



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

autumn 2011

# Living peace

congregation of the sisters of st. joseph of peace



Cultivating Peace  
Cherishing Creation

Care of Creation: One  
Size Does Not Fit All

Where Land Meets the Sea  
Humans Meet Nature

care of creation  
and climate change



# in this issue



autumn 2011

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**Cover Photograph**  
Photographer Patti Gabriel ([www.pattigabriel.com](http://www.pattigabriel.com)) took the cover photo in a graveyard in Milot, Haiti. With its symbols of death, abundant lush life, and resurrection and hope in the crosses and heart, Patti's photo beautifully captures the paradox of the climate change crisis. How can Haiti—and our planet—be in crisis when they are filled with so much beauty?

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## Message from Congregation Leadership: **We Are Called to Build the Universe**

by Terry Donohue, CSJP

*Mary Oliver, in her poem, Song of the Builders from “Why I Wake Early” writes about the amazing energy of a cricket as she watches it moving grains on the hillside. She says this is how it is for each of us as we go “on in our inexplicable ways building the universe.”*

**How are we called to build the universe?** How are we called to care for creation? How do we think about God? More than twenty years ago, in 1990, the theme of our General Chapter was “One Creation, One Future” and the statement of direction from that Chapter has the same title. The statement of direction reminded us that our charism of peace through justice calls us to respond more fully to the integrity of creation, and that the growing understanding of our interrelatedness with all of creation calls us to a deeper commitment to our mission of peacemaking. At our Chapter in 2008, one of our Chapter Acts was Care of Creation and Climate Change – the theme of this issue. It is not a new theme for us, but a continuation of a prior commitment. Care of Creation and Climate Change is a huge issue, and yet there are so many ways to respond, especially in light of our commitment to peacemaking.

Our Constitutions call us and guide us: Our Congregation had its origin in our founder’s response to the social concerns and needs of the time (*Const. 4*). We respond to God’s people in need (*Const. 11*) and our decisions regarding ministry take into account the needs of our times (*Const. 20*). As Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, we try to respond with the flexibility required by changing needs in our world (*Const. 27*).

We are called to change and respond as the needs of the world change. These changes in our world have called us to minister with the people of Haiti, inspired us to share some of our majestic cedar trees with the Native People in the Pacific Northwest and invited us to find ways to reduce our carbon footprint. The possibilities are endless. Let us together find new ways to think about God and be guided by creation all around us so that we can build the universe.

## ALL ABOARD!

by Jan Linley

**Mad Men** is a popular American television show about Madison Avenue advertising men, set in the 1960s in New York City. In a scene from an episode called “The Golden Violin,” the Draper family is picnicking in a park. When they are ready to go, Don Draper throws his empty beer can into the woods, his wife Betty shakes out their blanket, and the family piles into the car leaving all of their trash on the ground. It’s an accurate depiction of the unchecked polluting of that era. We’ve “come a long way, baby,” but we still have a long way to go.

There is frequently lag time between what we know and when we act. It’s like boarding a train; some will arrive early, others on time, still more will dawdle and get on late or not at all. This is where we are on the climate change train—partially boarded and running out of time.

In this issue of *Living Peace*, we explore the Congregation’s commitment to care of creation and climate change through personal choices and through the green decisions taking place in its ministries. Our stories reveal the prescience of the founder of the Congregation regarding environment, why coastal environmental issues matter and the conundrum of the imbalance of energy consumption on

our planet as developing countries strive for the lifestyles of their industrialized neighbors. We witness the transformation of a creation philistine, connect ecology and spirituality, ponder the plight and future of Haiti and find signs of hope.

The recent economic crisis has probably served more than any other crisis to drive home the fact that we are all connected and what affects one—one person or one country—affects all. It no longer makes sense, or is even accurate, to look at independent crises of environment, economics and development in any one particular location. We are living in the midst of one large interconnected multi-crisis. That’s why the slogan “think global, act local” is not just catchy; it’s imperative and gives each one of us power and responsibility.

When we heal and sustain the environment, we are also making it possible for positive developmental changes to take hold in poor countries. When we make smart choices about energy, we are also making smart economic choices. What we choose in our daily lives—from not buying bottled water to walking, biking or taking public transportation, to flying less—matters. There’s still room on the train. Let’s get it boarded and out of the station.



