



pursuing justice, we
seek god's gift of peace.

autumn 2010

Living peace

congregation of the sisters of st. joseph of peace

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Open Doors
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a spirituality of
peace
through **justice**



in this issue



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Cover Photograph

The beautiful photo of the dove nesting in razor wire was provided by Mitch Costin, a medical technician for PeaceHealth in Oregon. Mitch was struck—as were we—by this perfect image of living peace. He took this photo in El Salvador while on a PeaceHealth mission there. Our deep appreciation goes to Mitch for so generously sharing it with us.

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Welcome from the Congregation Leader

Welcome to *Living Peace*! May peace, Christ's peace, fill your heart, direct your actions and guide your footsteps so that you live more and more the life that God desires you to live. A living peace is our wish for you, a peace that influences all your choices, bringing energy, spirit and enthusiasm to the good days, and sustaining you in confidence and hope through the difficult times.

The Sisters of Saint Joseph of Peace have been reorganizing the structure of their religious congregation and, with that, evaluating the various print communications used in the past. Today, *Living Peace* comes as our principal written communication to members of the Congregation, to family, friends, co-workers and supporters, to those who have been associated with us for many years, and to those who would join with us in the work of justice and of peace. I will not say that *Living Peace* replaces the former publications such as *Peace Times* and *St. Joseph Messenger*; to replace is neither what we seek nor hope for. What we do hope is that through this journal we may bring together and extend the relationships represented by the earlier publications, work together in mutual support, reflect on the demands of justice and of peace in our world

today, deepen our understanding of the issues and live peace; that is, be doers of the word and not hearers only.

In this first issue of *Living Peace* we have attempted to lay a foundation of understanding. Who are the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, and what do they do? Many of our readers already know us. Nonetheless, it seemed worthwhile to speak here about who we are, what we do, and why we do it. That is why the theme of this first issue is A Spirituality of Peace through Justice. Basically, the emphasis here is on why we do what we do – what is the foundation on which the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, their friends and associates, have built their lives? Or, to put it another way, from what source do we draw our confidence and strength? These are perennial questions, they affect all of us, and our hope in publishing this journal is that our readers may, in turn, be enlivened and hope-filled by what they read here.

Blessings of peace,
Margaret Byrne, CSJP

Living Peace: How Is It Done?

by Jan Linley

Committing to a life of peace—a spirituality of peace—might seem relatively easy when we are in the flow and life and relationships are going smoothly. But when thwarted by life's challenges—big or small—it can be a struggle to hold onto stillness and maintain a peaceful center. The Sisters and Associates of St. Joseph of Peace have committed themselves to living a spirituality of peace. Each article in this issue of *Living Peace*, written by a Sister or an Associate, describes how that commitment is honored, sustained, shared, lived and renewed.

Carmel Little, CSJP, explains the charism of the Congregation—peace through justice—and some of the ways the Congregation lives that charism using their Constitutions and Chapter Acts as guides. In her article on promoting a spirituality of peace, Sheila Lemieux, CSJP, writes about the necessity of centering and bringing ourselves back to the present in order to sustain a peace that can be fostered and shared in the world. Associate Audrey Kettell defines and explores the benefits of spiritual direction on the path to a deeper connection with God. CSJP Ann Rutan suggests that peace, as a way of life, can become a reality if we commit to it together, “punching holes in the darkness of poverty, hunger, homelessness, racism and wars.”

Associate Terrence Moran describes the Congregation's ministry of hospitality, beginning in 1885 with a vacation home for poor, working Irish girls (“the Bridgets”)

on the cliffs of the Hudson River and continuing with present day retreat centers and ministries. Likewise, CSJPs Margaret Byrne and Joan Ward take us on a journey from past to present of the Congregation's ministries that serve the poor and displaced. CSJP Susan Dewitt profiles Sister Margaret Jane Kling's long ministry of peace and justice in El Salvador. And Mary Kuiken, CSJP, in *Our History and Roots*, gives a brief history of the publications of the Congregation.

We honor the spelling of the author's country of origin, so, for example, Audrey Kettell's article uses British spelling where appropriate. The initials CSJP stand for Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and are used to refer to the Congregation itself, or to a Sister or Sisters (CSJP, CSJPs) or an Associate or Associates (CSJP-A or CSJP-As).

