Women Religious conceived and created. It documents the works of women religious for nearly 300 years. Multi-media resources, e.g., displays, videos, audio and news footage capture an enduring love, otherwise lost in time.

Limited records reveal that there are more than 220,000 sisters from approximately 650 communities or orders who have ministered in the United States since 1727. In reality, there are probably more.

Women religious forged a path of unremitting service and acceptance, and fostered a culture of social service that continues today. They contributed to the discovery of DNA, took in 30,000 orphaned or abandoned children from the streets of New York, developed a prototype for the infant incubator, nursed soldiers on both sides of the Civil War, protested segregation and the Vietnam War, marched in support of the Equal Rights Amendment, and gave their lives to martyrdom in the countries of Brazil, El Salvador and Liberia, among others. They work with immigrants and underprivileged people and promote the preservation of planet Earth.

At the opening event, employees of the design company and of the Cincinnati Museum Center spoke about the impact that working on the exhibit (and the sisters behind it) made on them: "I learned by experience what REAL collaboration is through the interactions of these women," said one. Another commented, "I'm not Catholic, but I will be bringing my daughters here to see what awesome things women have accomplished." ●

## One sister's impression

Overall, the exhibit is stunning! I went to it four times, and learned something new each time. I was incredulous to learn of the medical patents, the multiple "firsts," the extent of the influence women religious had in our country's formation. The exhibit revealed the totality of the gift of self that the women who came before us gave: those who came from Europe knowing they'd never go home again; those who left the east coast to travel west with the pioneers, leaving everything familiar and living with such faith that food and shelter would be provided; those who nursed soldiers from both sides in the Civil War and those who led the marchers for Civil Rights in the 1960's. It was inspiring and profound.

The visuals, the interactive pieces, the variety of the artifacts, the column listing every religious congregation currently in existence - every part of the exhibit was engaging and absorbing, frequently sobering and deeply touching.

*Jeannie Masterson, CSJ*

### NUN 101

#### *a Glossary*

The world of Catholic sisters has its own rich vocabulary.

Look for glossary terms throughout the exhibit. The terms on this wall relate to habits, the differences between nuns and sisters, and the steps in becoming a sister.

**NUN:** a member of a religious community whose primary focus is prayer in an enclosed cloistered setting; sometimes the terms *nun* and *nun* are used interchangeably.

**RELIGIOUS:** a person, either male or female, who pledges to live in accordance with a community's rules, apart from parents, family, and spouse.

**SISTER:** a woman who is a professed member of a religious congregation; sometimes the terms *nun* and *nun* are used interchangeably.



Exhibit panel

# Our Sisters in Japan

## CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF CARING FOR SENIORS

by Mary Magdalene Hayashi, CSJ

For those who have little connection with people in Japan, it may be surprising how some things in our societies are very similar. Fifty years ago, a Maryknoll pastor in Kyoto noticed that fewer families were able to care for their elderly parents in their little homes. He asked our sisters to staff the first nursing home in nearby Matsusaka. Sister Emma Molitor, CSJ, and two Japanese sisters said "yes."



Photo by Robert Takagi  
Sister Rosa Mystica Miyake, CSJ, left, ministers to those who benefit from Day Care services.



Photo by Robert Takagi  
A staff member visits with Sister Antonia Dejima, CSJ, right, a resident in the nursing home.

"After many years, this place was not large enough to accommodate those who needed care, so our new home called 'Nansei Catholic Nursing Home', was built here in Azaka," according to Sister Mary Magdalene Hayashi, CSJ, a member of our Japan Center leadership team.

Nansei Catholic Nursing Home, which celebrated its 50th Anniversary on February 13th, consists of three special purpose buildings. The first one houses 105 beds, which are filled; and it has a waiting list of 600 people. The second, Care House, is home for 50 residents who live by themselves and need little help with daily living.

The third building is the Day Service Center, where Sister Rosa Mystica Miyake ministers to the area's elderly who come daily for meals, bathing, health and spiritual needs and recreation. About 25 people come every day.

"Most people who have entered our home are not Catholics," Sister Mary Magdalene pointed out. "They come because of the 'Good News' they hear about our work. During the time they are with us over the many years, many people have been blessed with the grace of baptism before passing into eternal life."

"Our home is special because it is truly catholic and has a spirit of hospitality, loving care, along with kindness and gentleness, and respect for all people who come to be served with unconditional love," she continued. "All of our Sisters shine with the 'charism' of the Sisters of St. Joseph as they serve in ministry to the elderly. Sister Rosa Mystica has worked with the elderly a long time, and they love her because of her gentle caring in the spirit of the CSJ sisters."

Sister St. Joseph Wakabayashi is in charge of the nursing home and Day Service Center. Sister Mary Magdalene is in charge of the Care House, and Sister Teresa Hiraga, who works in pastoral care, offers Bible study and prays with the residents at Nansei Catholic Nursing Home. Sister Maria Francisca Izawa, CSJ, who recently professed final vows in our Wichita Center's Resurrection Chapel, is a full-time member of the nursing staff. ●

# CSJ Associate protests for peace

by Gina Sullivan

Sheila Rock, a CSJ Associate from Cleveland, has protested at the infamous "School of the Americas" (SOA) five times, most recently in November, 2009. She has attended the annual event this often to unite with thousands of others in a common goal — to pressure our government to shut down the school.

Renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) in 2001, the former School of the Americas is a United States Department of Defense combat training facility for Latin-American soldiers, located at Fort Benning, in Columbus, Georgia.

Since its establishment in Panama in 1946, the SOA has trained more than 60,000 Latin-American soldiers in counter-insurgency techniques. An alarming number of SOA graduates have gone on to commit atrocities and human rights abuses often against their own countrymen. They protect corrupt Latin-American governments from citizen uprisings by terrorizing people, often targeting educators, union organizers, religious workers, student leaders – anyone who works for human rights.

On December 2, 1980, Jean Donovan, an American lay missionary, and three nuns: Dorothy Kazel, an Ursuline, and two Maryknoll missionary sisters, Maura Clarke and Ita Ford were beaten, raped and murdered by five members of the National Guard of El Salvador. Three of the five soldiers implicated in those murders were graduates of the SOA. Also in 1980, El Salvador Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated during Mass by a right-wing group headed by former major Roberto D'Aubuisson – a 1972 graduate of the SOA.

On December 11, 1981, Salvadoran armed forces trained by the United States military killed more than 800 innocent civilian men, women and children, including infants, in the village of El Mozote in El Salvador. On November 16, 1989, six Jesuit priests, their co-worker and her teenage daughter were massacred in El Salvador. According to a U.S. Congressional task force, those responsible trained at the U.S. Army School of the Americas. These are only a fraction of SOA graduates' atrocities.