# Cultivating Peace, Cherishing Creation

by Terrence J. Moran, CSJP-A

**Did you ever complain over the gaping potholes** in your street after the spring thaw? Did you ever wonder why the cracked sidewalk outside your favorite store never seems to get fixed? Did you know that when you trip on a cracked pavement it is directly related to the price of oil? When the price of oil rises, the price of pavement, which is a petroleum product, also rises. Local officials begin to rely on cheaper materials and fix fewer roads. And the arcane financial reports that you watch on the evening news begin to have a direct effect on how well emergency vehicles and school buses can travel through your streets. It would be hard to find an aspect of our lives that is not linked to oil, to fossil fuel. Our continuing dependence on fossil fuel has compromised the beauty and integrity of our home planet and its life systems.

The Congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, at its 2008 General Chapter, decided to make Care of Creation and Climate Change an essential element of its commitment to peacemaking. The Chapter declared, “We experience a call to live our stance of contemplative, nonviolent peacemaking in regard to creation. It is faithfulness to this charism in our own time that compels us to respond to the crisis of climate change/global warming.” Climate change might seem to be a strange focus for a group of religious women who have been known historically for hands-on service in education, health care and social work. In reality they are being profoundly faithful to their tradition. Mother Francis Clare Cusack, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, was a great connector. There have always been generous people who helped the poor. Mother Clare was one of the few people in church circles who tried to make connections between situations of poverty and injustice and the social and political structures that kept people impoverished and oppressed. While Victorian rhetoric spoke of woman as “the Angel in the House,” Mother Clare wrote *Woman’s Work in Modern Society* which explored the realities of women’s lives in the factories of the Industrial Revolution. She broke the silence about the existence of domestic violence behind the façade of the Victorian family. At a time when crop failures were seen to be uncontrollable “acts of God,” she uncovered the very human choices and political policies that drove thousands of Irish farmers to emigrate from their homeland. At the dawn of the industrial

age Mother Clare, with prophetic insight, was already observing the shadow side of unlimited economic growth. In her 1881 work *The Present Case of Ireland Plainly Stated: A Plea for My People and My Race*, she warns of the danger of an economy based on unlimited consumption instead of sustainability, “Nature yields to our demands so far but when we endeavor to press a further return we fail to obtain it...A moderate return of income can be obtained from the land...but where more is demanded, then nature revolts and the usurer suffers.”

At the beginning of the 21st century we are experiencing the reality of “nature’s revolt.” Rising global temperatures are causing the disappearance of Himalayan glaciers, a source of water for millions of people in the region. Families that have farmed lands for generations are displaced by lack of water and forced to relocate – not an “act of God” as Mother Clare would remind us but the result of human choices. Climate change sets into motion a chain of events that result in displacement of peoples, strains on family life, conflicts over scarce resources. Climate change is the ultimate connector – it brings together a wide variety of issues that threaten peace among peoples.

At their 2011 Spring Assembly, CSJP Sisters and Associates reflected on the sobering words of climate change activist Bill McKibben, “Nothing that anyone has done this year to aid the poor can compensate for the damage we’ve done simply by raising the temperature. There is no way to repair and heal while we’re still inflicting damage. Whatever else you are doing, you need to save a little bit of energy for joining the fight for climatic stability.” The Congregation of St. Joseph of Peace is committed to using its corporate energies to repair and heal in ways small and large – from bringing cloth napkins and mugs to meetings to avoiding disposable products to joining in efforts to “green” its healthcare systems.

Ultimately, for the Associates and Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, global warming is a religious and moral issue. Creation is not a collection of objects but rather a community of kin which shares a common origin and a common destiny. Earth is not merely a source of raw materials for consumption but a sacred icon of God’s beauty which moves us to awe and contemplation.

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION AND ACTION

Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace-Seeds of Peace: Climate Change: [www.csjp.org/justice/creation.html](http://www.csjp.org/justice/creation.html)

The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change: [www.catholicsandclimatechange.org](http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org)

350 – A Global Movement to Solve the Climate Crisis: [www.350.org](http://www.350.org)

M. F. Cusack, *Woman’s Work in Modern Society* (1874): [www.csjp.org/roots/macbooks.html](http://www.csjp.org/roots/macbooks.html)

# Elevating Morning Coffee to an Act of Commitment

by Jacqueline Kates

**Holy Name Medical Center (HNMC)** observed Earth Day 2011 by taking a significant step in the journey toward a life-sustaining society and introduced an “ethical” beverage program for our employees. The naturally-grown, high quality coffee and premium quality teas that comprise the program not only meet organic, Halal, and kosher standards, they are fair trade-certified products. Holy Name’s beverage program is green and sustainable, utilizing 100% recycled aluminum equipment, recycled paper napkins, disposable cups containing 90% renewable resources and 10% post consumer fiber, cup sleeves of 100% post consumer fiber, and bamboo wood tea racks!