In his book of the same name (“*Living Peace: A Spirituality of Contemplation and Action*”) John Dear, SJ, writes:

“Peace begins within each of us. It is a process of repeatedly showing mercy to ourselves, forgiving ourselves, befriending ourselves, and loving ourselves. As we learn to appreciate ourselves and accept God's gift of peace, we begin to radiate peace and love to others.”

In good times or bad, may you know patience, forgiveness and the grace of living peace.

OPEN HEARTS, OPEN DOORS: The CSJP Ministry of Hospitality

by Terrence J. Moran, CSJP-A

Hospitality is the virtue which allows us to break through the narrowness of our own fears and to open our houses to the stranger, with the intuition that salvation comes to us in the form of a tired traveler. Hospitality makes anxious disciples into powerful witnesses, makes suspicious owners into generous givers, and makes close-minded sectarians into interested recipients of new ideas and insights.

(Henri J. M. Nouwen in Ministry and Spirituality)



Garden, Peace and Spirituality Center, Bellevue, WA

They were called “the Bridgets” – young Irish girls who immigrated to the United States by the thousands in the 19th century to work as domestics in fabulous houses in Manhattan’s finest neighborhoods. At best they worked long hours for meager wages. All too often they were subject to physical or sexual abuse and not allowed to practice their religion. In 1885, Mother Francis Clare Cusack, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, with few resources and little support, opened a vacation house for “the Bridgets” in a rambling hotel in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Overlooking the Hudson River, the home offered a place of hospitality and rest for these beleaguered girls. What would it have been like to run such a place in the nineteenth century? An enormous house, with room for two hundred. No electricity. Fire places to be cleaned and set along with 100 oil lamps. Water for cooking, cleaning and laundry had to be pumped several times a day from the Hudson River, hundreds of feet below. And all this was done by a community of, at the most, six sisters.

The Congregation of St. Joseph of Peace has made hospitality the center of its ministries for over 125 years. They know that the road to a just and peaceful world is a long and demanding one and that people need way stations on their journey where they can rest, regroup and listen more deeply for the presence of God in their lives. As well, some need things most of us take for granted—a safe place, a warm meal, a bed to sleep in and a roof over their heads. This ministry of hospitality remains a priority for the Sisters and Associates of St. Joseph of Peace today, whether for friends and visitors needing a peaceful respite or for women and children in need of dignity and housing.

Stella Maris, a retreat and conference center on the Atlantic coast in New Jersey, USA, welcomes thousands of people a year. In addition to offering and hosting programs, a staff of resident and adjunct spiritual directors offers a ministry of holy listening to many people in the area. One frequent visitor to Stella Maris remarks, “I’m always amazed at the variety of people I meet at Stella Maris. Young and old, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and spiritual paths I can’t name; all are welcome. It is how I picture God’s reign.” WATERSPIRIT, another CSJP sponsored ministry, makes its home at Stella Maris. Under the direction of Suzanne Golas, CSJP, WATERSPIRIT invites people to find the Holy in the gift of water and teaches ways to advocate and work for the health of endangered coastal waters.

Sacred Heart Convent, Rearsby, Leicestershire, England is the center for the Congregation of St. Joseph of Peace in the United Kingdom. The Sisters have opened their beautiful home and grounds to the multicultural and interfaith population of the area seeking a time away. The Rearsby convent is one of the settings for a program of retreat days called “Quiet Gardens.” *Paradise Regained* was a recent retreat day theme and the group, led by an Anglican vicar, delighted in the presence of God found in the diversity of trees on the Rearsby property. Sister Mary Doyle, CSJP, long time convent gardener, introduced the group to the Cedars of Lebanon, Weeping Ash, (one of the very few in England), a Larch which had started life as part of a gift of a pot of flowers, a Californian Redwood, a Blue Cedar and two Brilliantissima. The day concluded with tea and Sister Lucy Sheehan’s scones, perhaps more famous than the garden itself!



Top left and right:
Photographs of Stella Maris, Elberon, NJ

The newly renovated *Peace and Spirituality Center* located on the CSJP property in Bellevue, Washington, USA provides a sacred space for reflection on nine wooded acres on Lake Washington with views of Mount Rainier and the Olympic Mountain range. Besides hosting groups from various spirituality and justice and peace organizations, Carmel Little, CSJP, director of the Center, organizes monthly days of Contemplative Prayer and Peace Days for Women.