The annual November SOA protest is a three-day weekend of non-violent witness. The weekend includes a Sunday morning procession. Those leading represent people who have died. "Everyone else follows behind and carries a white cross. As we march, we read the names of those who died and raise our cross and say 'Presente!' (Spanish for 'present')."

Thousands from the United States and many Latin-American countries attended the 2009 event. While the goal is to send a clear message to President Obama to close the school, Sheila has more personal reasons to attend. "It is both a witness and protest," she said. "Yes we are human rights defenders, but I also consider that my attending is a memorial to all those who have been killed by the SOA graduates. They were innocent and good people, and our tax dollars support this school." ●

To learn more about the School of the Americas and how to participate in next year's protest, log-on to the InterReligious Task Force on Central America website at [irtfcleveland.org](http://irtfcleveland.org).



Thousands protest each November.



## *Couple gives the precious gift of time and self*

by Bert Lieux, CSJ

Susie and Tom Siemers have been involved with charitable organizations for many years, and the Congregation of St. Joseph is one that has been blessed by their generosity.

Their connection with the sisters started with their commitment to Guardian Angels Elementary School and Archbishop McNicholas High School in Cincinnati where their three daughters Gretchen, Stephanie and Heidi graduated.

During those years, Tom served on the school board. He and Susie worked on many capitol campaigns for the school. Later on, when the founding congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille moved its central offices to Cincinnati, Tom



*Susie and Tom Siemers*

became a member of the congregation development council and the financial advisory board.

What made Susie and Tom become so involved with the Sisters of St. Joseph? "We had the wonderful example of our parents and we believe in the sisters' mission," Tom explained.

"We are fortunate and appreciative of what God has bestowed on us over the years," Tom concluded. "We want to give back and make a difference.

We hope and believe that our children will continue that family tradition." ●

### Congregation of St. Joseph

## *Heritage Society*

Remember the Congregation of St. Joseph in your will or estate plan and help us weave a stronger partnership with the *dear neighbor* for generations to come.

Your gift to us through your will, life insurance policy, or charitable trust automatically enrolls you as a member of our [Heritage Society](#).

Join us now so you can be included in the next Heritage Society Mass. To learn more visit us at [csjgiftplanning.org](http://csjgiftplanning.org), or contact Gary W. Mulhern, Gift Planning Specialist, (304) 232-8160, ext. 148, [gmulhern@csjoseph.org](mailto:gmulhern@csjoseph.org).

*All information is kept in strict confidence.*



*Photo by Joellen Shriisa*

When Bernie Binder (right) learned that the LaGrange Center was planning a new altar designed by Sister Mary Southard, CSJ, he decided it would be his gift to the congregation and a most sacred memorial to his beloved late wife Lillian. Sister Mary's design incorporated wood from maple trees that had to be removed from the Center's grounds. The altar's glass tabletop makes the earth visible from all sides. The altar signifies "we are one" with all creation.

To learn about ways you can support the Sisters of St. Joseph, visit us online at [csjoseph.org](http://csjoseph.org) and click on *Make A Gift*.



# Holy Spirit inspires the generous *yes*

by Maria Hill, CSJ

*F*ifty years ago I was living in Minneapolis, Minn., as a Sister of St. Joseph of Bourg (later to become Medaille), serving as a teacher in a city parish and living with six other sisters in a parish-owned convent. There was one car available for seven of us. We all ministered in the same parish and we could walk to work in one minute.

Today I live in a suburb of Chicago, Ill., belong to the Congregation of St. Joseph, and serve as a facilitator for group meetings and as a spiritual director. I live with three other sisters in a congregation-owned house.

Change is inevitable. The late architect, engineer, mathematician and cosmologist Buckminster Fuller taught that, "A living system continually recreates itself." We can participate or resist, but change will happen with or without our participation. So, how does a person or a group remain focused on what is essential when the very pillars of support collapse — a husband and father loses his job of 25 years; fire destroys the house in which a family of five has



lived for 12 years; or, a new position opens up for a young single mother in a city many miles from her extended family and friends, etc.? In situations like these, the life one has known can change forever. Where does one go from there? A spiritual person may turn to his or her faith for support and perspective.

As with all who follow Jesus, I have had innumerable changes in my life that have sent me to prayer. One of the most memorable was the experience of coming to a communal “yes” at a community meeting when we were posed with the question, “How do you lean regarding whether or not we become one with six other Sisters of St. Joseph congregations?” The question was huge! It involved pulling together seven different cultures, seven different financial systems, seven different ways of forming community and living the vows, seven different ways of doing vocation and formation ministry, seven different ways of relating with associates and seven different ways of maintaining relationships with benefactors. It involved coming to know more than 800 sisters, and supporting more than thirty different sponsored ministries and innumerable congregational boards and committees.

Toward the end of those power-packed, Spirit-filled days. We all sat in a huge circle and one-by-one responded to the question, “Shall we petition Rome for union with the other six Sisters of St. Joseph Congregations?” I listened as more than 100 sisters stated their leaning and gave their rationale. Only one person expressed her leaning as a “no at this time,” but she was willing to live with the decision of

“May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ ... give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of God. May the eyes of your mind be enlightened so that you can see what hope God’s call holds for you.”  
Ephesians 1:17-18

the group. The group had experienced the Spirit in a powerful way. We were one in the decision to form a union. At that moment I could have scaled any mountain and charmed snakes out of their baskets. The memory continues to empower me when living out that decision seems complex.

The Holy Spirit is always present and active. It is up to us to catch the movement of the Spirit, taking the risk to consciously move along with it. When significant decisions present themselves, our faith provides us with a very helpful discernment process. We discern in prayer (alone and with others), in honest reflection on one’s actions and in sharing faith in spiritual direction or in conversation with faithful friends we respect.

When a person or group listens to the Spirit with a holy indifference and complete trust in a loving God, the “yes” is easy, even if implementing the decision is difficult. There is the assurance that the choice made is of God, and God will be with us living out the decision.