By offering fair trade products, we are supporting farmers in developing regions of the world committed to preserving the environment and upholding sustainable farming methods, developing the business skills needed to compete in the global marketplace, and engaging in just labor practices. Most importantly, by supporting fair trade, we are helping to halt the forced child labor and trafficking practices prevalent throughout the world. Purchasing fair trade products affords our staff an opportunity to live the values of our mission, contribute to the well-being of the entire earth and make a difference to the world’s poor.

Holy Name’s commitment to fair trade and sustainability is rooted in the charism—peace through justice—and values—including protection of the planet—of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace.

The Medical Center has been utilizing \$5.5 million in grant monies received from Public Service Electric and Gas Company as part of the utility company’s initiative to fund infrastructure and energy efficiencies and promote conservation. Kitchen exhaust controls and heating, venting and air conditioning systems are being upgraded; instantaneous hot water heaters and occupancy sensors for lighting are being installed; garage lighting is being upgraded and windows are being replaced. New flooring made of wood chips is 100% recyclable. Old carpeting removed from the facility is recycled. Whenever possible, furniture is reupholstered rather than purchased new.

Holy Name is forming sustainable partnerships. On Earth Day 2010, we collaborated with GreenFaith to provide every employee and volunteer with a compact fluorescent light bulb. HNMC supplies the Township of Teaneck with cooking oil waste for use as fuel for the municipality’s bio-diesel fleet. Employees are active members of the Sustainability Advisory Board and Fair Trade Steering Committee of the Township, which was recently certified as the nation’s 21st Fair Trade municipality.

According to Ecclesiastes 1:4, “One generation goes and another generation comes, but the earth remains forever.” If we are to protect God’s creation—the totality of the physical world in which we live—then we must have a greater awareness of the consequences of our behavior. Fair trade elevates our morning cup of coffee to an act of commitment to the care of creation.



TOP: Jacqueline Kates enjoys a cup of fair trade coffee.

BOTTOM: Holy Name Medical Center volunteer and Yeshiva University student, Alan Fenyes

**Jacqueline Kates** is the Community Relations Coordinator for Holy Name Medical Center. Formerly mayor of the Township of Teaneck and chair of the New Jersey State Human Relations Council, an advisory body to the Governor and State Legislature, she represents HNMC on the Township’s Fair Trade Steering Committee. She is a sustainability advocate.

*Holy Name Medical Center is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace.*

For information about nonprofit, independent certifiers of Fair Trade products visit:

US: TransFair USA at: [www.FairTradeCertified.org](http://www.FairTradeCertified.org)

UK: The Fairtrade Foundation at: [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

# WATERSPIRIT:

## Deepening the Awareness of Peacemaking

by Suzanne Golas, CSJP

*"How lucky I am to have found a place, people and program that are full of the heart and soul of the essence of the spirituality I feel when I jump in the ocean, watch the snow falling, smell the autumn leaves...."*

This was the comment of a young woman after she participated in a WATERSPIRIT program.

A pastor of a large church, whose members have also participated in WATERSPIRIT programs, echoed her words: *"WATERSPIRIT has really helped members of our parish community live and act by values that show the relationship between water and the sacredness of God's creation."*

WATERSPIRIT is an ecology and spirituality ministry sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace. Its home base is located in Stella Maris Retreat Center on the New Jersey shore overlooking the beautiful Atlantic Ocean. While many of its activities take place at this site, WATERSPIRIT programs have traveled throughout the US, to over fifteen states from Maine to California, from the Great Lake states to Florida and Louisiana.

It is the voices of people like the two quoted above that capture the essence of WATERSPIRIT's mission, which is to educate people of all ages on global, regional and local water issues, inspiring them to preserve and protect water through personal behavior and support of systemic changes. However, at the heart of all WATERSPIRIT programs and activities is the deepening of a spirituality that recognizes the sacredness of nature, the interdependence throughout creation and the role of water in sustaining all life.

As director of WATERSPIRIT, I have often been inspired, motivated and energized by so many participating in our programs:

- eighth grade students, who having spent an hour cleaning the beach, sitting totally quiet at the ocean's edge, meditating on the presence of God in the sounds, sights and smells of the sea;
- communities of women religious developing a plan to conserve water in their homes and institutions;
- residents of a senior citizens community reverently sharing memories of how in their own religious traditions they first had a sense of the sacredness of water;



Suzanne Golas, CSJP adds WATERSPIRIT's voice to that of N.J. Congressman Frank Pallone and leaders of other environmental organizations in the introduction of the Clean Ocean Zone bill.