Tragically, the plight of “the Bridgets” is not limited to the 19th century. Trafficking in human beings is a multi-billion dollar global industry. An estimated 27 million people are trafficked each year – 80% of them are female; 50% are children. CSJP Sisters and Associates, faithful to the example of founder, Mother Francis Clare Cusack, respond in a variety of ways to this global crisis. In the United Kingdom, Margaret Healy, CSJP, works with trafficked women and children through the *Medaille Trust*. The *Medaille Trust* was founded in 2006 by a number of religious congregations in response to the plight of thousands of people who are being trafficked into the UK each year. A major part of the Trust’s work is to raise awareness of the plight of those who are enslaved and exploited in the trafficking industry, and campaign on their behalf. The *Medaille Trust* maintains safe houses where women and children who are trafficked live in a secure environment where their process of healing can begin.

In the United States, the *York Street Project*, Jersey City, NJ, housed in one of the first ministry centers of the Congregation in the country, ministers in a multifaceted way to respond to the needs of women and children who are homeless and poor. The *York Street Project* breaks the cycle of poverty by simultaneously providing housing, education, and childhood development with counseling and life-skills training to more than 300 economically-disadvantaged women and children each year. The *Jubilee Women’s Center* in Seattle, Washington, USA, was founded in 1983 by three Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace whose work among the homeless in Seattle taught them that homeless women needed a place of long-term hospitality to receive the support and learn the skills to put their lives back together. Women may remain at the Center for up to two years. In the beautiful and hospitable environment of a former convent building, homeless women find healing and hope.

Homemade scones and pots of tea; beach clean-ups and garden tending; safe houses and dignity for those without, holy listening and creative preaching; open hands and open doors – through these and a myriad other ways, the Congregation of St. Joseph of Peace carries its tradition of hospitality into the future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Stella Maris Retreat Center
www.stellamarisretreatcenter.com

Peace and Spirituality Center
www.csjp.org/peace/pscenter/about.html

The Medaille Trust
www.medaille.co.uk

The York Street Project
www.yorkstreetproject.org

Jubilee Women’s Center
www.jwcenter.org

we have not forgotten them: CSJP Margaret Jane Kling's Long Mission in El Salvador

by Susan Dewitt, CSJP

In 1985, when the Civil War in El Salvador was at its height, Sister Margaret Jane Kling came to El Salvador with Sister Andrea Nenzel. New to Central America and with only a bit of Spanish, they had the courage to say “yes” when San Salvador Archbishop Rivera y Damas asked them to accompany Salvadorans displaced by the war in a new refugee center. They became the visible North American presence – visible partly because both are a fair bit taller than most Salvadorans – at the Calle Real Refugee Camp.

Margaret Jane tells amazing stories from those days, of facing down soldiers who wanted to search the camp, of nursing refugees through childbirth and war wounds and suicide attempts, of being picked up by authorities and carted around the country. In those tumultuous years she formed a bond with the people of Salvador that has brought her back, again and again. Since 2009 she has been living in Suchitoto, El Salvador, where she shares community with me (I coordinate a PeaceHealth/CSJP medical volunteer mission there) and Sister Peggy O’Neill, SC. She came back because, she says, “our continued CSJP presence in El Salvador is greatly appreciated. The people know that we have not forgotten them.”

Margaret Jane’s lifelong commitment to peace through justice led her to her present ministry, teaching English at Peggy O’Neill’s Centro Arte para la Paz to young Salvadorans who need the language for education and work opportunities here. These have to be the luckiest English students in Central America: with donations from CSJPs, family and friends, Margaret Jane purchased Rosetta Stone programs, workbooks, and games for English learners, and she is always on the lookout for good materials for the classes. Each class includes individual one-on-one conversation with the maestra, computer study, reading aloud, language games and group conversations. Some of her students are hoping to go to the University, a huge step for people from the country: they may be able to join the three now studying there with assistance from CSJPs and others. As Margaret Jane says, “I am confident that we will be able to assist them in some way.”



above: Sister Margaret Jane greets Archbishop Rivera y Damas on his visit to the Calle Real Refugee Camp, 1985.



left: Sister Margaret Jane with two students, Sulma and Rosa, both from the Marianella Garcia colonia of Suchitoto.