Discernment is the art of choosing well when confronted with a significant life decision. Briefly, the basic steps include:

1. **Praying to the Holy Spirit for openness and insight.** The Spirit speaks to us in prayer, in scripture and in the persons and circumstances of our lives. To really hear, we must be still, open-minded and listen deeply.
2. **Clarifying the issue to be decided.** It is essential to gather the facts and discover that there may be more than one good option. It is helpful to keep a journal of the work done in steps 2-5 and return to it frequently in prayer and reflection.
3. **Determining the pros and cons for each option.** We have to let go of the need to control the outcome. This step may include seeking the wisdom of others whose opinions we respect.
4. **Weighing all alternatives.** We need to be in touch with the feelings that arise when we consider each option. Notice which alternative gives the greatest peace.
5. **Making the decision that brings the greatest peace during quiet prayer.** It is helpful to live with the decision for a time, picturing ourselves implementing it. If peace and joy continue to accompany the decision, it is a sign that God’s mind and ours are likely one in this instance. ●

*Sister Maria Hill, CSJ, is a group facilitator and spiritual companion for people seeking spiritual direction. Her previous ministries included teaching, educational administration, parish ministry, and religious education. She also served in congregation leadership in Minnesota and Cincinnati prior to relocating to the LaGrange Park Center, near Chicago.*

# Still Saying *YES*

by Bridget Brewster

What does it mean to say “yes” ... and to keep saying “yes,” and saying “yes” again and again? A Sister of St. Joseph ponders the mission of unity and reconciliation in her heart every moment of her yes-response to a *dear neighbor’s* need.

In the manner of Mary, the 750 sisters in our congregation say, “Yes, here I am, God.” While the response remains positive, the ministry to which each is called changes many times over a lifetime and, for some sisters, several changes occur in the course of a year! Some of our sisters shared their experiences with God’s response to their very personal “yes” to yet another ministry.



**Sister Jane Ann Comerford:** *I have entered a stage in my life that offers me new ways to minister. I have time to offer myself as a hospice companion, to be present at St. John’s Day Center for Homeless Men, to volunteer at Louisville Center for the Arts and – most exciting of all – I go to Koshair Children’s Hospital in Louisville, to rock babies who are withdrawing from their*

*mothers’ addictions. I’m saying ‘yes’ with an inner energy that honors my lack of the youthful energy I had when I first said ‘yes’ in 1931.*

**Sister Rita Schafer:** *After offering educational support to inmates at the Kalamazoo County Jail for 8 years, the invitation to serve chronically poor people at the Catholic Community Center in Benton Harbor, Mich. was a new opportunity to help others help themselves. I’m part of a team of 13 who visit and pray with inmates and hosts Kairos retreats for family members ... ministering as the Gospel compels, “I was in prison and you visited me.” God continues to call me to ‘the more’ so, I continue to say ‘yes’ and thank God for the gift of wisdom and gratitude I receive from those I serve.*





**Sister Felicia Petruziello:** *Through my work within the Women's Outreach program, I feel a continual sense of joy and enthusiasm, being with and relating to women who have been used and abused, and who continually search for 'home.' I say, 'yes' daily to being called a 'street nun.' This allows me to feel connected not only to the 17th century Sisters of St. Joseph, but to the*

*legacy of the work of the Cleveland CSJs who have a long tradition of working with people who are poor.*

**Sister Irene Regan:**

*Teaching in Minnesota and Wisconsin for 49 years prepared me to serve as a teacher's assistant in Baton Rouge after my "retirement" in the North. Following ten years at Sacred Heart of Jesus in Baton Rouge, I began a new ministry in Wichita. I serve as receptionist for Dear Neighbor Ministries, where I am taught daily by our neighbors to be grateful for the life I enjoy. Saying 'yes' to our charism is the only way I know to grow into authenticity and honor my promise to God.*



**Sister Margaret Halligan:** *I taught school for 25 years and then was invited to serve as pastoral associate at St. Barbara Parish in Brookfield, Ill., in 1980. My instructions were very simple, 'Help those in need.' With an all-volunteer staff, including Sister Thomas Agnes (who claims to be recycling herself) as my 89-year-old assistant, we provide services through*

*our food pantry and clothes closet. We also loan out medical equipment and support the Phoenix and Seton ministries for people who are separated or divorced or who have lost a loved one. In addition we serve people who are homebound through the ministry of care.*

**Sister Mairead Scanlon:**

*Catholic classrooms held me for 25 years; then I enjoyed six years in West Virginia public schools before answering a call to serve as Hospital Chaplain for six years at St. Joseph Hospital. Now I'm beginning year 24 at Wheeling Community Hospital. I love my work and hope to continue as long as God gives me energy and my feet will carry me.*

*Offering a resounding 'yes' to God and our charism of unity is what gives me life. I don't know any other way to answer God's call in my life.*



The pattern that emerges from the lives of these women, and their sisters on the journey with them, is one of deep gratitude and a recognition of receiving 'yes' from the *dear neighbors* with whom and for whom they serve. Through the lives of the men and women who embrace the Joseph charism, 'yes' is how life is made real. ●

# HOSPITALS WE CO-SPONSOR WORK TOWARD *100% access and coverage*

by Helene Lentz, CSJ

Our congregation's healthcare ministry over the past one hundred and fifty years is truly an example of an enduring "yes" to the movement of the Spirit.

**A**s I listened to the debates and discussions regarding healthcare reform over the past year I am very aware of the difference in how healthcare used to be and how it functions now. Over the past thirty years, I have frequently found myself sitting in executive meetings advocating for new healthcare services. Sometimes at these meetings I wonder what our early sisters would think of our current healthcare system. Generally, it takes months, and sometimes years, to determine the feasibility of providing a new service – months to develop a financial plan and more months to get the necessary approvals to move forward. At times, working through the seemingly endless flow of paperwork feels like an endurance test; so I pray that we have the dedication, passion and enduring love that motivated our early sisters. (See Healthcare in the 'olden days' on pg. 16.)



Sister Juli Caron, CSJ, ministers to patients as Chaplain at a hospital in Fargo, North Dakota.

At present, our congregation co-sponsors two healthcare systems: Ascension Health and Via Christi Health. Ascension Health was previously the healthcare ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, Mich.; and Via Christi Health was, likewise, the ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita, Kan. Today, Ascension Health operates both of these healthcare ministries. It is the largest Catholic health system in the United States.

Both Ascension Health and Via Christi Health have a long history in their respective communities, compelled by the enduring CSJ value of serving the *dear neighbors* – especially those who are poor, frail, elderly or otherwise vulnerable. That includes people who are chronically mentally ill, persons with disabilities, and those suffering from AIDS and other medical conditions that sometimes evoke fear in the general population.

With a determination to provide "healthcare that leaves no one behind," Ascension Health has developed a 100% Campaign to accelerate its progress toward 100 percent access and 100 percent coverage for all of its patients. We see firsthand the impact on millions of Americans who are either underinsured or uninsured. Through Ascension Health, we provide \$868 million annually in health care to poor and underserved patients.

Today, our health ministries continue to face significant challenges that the many debates in Congress have brought to the forefront. Meanwhile, economic volatility, unemployment and compromise continue to dilute, and even preempt, the best responses our country can offer to fix this crisis of healthcare.

As we attempt to address the lingering difficulties, it is important to think of them in a larger context. We are stewards of a ministry that has survived a great deal of turmoil and stress over some 350 years since the first Sisters of St. Joseph became a congregation in LePuy, France in the year 1650. Those who have gone before us have gifted us with a legacy of deep, strong roots – a legacy with the ability to weather the storms that continue to buffet us today.