- high school students determined to have bottled water removed from their school;
- the inner city high school senior, terrified at seeing the ocean for the first time, but by the end of the day, standing on the beach staring at the sea and sighing, "It is so beautiful;"
- groups planning their strategies for opposing hydrofracking or supporting a clean ocean zone;
- the disabled woman, gingerly walking with her cane out toward the beach, to join a group in the "Prayer of Directions" which acknowledges the presence of the Spirit of God in north, east, south and west;
- the parish deciding that at an early autumn Sunday liturgy, families would bring water from their different vacation locations and pour all these waters into one bowl signifying that there is "one water" which sustains life throughout the planet.

This understanding of the holiness of creation has also been a deepening realization within the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace over many years and has been written into our Chapter Acts and Constitutions. Our Constitutions commit us to valuing *the gifts of creation*. Over twenty years ago, we stated in our Acts our belief that our

*"Water is the **hammer** with which climate change will **hit the Earth.**"*



growing understanding of our interrelatedness with all of creation called us to a deeper commitment to our mission of peacemaking and challenged us to continue our education regarding the interrelatedness of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. We subsequently committed ourselves to a focus on the ethics, economics, and politics of water. And most recently, we, Sisters and Associates of St. Joseph of Peace, have committed ourselves to *identify and reduce our carbon footprint in our communities, ministries and institutions.*

Today's WATERSPIRIT programs and activities connect water with climate change and global warming. The biologist, Travis Huxman, has said it this way, "Water is the hammer with which climate change will hit the Earth." The overwhelming number of the world's scientists agree that increasing floods, droughts, melting snow caps, rising seas and extreme storms are all, at least partially, the result of global warming.

The spirituality that increasingly is underlying our ministries such as WATERSPIRIT is a spirituality that relates to an emerging consciousness seen on the international scene, even within the cautious chambers of the United Nations. Recently, the General Assembly discussed practical implications of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's report, "Harmony with Nature," which states, "Ultimately, environmentally destructive behavior is a result of a failure to recognize that human beings are an inseparable part of nature and that we cannot damage it without severely damaging ourselves."

Earth is a living system. It is an indivisible, interdependent and interrelated community of which humans are a part. It is ever clearer; we cannot damage water, her systems and her relationship with all of creation without damaging ourselves. It is also clear that, in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, "If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation."



TOP: The sun looks out as spirited children revolve around her, re-enacting the emergence of life on Earth.

MIDDLE: University students participate in a beach clean-up, helping scientists and Earth as they gather data and debris.

BOTTOM: Young liturgical dancers enhance WATERSPIRIT's Winter Solstice celebration, focusing attention on the coming of the light.

# CARE OF CREATION: **One Size Does Not Fit All**

by Susan Dewitt, CSJP

*The Congregation of St. Joseph of Peace is blessed by being able to understand care of creation from many perspectives. For this article I interviewed Sister Chero Chuma, CSJP, a native of Kenya, and Sister Sukyi Hur, CSJP, who grew up in South Korea; I also have drawn on my own experience of living in El Salvador and on our shared experience of life in the United States and the United Kingdom.*

For each of us, caring for creation takes its heft and color from the particular earth we stand on and from the earth of our birth and upbringing. Kenya, El Salvador, South Korea, the United States and the United Kingdom—these countries, so different in their climates, histories, and economies, face very different challenges in adapting to climate change and caring for creation.

In Kenya, says Sister Chero Chuma, people see creation as a gift from God and live in direct connection with the earth, raising and eating their own food and making what they need rather than buying from the store. People in the city buy directly from farmers, and most city dwellers go home on holidays and return with food from the farm.

Kenya is a big country with many microclimates. Chero's family lives in the fertile Rift Valley, an area the whole country depends on for food. Her family lives simply on their farm but also with a creative approach to energy that rivals what Western countries are trying to do. They have a biogas processor that works with cow dung, water and bacteria to produce methane gas used for cooking and lighting.

In Kenya, Chero says, many people see climate change as God punishing them. They see the effects in the droughts and uncertain weather patterns that have wreaked havoc on the people of eastern Africa.

Like people in most developing countries, Kenyans are working hard to catch up with the way people live in



The author with macaw friend in Honduras.

As in the United States, there's a desire to connect to the country; for example, there's a farmer's market attached to the Cathedral in Seoul, a place where people can buy healthy local fruits and vegetables. People are encouraged to walk, bicycle and use public transportation. They also understand that they can save money conserving power by doing things like turning down their thermostats and wearing warmer clothes.