*“...our continued
CSJP presence in
El Salvador is
greatly appreciated.
The people know
that we have not
forgotten them.”*

A Weighty Grace: Promoting a Spirituality of Peace

by Sheila Lemieux, CSJP

*My heart is moved
by all I cannot save:
so much has been destroyed
I have to cast my lot with those
who age after age, perversely,
with no extraordinary power,
reconstitute the world.*

Adrienne Rich, in her poem, "Natural Resources" in
The Fact of a Doorframe

This poignant piece from Adrienne Rich is a sober reminder of the vast landscape ahead of those desiring to promote a Spirituality of Peace. Work and study in our Congregation Small Groups and individual actions have brought us to new levels of consciousness about our planet and the urgency calls us forward.

Why is it that as devastating atrocities happen to people and creation all over the globe, at times we become anesthetized, numb and detached from investing ourselves to collaborate with others to seek ways that could ease human suffering? We are bombarded daily by unrelenting reports of crises and devastation to such proportions that one feels powerless and impotent to provide any remedy of substance. Somehow the great injustices that cry out for redress get stifled by our own paralysis to do something. How do we find ways to see the faces and feel with those most disenfranchised on our globe today? One way of engagement described by Sr. Simone Campbell, SSS, Director of Network, is to let our hearts be broken by what we see and hear. According to Simone when our hearts are broken by something that confronts us and we become engaged with the experience- we will find the energy, focus and the determination to respond. Sustained action, she maintains, comes out of a broken heart. What then?

How do we keep ourselves from slipping back into an emotional numbness that from the outside bears an unpleasant resemblance to complacency? How do we sow the seeds of hope that bring about change and keep ourselves buoyant and committed to peacemaking?

The simplest and most effective way is to bring ourselves back to the present moment by not trying to control what we cannot. We do that by renewing and going deeper into ourselves, into our well of integrity. Each day, each moment, offers an opportunity to "practice our practice." Check in with yourself regularly. Ask yourself, "Am I numb? Overwhelmed? Do I feel I have no impact in the world?" If the answer is yes, dip deeper still, and more often, into the well. It is important, too, to seek other forms of renewal.

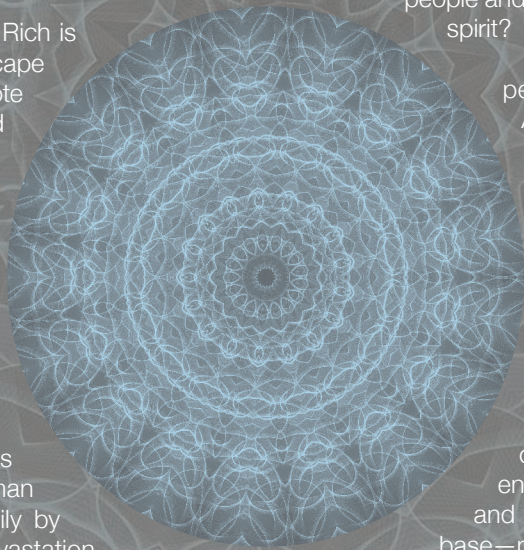
What makes you feel peaceful? Joyful? Who are the people and where are the places that feed your spirit?

Along with so many other people of faith, we, the Sisters and Associates of St. Joseph of Peace, have received a weighty grace as we strive to respond to this call of living peace. As always, the Holy Spirit hovers and meets us where we are and entices and coaxes us to a greater integrity in how we live our lives so that what we profess is witnessed by how we live. The foundation of it all is two-fold: the recognition of our dependence on God as we engage in this substantial enterprise; and the recognition that our spiritual base—prayer, private and communal; work for justice; and mellowness of heart—are what will sustain us going forward.

Like the mystics, we long to act out of a contemplative stance. A passage from our Constitutions- our CSJP way of life- reiterates this foundational truth:

Recognizing gospel peace as both gift and task, we believe that prayer is fundamental to our life. Our intimacy with God unifies our prayer and activity so that we are moved to action by prayer while action urges us to pray. Constitution, #28.