Whatever the future may hold for healthcare, the Congregation of St. Joseph will remain faithful to our tradition of ensuring healthcare that enhances the well-being of our communities, including people who are poor and vulnerable. By continuing to work together with employees, physicians, boards and administrators and community leaders, etc., we will find new ways to steward our creativity and optimize our resources for current and future generations of healthcare needs. ●

*Sister Helene Lentz, CSJ, represents the Congregation of St. Joseph on the Ascension Health Sponsors Council. She has served on healthcare boards for 30 years and was VP for Mission at Via Christi Health in Wichita, Kan., from 1990-2000. From 2000-2007, she was President of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita. Today, she is also director of the Magnificat Center in Wichita, one of the congregation's spirituality centers (see ad on back cover).*



WE REMEMBER AS WE CELEBRATE

## *Ascension Health's 10-year anniversary*

by Betty Granger, CSJ

Ascension Health celebrated its tenth anniversary in November. At its founding, the health system's original sponsors – the Daughters of Charity and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth – created a new model of shared sponsorship and collaboration. Ascension Health now embodies their “sacred promise” to strengthen Catholic healthcare in the United States and expand its ability to serve all people in the communities where it operates. Today, Ascension Health has more than 500 care locations in 19 states.

Over this past decade, Ascension Health has provided healthcare to millions of people. To be truly effective, it reaches into the communities to meet local residents' healthcare needs, especially for people who are poor and vulnerable. In fiscal year 2009, Ascension Health treated an uninsured person every 34 seconds and provided \$868 million in uncompensated care.

The staff and associates make Ascension Health a strong, vibrant ministry focused on transforming healthcare. Together, they are committed to realizing the vision and mission of healing by providing spiritually centered, holistic care for everyone.

For all that has been – thanks! For all that will be – yes! ●



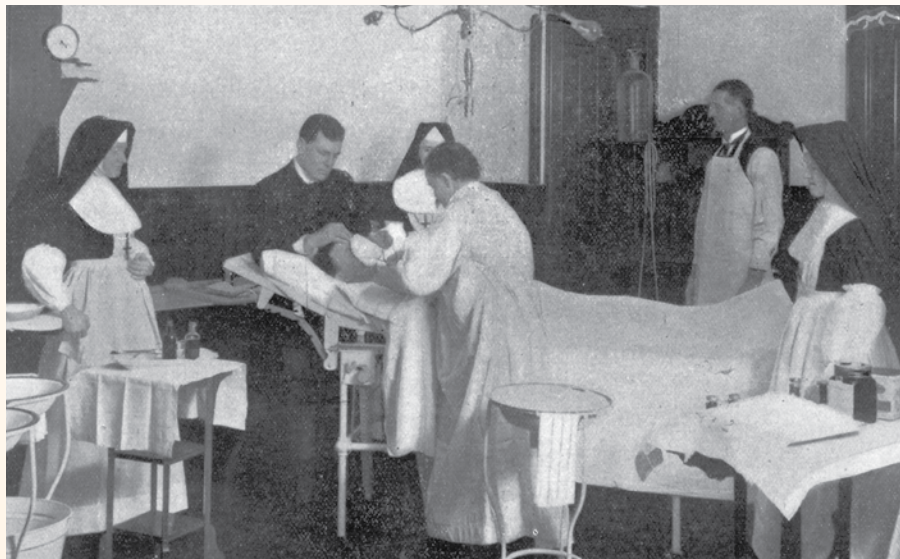
Photo courtesy of Ascension Health

# Healthcare in *'the olden days'* required pioneer spirit

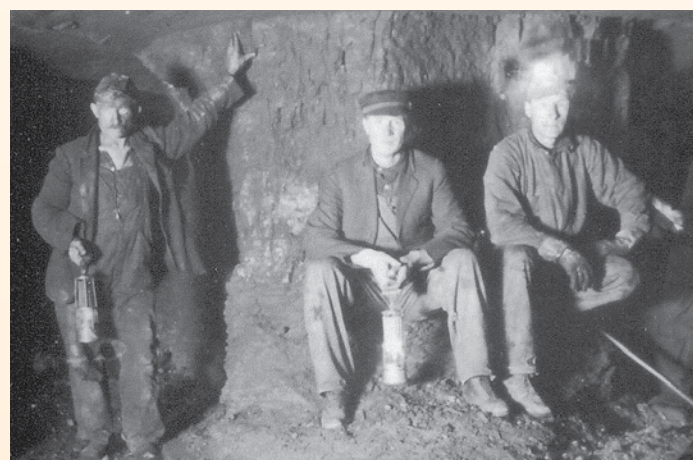
by Helene Lentz, CSJ

The healthcare roots of our congregation go back more than one hundred years. While Nazareth, Medaille, Tipton, Wheeling and Wichita all had health facilities in the past, all seven former congregations have had women dedicated to the ministry of healthcare. Here are a few wonderful examples of our sisters' courage, innovations, hard work and firm commitment to serving their *dear neighbors*, especially those who were poor or marginalized.

*In the mining town of Pittsburg, Kan.,* in 1903, the sisters began one of the first managed care programs. They went to the mines and collected 25-cents per month from each miner to cover healthcare costs in case of an accident, illness or injury in the mines.



*These were the groundbreaking days of hospital care and surgery in America at Borgess Hospital in Kalamazoo, Mich.*



*In the early 1900s, the sisters helped miners anticipate healthcare needs.*

*During a yellow fever epidemic in New Orleans,* the sisters helped care for people in their homes where, as a precaution, doctors and nurses were not allowed to go. In appreciation, the city let the sisters ride free-of-charge on all public buses and trolley cars for many years thereafter.

*In Erie, Penn.,* at a dedication ceremony in 2005, the Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists unveiled a state historical marker honoring Mother Mary Bernard Sheridan, CSJ, as the nation's first formally trained nurse-anesthetist. Later Mother Mary Bernard founded the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita and Catholic healthcare services there.

*At the turn of the 20th century,* our sisters at Borgess Hospital in Kalamazoo, Mich., had no secular help until 1902. They performed all professional, non-professional, and domestic services: cleaning, making beds, cooking, serving meals, etc. After a full day of strenuous work, they also took turns sitting up half-nights to monitor patients. A sister remained at the bedside of each surgical patient for three nights after surgery- at no additional charge.



*From April 13, 1864, until the Civil War ended in 1865, Wheeling hospital in West Virginia dedicated one wing as a “post hospital” that treated both Union and Confederate soldiers. The Union commissioned Sisters Ignatius Farley, DeChantal Keating, Vincent Smythe, Stanislaus Hohrman and Mary Agnes Kelly as army nurses and, later, two of them received the Bronze Medal in recognition of their service.*



*St. Francis Hospital in Charleston, W.Va., integrated its nursing staff in the early 1950s.*

*Charleston’s St. Francis Hospital became the pioneer hospital in southern West Virginia to foster an integrated nursing staff. The hospital hired its first three women of color, well-qualified graduate nurses, in 1950-51. Twenty white nurses demanded that Administrator Sister Helen Clare Bauerbach dismiss the three who were African-American. She held firm, backed by CSJ and diocesan leadership. The 20 white nurses walked out and influenced all but two of the 25 physicians on the medical staff to espouse their cause. The situation created a short-term administrative and a long-term financial burden from which it took several decades to recover.*

*In the 1920s, in the city of Kokomo, Ind., and surrounding areas, the Ku Klux Klan had significant presence and influence. When the Klan held a national “conclave” in Kokomo in 1923, white-robed Klansmen paraded through the streets carrying a large American flag by its four corners asking for contributions so that another hospital might be built in Kokomo. Local lore says that the Klan collected some \$50,000 so that local residents “would not have to suffer the indignity of being born, cared for or dying in a Catholic hospital.” The Klan completed its new hospital in 1925; however, circumstances changed greatly and they could not continue their financial support. In 1930, the hospital*

doors closed and Kokomo auctioned the building for unpaid property tax. The sisters, working quietly through members of their Advisory Board, were able to buy the facility which, in 1936, became known as St. Joseph Memorial Hospital.

*In response to a request from the United States bishops to move into foreign mission work, the Wichita congregation sent three nurses to Kyoto, Japan, in 1950 to establish a community hospital. The three studied Japanese and soon began attracting other young women to join them. Three more Americans went to Japan in 1953. After a short time, the sisters realized that Kyoto needed a hospital for the many children with deformities in post-war Japan. Many parents had been hiding them in closets so the children would not bring disgrace on the family. Our sisters went house to house and convinced parents to bring their children to the hospital. The sisters used a German form of therapy, which was highly effective, and they worked with the parents to provide therapy for their children. Today St. Joseph Hospital for Crippled Children is a state-of-the-art facility. In 1959, the sisters responded to another healthcare need: caring for elderly people in Matsusaka, Japan (see 50th Anniversary article pg. 7) ●*



# Educating women transforming the world

by Eleanor Bernstein, CSJ

Working with the Center for American Progress, Emmy Award-winning journalist Maria Shriver announced in October that women were about to become 50-percent of the nation's workforce by the end of 2009. Today, two-thirds of the nation's women are breadwinners or co-breadwinners, and they are earning 50-percent of the Ph.D. and professional degrees in this country.

**T**hose facts from the Shriver Report invite us to reflect on the evolving role of women over generations, how women have enabled each other and how the Sisters of St. Joseph have been a part of that journey.

It started a long time ago. At the conclusion of the report, Oprah Winfrey wrote, "We women have been having conversations since the birth of this nation. We know when its time for a conversation to begin."

She cites Sojourner Truth as an example. A former slave, Sojourner Truth spoke in Akron, Ohio, in 1852, to suffragettes fighting for the right to vote.

*"Well, children," Sojourner Truth said, "where there is so much racket, there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the Negroes of the South and the women (of) the North all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon."*

*"But what's all this here talking about? If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right-side-up again!"*

## Right-side-up again

Turning the world right-side-up again — a fresh image for doing what Jesus did.

The itinerant Nazareth preacher began his ministry by proclaiming "the reign of God," declaring a new social order. The hungry would be filled, the lowly raised up; he came so that all would have life, life to the full — no exceptions. Women, men, children; all classes, all races, orientations and ethnic backgrounds. God's all-inclusive love embraced everyone — the privileged and the ordinary, the "titled" and the marginalized.

And from the beginning, Sisters of St. Joseph claimed Jesus' mission as their own. Since our founding in 1650

France, we seek to respond to the needs of the *dear neighbor* – those who are poor, sick, elderly; widows and orphans, prisoners, beggars – all.

When our sisters arrived in America, convinced of education's critical role in the betterment of all people, they focused their energies on teaching children. From these initial efforts sprang parochial schools, then academies for girls and young women (though not exclusively) and even colleges. Because of their word and witness, because their schools embodied Gospel values, generations of students would come to recognize their own vocations to be contributing members of society, to make this world a better place.

Countless students have gone on to engage in this Gospel work, without fanfare or headlines. They raise families and they enrich neighborhoods, parishes and volunteer organizations. They quietly serve the *dear neighbor* according to their gifts and the other's need. As the Shriver Report shows, though the number of women who work outside the home has greatly increased, women continue to selflessly live the vocation of wife and mother. Others struggle as single parents.

Indeed, more and more women work in the public arena. They serve in political life, they advocate for peace and justice in our country and beyond, they pursue the challenges of investigative journalism, law, medicine, the arts – and every human endeavor – working to turn the world right-side-up again. Among them are former students of our sisters.



Louisiana Representative  
Corrine "Lindy" Boggs, 1983.

### Politics as Service

Former Representative Corrine "Lindy" Boggs, the first woman from Louisiana to serve in Congress, is a striking example. Lindy succeeded her late husband, Democratic majority whip Hale Boggs, in 1972. Winning reelections in her own right, she served a total of 18 years in Congress.

Congresswoman Boggs worked on the House Appropriations Committee

and the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families. Her daughter, broadcast journalist and political commentator Cokie Roberts, says her mother tells this story: The committee was considering legislation barring banks from denying anyone a loan because of race, national origin or creed. "According to Mamma, she snuck into a back room, wrote the words 'or sex or marital status' in longhand into the text of the bill, made copies, and then brought them back to her colleagues saying in her sweet, southern way, 'I'm sure the omission was just an oversight on your part.'"

Truly a "steel magnolia," Lindy Boggs built bridges between political factions, between the old and new, liberals and conservatives, men and women, whites and blacks, even though her support for disadvantaged people often risked disapproval from her own constituency. Lindy fought for and won protection for women, minorities and children. She spearheaded legislation from civil rights to equal pay for women, and helped found the Women's Congressional Caucus.

When President Bill Clinton named her Ambassador to the Vatican, she acknowledged the education she received from Sisters of St. Joseph at her elementary school in rural New Roads, Louisiana. Her privileged background did not prevent her from identifying with people on the margins of society. This diminutive Southern lady was a giant in the halls of power, and made lasting contributions to getting the world right-side-up again.