(And, to all of this, a dose of not taking ourselves too seriously is warranted!)



ministries of the sisters of st. joseph of peace



Concordia Learning Center at
St. Joseph's School for the Blind
Holy Name School of Nursing

Teaching
The Nurturing Place
Kenmare Alternate High School for Women

education

UP justice
advocacy

Social Work and Community Development
York Street Project
Harbour Place Day Center
NGO at the UN
WATERSPIRIT CAFOD
Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center

missions
abroad

Guatemala
Clinica Maxena
GRUDEM Foundation
Haiti
Hopital Sacré Coeur

El Salvador
Centro Arte para la Paz
Paz Salud

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Are Girls to Be Exported Like Cattle? Ministering to the Displaced

Margaret Byrne, CSJP and Joan Ward, CSJP

The presenter at the conference was blunt: “All this emphasis on trafficking”, he said, “is it not another example of jumping on the bandwagon and ignoring the work already in hand?” And the work in hand, as his subsequent remarks suggested, related broadly to questions about prayer and spirituality. The question gave me pause. Was it even a legitimate question? Yes, I thought, all questions, at least those asked with sincerity, are legitimate, and deserve serious consideration. Was there a necessary correlation between choosing one and ignoring the other? No, I thought not, though there is a special challenge here to which our Constitutions refer: *Our intimacy with God unifies our prayer and activity so that we are moved to action by prayer while action urges us to pray.* A further question arose: Was trafficking, perhaps, an issue that resonated more with women religious than with men? Possibly. And is our interest a product of new communication possibilities rather than a response to a “new” phenomenon? After all, the men and women forcibly taken from West Africa to work as slave labor in the “new world” were surely trafficked. The Bible, too, is replete with accounts of the forcible displacement of peoples, most especially the Hebrews, as well as admonitions to care for the stranger: *You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress foreigners, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.* [Exodus 22:21] and *Cursed is the one who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.* [Deut. 27:19] The questions, or rather, possible responses to the questions, are multi-faceted; here I can focus on just one aspect, the fact that trafficking is not new and that we – I mean the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace – have a history that calls us to a special concern for displaced people.



Harriet Hamilton, CSJP, (center) with residents in the dining room of St. Mary's Residence

The men, women and families that left Ireland in the decades after the Great Famine were not trafficked in the sense of being tricked into emigration or forcibly taken from their homeland. The coercion was similar to that experienced by thousands of migrants today – desperation to live, to eat, to support their families, to have a better life. But once in the new land their situation was precarious in the extreme. Our founder, Mother Clare (Margaret Anna Cusack) knew this, just as she knew that emigration was almost always a last choice of the wretched. As early as 1881 she was enlisting Episcopal support for an association that would help the Irish emigrants in their new land and Bishop John McCarthy of Cloyne responded favorably: *I will be glad to co-operate with you in any project of yours that has as its object the protection of our emigrants - they are leaving Queenstown at the rate of thousands a week...* Mother Clare's concern was as much to combat the need for emigration as it was to

*Cursed is the one who distorts the justice due
an alien, orphan, and widow.* [Deut. 27:19]

help those who made that difficult choice. *Are girls to be exported like cattle?* she asked. Her proposed industrial school at Knock aimed to provide a means of income that would enable young women to remain in Ireland, or, failing that, to equip them with skills they could use abroad. At Bluebell Hill in Nottingham, a hostel for working girls from Ireland and England's rural midlands was one of the first ministries. Though that hostel survived but a short time, the idea of accommodation for poor women separated from family and friends continued as a common thread in the early ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace. The house rented at Grove Street, Jersey City in March 1885 to serve as a convent for the Sisters, an employment bureau and home for working women, now flourishes

near-homeless people in Seattle, many of them Native Americans separated from their traditional homes and way of life, found friends among the Sisters – who could forget Sister Anastasia Daigle continuing in ministry well into her 90's! But to name one Sister or ministry runs the risk of overlooking the many who through the years responded to the needs of the immigrant, the displaced and the friendless.

In our own day, Sisters Andrea Nenzel and Margaret Jane Kling went to El Salvador in the early 1980's specifically to work among internally displaced refugees at Calle Real. Today, with the war in El Salvador over, Sisters Margaret Jane and Susan Dewitt, work in the ministry of Paz Salud contributing toward the health and safety of previously displaced communities. Associates Sheila

Early correspondence between Mother Clare and Bishop Wigger...stresses the moral as well as practical advantages of ministry among emigrant and displaced women—to lighten their burdens, provide them with a means of support, and “so that girls would be out of the way of many temptations.”

as a home for women with limited incomes at St. Mary's Residence, Washington Street, Jersey City, under the leadership of Harriet Hamilton, CSJP. The property at Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey was purchased in 1885 and developed as a vacation home for poor working women. Similarly, in Seattle, St. Teresa's Home opened in 1909 for “young women without family support and protection.” Five years later Rosary Hall was opened in Vancouver with the hope of serving a similar population.