### Sowing Peace

The calling of peace activist **Kathy Kelly**, founder of "Voices in the Wilderness" and "Voices for Creative Nonviolence," quickly thrust her into the international scene. Her name and work connect with issues of war, militarism, human rights, climate change, Guantanamo, suffering women, and men and children everywhere. "Voices for Creative Nonviolence" engages in nonviolent civil resistance to end wars and occupations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the occupied Palestinian Territories. She helped organize and participated in nonviolent teams in Haiti, Bosnia, and Iraq.

Prior to and during the Iraq war, and despite U.S. sanctions on Iraq, Kathy Kelly spearheaded some of the 70 humanitarian delegations delivering food and medicine to hospitals and doctors for Iraqi citizens.

Kathy frequently speaks of the Sisters of St. Joseph and their charism of unity and reconciliation: *(We live and work to bring all into union with God and with one another.)* Proud of their student from St. Paul High School in Chicago, Sisters of St. Joseph continue to encourage her work.

Among her many honors are the PAX Christi USA Teacher of Peace Award (1998); the Dan Berrigan Award, DePaul University, (1999); and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee (2001) and (2003).

### **The Work Goes on**

Building on their early commitment to education, CSJs continue this ministry in three outstanding high schools in Baton Rouge, Cleveland, and LaGrange Park, Ill. — exciting places where vital outreach to young students inspires a new generation with Gospel values and Gospel living.

Last fall, Saint Joseph Academy, Cleveland, invited humanitarian and author Greg Mortenson (“Three Cups of Tea” and “Stones into Schools”), to address the student body. Students at St. Joseph’s Academy, Baton Rouge, participated via live video stream.

Dr. Greg, as he is affectionately called by Afghan and Pakistani villagers where he has built schools, lives by the conviction that when you educate a girl, you educate a whole village; and thus you transform a society. Co-founder of the Central Asia Institute (CAI) in 1996, he and his staff collaborate with local villagers to build schools primarily, though not exclusively, for girls. In educating girls, he believes we sow the seeds of economic development, peace and prosperity in impoverished communities.



*Sister Dorothy Lynch, CSJ, left, met up with her former student and international peace worker Kathy Kelly at an anti-war march in LaGrange Park, Ill.*

His “instincts” prove true. In villages where girls have access to schooling, they marry older and are better prepared to rear children. Also, in the villages where these schools exist, the Taliban has had limited success in recruiting new members. To date, Dr. Greg and the CAI have built 131 schools for 58,000 children.

Students at our high schools responded generously to Dr. Greg’s work and benefitted from his profound insight into both the dignity and the needs of the *dear neighbors* halfway round the world. This is just another example of how visionary educators help to set the world right-side-up again. Mortenson’s

captivating description of his work to build schools for children, especially for girls, in Afghanistan and Pakistan opened students to a new way of thinking about their faraway “sisters and brothers.”

Enabling women to achieve their potential, to become fully alive, to stand tall and contribute to a better world ... that is one of the gifts that the Congregation of St. Joseph continues to offer. There are many, many more examples of former students – women and men now – who continue to live the Gospel values through their work, in their families and for their communities. To “meet” a few more of them, please read the following article. ●

*Sister Eleanor Bernstein, CSJ, served as vice-president on the leadership team of the founding Congregation of St. Joseph of Medaille. She has ministered in parishes, in adult education programs and at the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy. Currently she is working on a book of prayers for women.*



Our former students make  
*significant impressions*

*What influence have our sisters had in enabling women and men to make a difference, especially through education? Here is a glimpse of some of our students who have become people of influence, living some of the values we encourage.*

Cleveland’s Saint Joseph Academy graduate **Mary Jordan** (above center), has been a staff writer for the “Washington Post” for 24 years. She and husband Ken Sullivan have been posted abroad for 15 years, first in Tokyo then Mexico, and now Mary is the newspaper’s co-bureau chief in London. The couple won the George Polk Award in 1998 for coverage of the Asian Financial Crisis and a 2003 Pulitzer Prize for their coverage of the Mexican criminal justice system. They are the co-authors of “The Prison Angel,” a biography that won a 2006 Christopher Award.

**Sister Mary Ricardo DiSanto, CSJ**, teaches Suzuki Method violin to pre-school, grade school, and high school students and adults. Some of her students have had significant success in the music world. **Renata Arado** (above right) was “principal second” in the Norway Philharmonic. Now in Louisiana, she teaches her own children Suzuki Method violin. **Stephanie Arado** became Assistant to the Concert Master of the

Minnesota Symphony. **Tina Raimondi** is a member of the Florida Symphony Orchestra and **Jacqueline Smerz** performs in the renowned Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Chicago Youth Orchestra.

Michigan Supreme Court Justice **Maura Corrigan**, (above left, top row, second from left) a graduate of Cleveland’s Saint Joseph Academy, has been a Michigan Supreme Court Justice since 1999. From 2001-05, she served as Chief Justice. Just a few of the significant awards she has received include the Michigan Children’s Award (2008); Spectrum Human Services Chairman’s Award (2006); Michigan Family Support Council Judicial Award (2006); Vista Maria’s Child Advocate of the Year Award (2005); the Congressional Coalition on Adoption “Angels in Adoption” Award (2005); and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Award for significant improvements to Michigan’s Child Support Enforcement Program (2002).





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**Michael Moore**, (above center) famous for producing justice-oriented documentaries such as “Bowling for Columbine,” “Fahrenheit 9/11,” “Sicko” and “Capitalism: A Love Story,” had CSJ teachers at St. John’s School in Davison, Michigan.

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When **Tom Rosshirt** was in first grade at St. Francis Xavier in LaGrange, Ill., he played the role of Baby Jesus in the Christmas play, Sister Pat Willems, CSJ, remembers fondly. A graduate of Notre Dame, he went on to become a foreign policy speech writer for President Clinton. He and his partners founded the writing and communications strategy firm West Wing Writers in Washington, D.C

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**Kathleen Jesme**, who attended St. Joseph’s Academy in Crookston, Minn., is the author of three books of poetry: “The Plum-Stone Game;” “Fire Eater;” and “Motherhouse,” a national poetry prize winner.

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**Karen McNulty Enright**, (above right) who graduated from the LaGrange Park Center’s Nazareth Academy, is a founding partner of Winters, Enright, Salzetta & O’Brien, L.L.C., a Chicago personal injury law firm. She is a successful trial lawyer who specializes in representing clients who are injured through medical negligence, premises and products liability and automobile and construction accidents. Among many honors, *Chicago Magazine* named Karen one of the “Top 50 Women Lawyers” in the State of Illinois. In addition to her many professional commitments, she generously returns to Nazareth Academy to speak to senior peace and justice classes. She stresses the

importance of being aware of one’s gifts and talents and saying “thank you” to teachers, parents and, especially, to God. She also credits much of her success to the education she received at Nazareth Academy and to her connection with the Sisters of St. Joseph.