Early correspondence between Mother Clare and Bishop Wigger of Newark stresses the moral as well as practical advantages of ministry among emigrant and displaced women– to lighten their burdens, provide them with a means of support, and “so that girls would be out of the way of many temptations”. She had already in a letter to *The Times* of London spoken of the *circumstances of serious temptation (to which too often many are found to yield) when they [young women] arrive in foreign countries without any previous training or preparation.*

Soon, when the Great War displaced millions throughout Europe and Nottingham, we find another founding Sister, Mother Evangelista, ministering among the Belgian refugees who flooded into the city, providing space in the school building where they could come together. She asked Sister Columba to canvas friends and benefactors for employment for the refugee women. Fast forward to the 1960's and 70's where we find the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace working among the poor and disenfranchised in the downtown area of Jersey City and providing shelter for a Vietnamese boat family. The services provided today by the York Street Project - www.yorkstreetproject.org - continue in that great tradition. On the west coast, homeless and

McShane and Annie Welsh are or have been similarly engaged. How providential, too, that Sisters Ann Crawley, Marilee Murphy and Maureen Boggins were in Milot, Haiti to work with some of those most severely injured and displaced by the earthquake of January 2010.

So, we find ourselves in the position of continuing in a long tradition working with trafficked, refugee or displaced people, especially women and children, and until we live in a world where that is no longer needed, we are honored to journey with them. Matthew 25, verse 38 continues to find a challenging echo in our hearts: *When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?*



Ann Crawley, CSJP, with patient, Jamesly, in Milot, Haiti.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

by Audrey Kettell, CSJP-A

The term Spiritual Direction is misleading as this work is not really about 'directing' at all; it would perhaps be better described as 'Spiritual Accompaniment'. The very person of the accompanier will influence how that person works, so one accompanier will work slightly differently from another. It is generally accepted that the aim of Spiritual Accompaniment is to help a person grow in, and deepen, their personal relationship with God, which in turn will affect every area of a person's life, from their inner life to their very presence and their every action - to quote Richard Rohr, OSF, Diarmuid O'Murchu, MSC, and others, 'everything belongs'... God is the prime mover so prayer will underpin the work. It is good to remember that in whomsoever we meet, 'God has been there before us.'

I believe that God is within each one of us, therefore we have all we need within ourselves, so what many of us need is to be helped, enabled, empowered to be open to and aware of that presence—God's presence—and be helped to develop our own 'touchstone' or discernment of God's working in our spiritual journey, for God may reveal her/himself in any situation, at any place, at any time in whatever way is right for each of us - God is in the very air we breathe.

Spiritual Accompaniment offers a safe place in which a person can feel free to explore their journey with God in whatever way they feel led, sharing whatever in their life seems appropriate to them for although God can be experienced in all of life it is the 'awareness' of God's presence and guidance in this experience that is so important; just involvement in life can be an aspect of prayer. An accompanier will listen above all else, and is there to enable, encourage, affirm, sometimes to guide, sometimes to challenge, possibly offering assistance in the form of scripture passages, books, prayers, poems, pictures, icons, music, creative aids etc. The use of silence and practising meditation and contemplation are often encouraged. I cannot stress enough that during the journeying it is the 'awareness' of God and God's presence and all that that entails that is so important to each of us, 'awareness' of God's unconditional love, gifts, forgiveness, desire for each one of us, paradoxically even the awareness of God's presence in God's seeming absence. God holds us in our sorrow as well as in our joy.

Spiritual Accompaniers can be found in several ways, for example, many CSJP Sisters and Associates offer this ministry, some dioceses have lists of Directors and/or leaflets on how to find one, friends may recommend an accompanier - it is a matter of asking around. The organization 'Spiritual Directors International' has an extensive website (www.sdiworld.org) offering information on most aspects of Spiritual Direction. Working with someone from a different denomination from your



own does not necessarily matter, and might even have its advantages, but each person should look for an accompanier with whom they feel comfortable to work, and who in turn feels they can work with them

There are many excellent books on Spiritual Direction, so to do justice to this subject in a brief article has been a daunting challenge! I feel very privileged to work in this ministry. It is very close to my heart, and I am ever grateful to God for having drawn me into it.

Recommended Reading

The Practice of Spiritual Direction
by William Barry, William Connolly

Spiritual Direction: Beyond the Beginnings
by Janet K Ruffing

Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction
by Margaret Guenther

Spiritual Direction for Every Christian
by Gordon Jeff

Spiritual Freedom
by John English

The Spiritual Journey
by Francis Kelly Nemeck, OMI and
Marie Theresa Coombs

Open the Door: A Journey to the True Self
by Joyce Rupp

For further suggestions, please visit our website at www.csjp.com and click Spirituality of Peace.

Spirituality of Peace through Justice

by Carmel Little, CSJP

Charism and Constitutions

The charism and Constitutions of a religious community go hand-in-hand. Charism comes from the Latin word for gift. It is the gift given the community by God to the founder. It is a gift for the church and for the world. That founding gift, or spirit, deeply identifies a religious order. The Constitutions are guides or rules by which a congregation lives out its charism.

The mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace is to work for peace through justice. This is our charism. The charism is the gift given to the founder and is what continues to attract and inspire the members of a congregation. The Constitutions are the daily expression of that charism –the road map by which we strive to live our lives. The charism holds the vision, inspires us and gives us hope. The Constitutions invite us to live that charism in concrete ways.

In our Constitutions we say that “gospel peace is both gift and task.” We accept the charism and the Constitutions as gift, believing that they hold the mystery of God. And we respond to the charism and Constitutions as task inviting us to “continue the work of establishing God’s reign of justice and peace.” (Constitution 2)

To be people of peace and justice we must first be people of prayer. Our Constitutions say; “*Recognizing gospel peace as both gift and task, we believe that prayer is fundamental to our life. Our intimacy with God unifies our prayer and activity, so that we are moved to action by*

our unity.” (Constitution 13) Community enables us to stay the course when it is difficult; to take the risk when it is dangerous; to have courage in the face of fear. Community life sustains us. “*Our presence to one another enables, sustains, and challenges us to be responsive to our mission.*” (Constitution 16)

Being responsive to our mission calls us to reflect on “the needs of our times.”(Constitution 20) At our General Chapter, a congregational meeting held every six years, we pause to do this. At our General Chapter in 2008 we committed ourselves to the care of creation and to growing in nonviolence. Our Constitutions say: “*We strive to respect the gifts of creation.*” (Constitution 11) We find these words more than ever call out to us today as we experience and witness the devastation of the environment. They call us to a greater awareness of the effects of our actions on our brothers and sisters around the globe and on our natural world. The devastation of the environment and the depletion of natural resources are

“We respond to God’s people in need and promote social justice as a way to peace.” (Constitution 11)

prayer while action urges us to pray.” (Constitution 28) The work for peace calls us to be rooted in God, the source of our peace, for it is only when we come from that source that we are able to sustain our efforts for justice. It is our intimacy with God that compels us to strive to alleviate the poverty and oppression of people. “*The weight of suffering and oppression borne by so many people today, especially those who are economically poor, cries out to us for action. Our response demands a firm commitment to work for justice in solidarity with our sisters and brothers.*” (Constitution 21)

To work for peace through justice is not an easy task because justice calls us into places we would rather not go. It can be risky and difficult to open the eyes of the blind, to set prisoners free, to bring good news to the poor. It is likewise risky to provide affordable housing, to assure healthcare for all, to take a stand against violence and war. It is not an easy path. We need the support of others who share our vision. We need community. Our Constitutions say; “*The call to live community for mission comes to us from Jesus whose Spirit is the source of*

having the greatest effect on the poorer countries of the world. In her own time, our founder, Mother Clare, made the connection between the devastation of earth and the victims of famine. In her book, *Illustrated History of Ireland*, written in 1868, she says: “The ancient forests have been hewn down with little profit to the spoiler and to the injury in many ways of the native...”

“The very name Sisters of Peace will, it is hoped, inspire the desire and a love for it.” These words of our founder continue to inspire us today. The world is bombarded by violence - from individual violence to the violence perpetrated by nations. It is a daunting task to be a person of peace in such a milieu. Yet, we have known people who have overcome adversity and violence through nonviolent means. As Mahatma Gandhi says: “Be the change you want to see in the world.” *Be the peace you want to see in the world.* As we commit ourselves to walk in the way of peace “*we trust that Christ’s blessing promised to peacemakers will sustain us, knowing that God working in us will accomplish more than we can ask or imagine.*” (Constitution 62)



Punching Holes in the Darkness: Peace Is a Way of Life

by Ann Rutan, CSJP

For many of us, these are very difficult, even fearful times. There is poverty, unemployment, 46 million without healthcare insurance in the United States, terrorist strikes, wars and pending wars. It's overwhelming.