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Two former students are now principals of their *alma maters* and one is president: **Linda Harvison** is principal of St. Joseph’s Academy in Baton Rouge, La., **Debbie Vondrasek** is principal of Nazareth Academy in LaGrange Park, Ill., and **Mary Ann Corrigan-Davis** is president of Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland, Ohio.

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**Carol Eck Heise**, a graduate of Nazareth Academy in LaGrange Park, Ill., held on to the belief that she could make a difference. She has been a psychiatric nurse, a nursing instructor and an international human rights worker. Today she is an attorney at the Midwest Center for Justice representing with her partner, Alan Freedman, prisoners on death row in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. She is a mother of three and has four grandchildren.

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**John Polan** (above left) was a grade school student at St. Mary School in Riverside, Ill. Today he is Abbot Gregory of Conception Abbey in Missouri. He recalls his former CSJ teachers and is grateful for their influence on him.

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*These are just a few of our former students who have made significant impressions in their work. There are many more we would have liked to include, but space simply does not permit. We will look for opportunities in the future to tell you about more of them. ●*

## On Gospel Leadership

by Pat Kozak, CSJ

It's Saturday afternoon in Toni Morrison's novel, "*Beloved*," and the black preacher, Baby Suggs, "followed by every black man, woman, and child who could, took her great heart to the Clearing – a wide-open place cut deep in the woods."

There in the Clearing, rivaling any sermon we are likely to hear today, Baby Suggs preached the good news and offered an example of gospel leadership. Not because she quotes the scripture. She doesn't. Not because she offers any lecture on leadership. She doesn't do that either.

What she does offer is captured in the closing lines of one of her Saturday sermons. "She did not tell them to clean up their lives or to go and sin no more. She did not tell them they were the blessed of the earth, its inheriting meek or the glory-bound pure ones. She told them that the only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine. If they could not see it, they would not have it."

*The only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine.*

Gospel leadership is about the exercise of imagination at its finest. It is an imagination that is set afire by hope – as in life coming out of death or genuine peace rising up after generations of conflict. This is imagination at its finest.



*Beah Richards as Baby Suggs, preaches in the Clearing in Beloved (1998).*

Gospel leadership happens when people see radical new possibilities so clearly that they can feel them in their bones. And they talk about it, pray for it, act on behalf of the belief that life should and can be better for everyone, but especially for the least among us.

So how do we recognize Gospel leadership? Look around. Who is able to ask the hard questions because she or he is not afraid of the answers that might come? Questions like: What else is possible besides the systems that are already not working? What needs could be met if we didn't tell ourselves that the problem has always been there,

or is too big to address, or that people don't want to change anyhow? What is the grace we need to imagine today for our world and our church?

The imagination of Jesus was fed by two things: first, paying close attention to what was really happening around him – and its effect on the poor and oppressed of his time; and second, his confidence in the power of God to be greater than any other power that might limit or discourage.

*See, I am doing something new. Do you not see it? Is. 43:19*

*Look, the kingdom of God is here. It is in your midst! Lk. 17:21 ●*

*Sister Pat Kozak, CSJ, is a facilitator and consultant to religious congregations. Previously, she was on the leadership team of the founding congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cleveland; served as a pastoral associate for a parish in California; and worked in vocation and formation ministries and secondary and adult education.*

# Si se puede: It can be done

by Laurina Kahne, CSJ

Years ago, when Germans, Poles, Italians and Irish came to the U.S. in large waves, it was the churches and parish schools that became their local ports of refuge. In larger communities with several Catholic churches, people identified them as the Polish church, the German church, the Italian church, etc. Today our sisters continue to say “yes” to the ministry of welcoming the stranger – the newest wave of immigrants who come seeking food, shelter, education and hope for a decent future. Unable to obtain visas, they have risked their very lives to get here.



*Sister Laurina serves communion to one of the faithful at the feast of our Lady of Guadalupe mass on December 12, 2009*

**F**or the past 20 years, I have been blessed to walk with, or stand with, Hispanic Catholics at St. Alexis Parish just northwest of Chicago. In order to do that, I first had to learn Spanish. As an adult, it was difficult to learn a new language. So I can relate to the question so many U.S.-born people ask about immigrants: “Why don’t they learn English?” In fact, our congregation ministries and other local agencies that teach English constantly have waiting lists of immigrants who want to learn English.

So often, people also ask, “Why do they have to come here?” It is no secret that providing food and shelter for their families in Mexico and Central America is nearly impossible. And now, the drug cartels that have overrun large areas south of the border are terrorizing

both urban and rural communities, raping women and killing practically for sport.

Migration is nothing new. In Genesis we read, “The people were migrating to the east.” In Exodus, the people migrated to Egypt because of famine. Then, Moses led them back to Israel. The Irish and Germans came to America because of crop failures; the Poles, due to war and poverty, as well. The story barely changes – only the years and the countries of origin.

Here, in the U.S., however, quotas have changed dramatically. We welcomed Chinese labor to build the transcontinental railway and parts of the west, then passed the nation’s first restrictive immigration law, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. It wasn’t until after WWI that Congress passed the Quota Act,



limiting immigrants to only three percent of each nationality already living in the country. Three years later, Congress lowered that to two percent. More recently, under the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, undocumented immigrants became ineligible for all federal and state benefits, except emergency medical care, immunizations and disaster relief.

People who don't know better ask, "Why don't these people just follow the rules to come here legally?" Not only is it easier said than done, for all practical purposes it's impossible. Only rich and well-connected people can get a visa.

When some succeed, the jobs they find here are menial, their hours of work long. Employers take advantage of their not knowing the language very well. One client I met with worked in a factory filling commercial containers with sugar. But the boss wanted him to work faster and raised the safety guard to speed him up. As you would expect, the machine cut off several of his fingers. The boss ran over to the machine and quickly put the safety guard back down, hoping to protect himself and the company. We found a lawyer who agreed to work *pro bono* on the case and succeeded in getting the company to pay the man's medical expenses, plus a meager \$20,000 payment for loss of use of his fingers.

The Church's stance for comprehensive immigration reform enables us to understand immigration not only from an economic, social and security issue,

but also from a humanitarian one. Jesus spells it out in Matthew 25:40, "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, that you do unto me." From Exodus, the second book of the Bible, to Revelation, the last book, Scripture mandates the care of outcasts, strangers, orphans and widows.

As the country grapples with immigration reform, we are concerned with the punitive aspects of immigration raids such as happened in Postville, Iowa, in May 2008, and in other raids throughout the country. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and local police round up immigrants like livestock, and handcuff and chain them at their feet. Often children wait at home for a parent who won't be returning because he or she will be deported in the next day or two. The human suffering of separated families is beyond measure.