One has to wonder why we can't make peace a way of life. It seems to me that when people set aside their differences to work in a common effort toward a common goal, all things are possible. As Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, our charism calls us to make peace a way of life, and it is our prophetic message for the rest of the world, a world in which we wish to bequeath peace and prosperity to the next generation.

Sister Maria Riley, OP, Senior Advisor for the Global Women's Project at the Center of Concern in Washington, DC, tells us: "A spirituality of solidarity recognizes and embraces the unity and community of all life. It understands that this solidarity goes beyond charity and even justice, and recognizes that our very salvation as individuals, communities and nations is linked to our living unity and community."

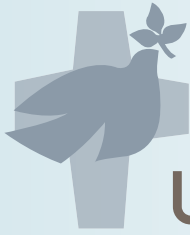
Our times call us to return to the kind of community where everyone can thrive and survive and contribute to the well-being of everyone else, where we live together in solidarity, hope and energy, exploring the gifts of life.

Those, too, are the dreams of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace.

I am reminded of the poet Robert Louis Stevenson who, as a child, watched the lamplighter light the town's street lamps, and said, "Look, Mother, there is a man who punches holes in the darkness." That is part of our calling – to punch holes in the darkness of poverty, hunger, homelessness, racism, and wars.

I say to all of our readers, we are called to godly lives: relying on God, hoping daily in God, being gentle with others. In that perspective, our lives are not overwhelming, we are blessed by God. Let us never give up in this world seeking for that spirit of peace, that longing for justice, which has been so integral to our lives together.

*"Look, Mother, there is a
man who punches holes
in the darkness."*



we invite you to connect & participate



consider becoming a sister

Contact Sister Jo-Anne Miller, CSJP
Vocations Director
jmiller@csjp-olp.org

consider becoming an associate

Women or men who share our concerns and charism
Contact Sister Sheila Lemieux, CSJP
Formation Director
slemieux@csjp-olp.org



participate with financial support

Donate on line at www.csjp.org or use the envelope included.

request prayer support

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. —Philippians 4:6



Our Sisters pray daily for friends, supporters, all who ask our prayers and those linked with us through the Pious Union of Prayer. The original purpose of this Union was to form a network of prayer for peace in homes and in families. You may write your request on the inside flap of the return envelope insert.

learn more about us at
www.csjp.org



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Sisters address, sort and tie magazines in the circulation department of St. Joseph's Messenger circa 1957.

History and Roots

by Mary Kuiken, CSJP

The history of *St. Joseph Messenger* is a long and memorable one that had its roots in 1886 with the Congregation's very first publication, "The Dove of Ireland." It was a little paper issued every year in connection with the Union of Peace and Prayer, a network of prayer for peace in homes and families. Today the prayer network continues as the Pious Union of Prayer, uniting its members with the ministry and prayer of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace. Margaret Anna Cusack, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, was dedicated to the ministry of the written word and used her gift of writing to communicate the message of peace.

The "Dove" was renamed "The Orphans' Messenger and Working Girls Friend" and debuted as a newspaper with eight pages. The earliest issue still in existence is No. 8, dated March, 1894. In the year 1899, when the Sisters began their work with persons who were blind, the form of the magazine was altered and received the title *Orphans' Messenger and Advocate of the Blind*.

The magazine was well established by the early 1900s and in 1912 a Printing Building was constructed at the corner of York and Washington Streets in Jersey City, New Jersey. For many years it was at the Printing Building that the *Messenger* was edited, printed, folded, stitched, cut, addressed, wrapped, bagged, tagged and sent on its way. The numerous facets of this laborious work were done primarily by the Sisters.

The final name change for the magazine, *St. Joseph's Messenger and Advocate of the Blind*, occurred in 1977. Over the years, numerous Sisters, Associates and others have contributed articles that have spoken to the magazine's Mission Statement: "To share with our readers a sense of hope and of God's abiding presence among us..." In this way we honor our long history and tradition of being united through writing and prayer for the promotion of our various ministries for the benefit of God's people.' This mission continues with the inauguration of *Living Peace*.