The requirements for reuniting family members are long and complex. We look forward to Congress, working with the current administration, to initiate humane, comprehensive immigration reform to address the issues of family reunification, paying fines and back taxes and upholding the rule of a just law.

In 2005, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) called for a new advocacy: "Welcoming the



*Sister Laurina (center) attends parish fiestas to walk with people in joy, as well as in difficulty.*

Stranger among Us: Unity in Diversity." The challenge continues, literally at our doorstep. Where parishes have not been welcoming, usually because they fear losing established members and revenue, many immigrants have turned to other religions for fulfillment, abandoning the richness of their Catholic faith.

For me, because I know and work with these beautiful people every day, the response is *Si se puede*. It can be done. We can welcome our sisters and brothers in Christ and assist them in their hope for a better life. ●

To learn more about immigration reform, visit us online at [csjoseph.org](http://csjoseph.org) and click on peace and justice.

*Sister Laurina Kahne, CSJ, is Minister to Hispanics at St. Alexis Parish in Bensenville, Ill., a northwest suburb of Chicago.*

# It was a chance 'meeting' that still resonates

by Caroline Benken, CSJ

I don't know the intent of the artist who created the huge globe on the plaza at the United Nations. Part of its surface is like polished gold that reflects its surroundings. But the artist deliberately broke the surface and the geographic relationships seem disjointed.



Photo by Caroline Benken, CSJ

This globe illustrates my experience of participating in sessions the UN offers to members of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Hundreds of people from all over the earth walked in with me to the conferences. The diversity of the group represented some cultures from the lush and fruitful parts of our globe, others from lands dried and cracked, bombed and blasted, where the earth struggles to sustain the poorest of the poor. Yet, being

here, I experience a oneness with all those seeking methods that will help us transform our ways into habits that can bring healing to our world.

We took a detour through a long hall where a maze of huge photos mesmerized me with stories of the lives of the women of Rwanda, like Odette, who were raped and tortured, yet survived. The stories of woman after woman, holding a child, perhaps standing apart from the child (the fruit of her being raped), haunted me. Their eyes seemed to search for mine. Pictures of the sad faces of children who don't know the fathers whose hatred and anger gave them life in the wombs of mothers who now struggle to care for them or even to love them, each asked me, "Where do I find hope?"



© Jonathan Torgovnik

Odette with her son Martin, who was born of rape. "When the militiaman was going to rape me," said Odette, "I begged him kindly, saying, 'I'm still a student. I'm still young. Wait. When I finish school, I will be your wife, but please don't rape me.' Then he told me, 'You don't have time to go to school, so forget about being anyone's wife. Even if you are lucky enough to survive, you will just be a maid in my house.'"

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I found myself growing weaker as I read each panel. The faces pierced my heart and asked, "Do you care?" My mind and heart stretched farther and farther around the globe and told me, "These are my brothers and sisters. They want, they need, the healing power of my love."

The ministry of peace and justice seeks to transform unjust systems. For me, the most powerful gift and, usually, the hardest part of this ministry is the transformation I experience by the lives of those who have pierced my heart and made it flow out across our broken world with love, compassion and the will to act. ●

# Let Your Light...

Every single minute of every single day, people all over the world are expressing love through thoughtful actions. While we often hear of humankind's inhumanity, it is an affirmation of God's goodness when we recognize the bazillions of ways people show kindness. Each of us can attest to how great we feel when someone sends a smile our way, or opens a door for someone. It is through these kinds of actions we see the Light ... and sometimes, we offer the Light.

**Janet Franklin, CSJ, shares her appreciation for life within a multicultural community ...**

*A few rounds at the doctors' office have taught me some valuable lessons about "hospitality of the heart," even though I have not been going for heart problems. The clinic is on the Pojoaque Reservoir in New Mexico, and it is such a friendly place with compassionate service. I talk to real people on the phone and when I visit, we share stories of our community. The quality of relationship among the professionals and with their patients is a beautiful reminder that "we are one," which is the heart of our CSJ charism. I call this relationship-building a blessing of "mutual caring."*

**Grace Skalski, staff, relates a story of a co-worker ...**

*I asked Ann Hultgren to go to a local food pantry to take a photo of our sisters who minister there. As Ann was heading to her assignment, she said she planned to stop somewhere and get things to donate to the pantry. I just find it so remarkable that while on an assignment for work, Ann thought about taking a personal donation.*

**Adelaide Williamson, CSJ, tells about her aunt's compassion for others ...**

*My aunt Clara, my mother's younger sister, is constantly giving me an example of Christ-like thoughtfulness in the way she reaches out to care for her sisters-in-law who are suffering the diminishment age brings. Clara brought one of these sisters to my mother's 91st birthday celebration and sat with her at the table. Clara was so attentive and later told me, with great joy, that she hadn't seen this sister-in-law so happy in a long while. The other aging sister-in-law has cancer and is undergoing treatment. Knowing that time can weigh heavy for these two women, Clara is always trying to think of ways to bring them together for a time of sharing simple pleasures.*

If we can envision a world in which the Light of Love shines in all of us, we will be closer to living in that kind of world. As we witness acts of respect and kindness, we are blessed to be one step closer to living in peace.

*If you would like to share a brief account of witnessing someone letting Christ's light shine through a simple act of God's love in the world, please send your story to [bbrewster@csjoseph.org](mailto:bbrewster@csjoseph.org).*

**Xenia Cord, donor, expresses her joy in reconnecting with a sister ...**


*Sister Danielle Garst, CSJ, was in my folklore class ... the only time in 21 years of teaching I ever had a nun in class. The semester ended on a Friday, and I was consumed with reading term papers, turning in final grades – and also making preparations for a holiday open house at our home the following evening. On Saturday, at the last minute, I made a bundt cake; when I turned it over to loosen it from the pan, it fell into a heap of crumbs on the table! As I wondered what I could make as a really quick substitute, the doorbell rang. On my step was Sister Danielle, holding out a foil-wrapped cardboard on which rested a Christmas tree made of sweet rolls and garnished with icing and red and green cherries. I was astounded: students never show up at one's door, and especially not bearing gifts! All she said before vanishing in the dark was that she thought I might enjoy the treat!*

**Sister Margot Eder, CSJ, offers gratitude for people helping people ...**

*Moving day for all the residents and their belongings from the old Borgess Nursing Home to the new Borgess Gardens was a tremendous undertaking that was beautifully orchestrated by staff. Many volunteers and family members helped get things packed up and ready, and then unpacked them at the new site. Of course, getting the residents moved was the most important thing and so many pitched in to make it happen. There was welcoming applause as each person entered. As residents saw their new home, any anxiety evaporated and the radiant smiles didn't stop. So many worked together to make this a very memorable day!*



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