South Korea is a small country with powerful forces urging land development, but there has also been a pushback. Sukyi cites a Buddhist and Catholic movement against the development of land bordering the country's

*“...the wealthy nations **are the big spenders** in energy use, while in the poorer nations people have learned, by necessity, to **live well using far less** of the world's resources.”*

the West. Why should they stop trying for a better way of life to placate the industrialized world?

South Korea, like the United States, is a highly industrialized and urbanized country, says Sister Sukyi Hur. Farming was the main occupation a couple of generations ago, and rice is still both the staple and a sacred food, but now there are few farmers and less people who live in rural areas. Most young people have chosen to move to the cities, and South Korea imports much of its food, even the rice that is the holy and essential staple of everyday life.

four major rivers. Both communities call for conserving the soil and the forests, rather than compromising the forests with development.

In spite of work to return the environment to health the sky in Seoul is dark because of pollution. Conservation is difficult because of the dynamic of industrial development which has brought South Korea such wealth. There have been attempts to educate people, and especially children, about climate change; for example, more than 10,000 students are participating in a campaign to create





a “green” school in the forest. But while people are changing some habits—recycling more, conserving water, reducing the use of chemical fertilizers and detergents, planting trees, reducing the use of fossil fuels, using less plastic and more public transportation—few would wish to return to the lifestyle of pre-industrial South Korea.

As is the case in Kenya, El Salvador’s culture and community life have a strong rural and farming focus, but—as is also the case in Kenya and South Korea—life in the big city draws many away from the land. Like South Korea, El Salvador is a small and densely populated country, importing much of the produce and goods for sale in the markets. The capital city, San Salvador, has plenty of shopping malls and air-conditioned restaurants and too many neighborhoods where deep poverty breeds crime and violence.

In the country most campesinos have a *milpa*, an acre or two in which they grow the white corn and red beans that are the staples of Salvadoran life. Every rural family has an orchard for mangoes, bananas and papayas and shares their space with chickens, ducks and turkeys. A few raise cattle or pigs. The big cash crops, coffee and sugar cane, are sometimes grown by a collective; however, they are more often produced by laborers working for the landowner’s *fincas*. Planting times and methods have come down from the Nahuat ancestors of today’s Salvadorans but with supplements from the industrial West— fertilizers and chemicals to control insects and weeds.

Some nongovernmental organizations are working to introduce different approaches to farming; I have visited a model farm where animal dung is composted for fertilizer to feed the fruit trees and vegetables, where tomatoes and basil and squash and many herbal remedies are grown in pots watered from a wastewater pond being cleaned by water hyacinth and fish. But it’s a challenge to promote such new concepts in a traditional rural culture.

As in Kenya, almost everyone lives at a level of energy consumption dramatically lower than in the industrialized countries. Instead of being air-conditioned, houses are built to catch the breeze; few homes have water heaters; most people travel short distances by foot or bike or on horseback, and make longer journeys via bus or pickup.

A look at comparative statistics on energy use between these countries (I included Haiti, the topic of another article in this issue) shows a reality we are all familiar with, a resistant reality: the wealthy nations are the big spenders in energy use, while in the poorer nations people have learned, by necessity, to live well using far less of the world’s resources. We have many fine teachers among the people of countries like El Salvador, Haiti and Kenya. Our challenge in the expensive West is to learn to listen to them, to learn from the poor how to live with less.



TOP LEFT:  
Fresh food at a market in El Salvador

TOP RIGHT:  
Two El Salvadoran women carrying corn to the mill.

BOTTOM:  
Chero Chuma’s sister, Mercyline, stands next to a full tank of gas at her family’s farm in Kenya.

# HAITI: Time to Make Resilience an Attribute, Not a Requirement

by Maureen Boggins, CSJP and Jan Linley with appreciation  
to Dr. Robert Maguire for his time and input



TOP:  
Maureen Boggins



BOTTOM:  
Jan Linley

**When you think of Haiti**, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Do you think of Haiti's long history of political strife and the hard-won, unfair price they paid for freedom? Do you think about how Haiti or Ayiti—whose name in the language of the original Arawak Indian inhabitants means “the land of mountains”—was once known as “The Pearl of the Antilles” because of the wealth of its resources and its natural beauty? Or does your mind go instead to tropical storms, hurricanes and the devastating earthquake of 2010? Do you wonder how Haitians will make their environment stable and sustainable? Maybe you think of how poor Haiti is. Will their government be able to get organized and in sync enough to coordinate and oversee the necessary changes? When you think

of Haiti, does it cause you to shake your head in despair and say, “Poor Haiti,” as a friend did recently?

Dr. Robert Maguire, chairman of the US Institute for Peace Haiti Working Group and professor at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University, comments that, “After the earthquake one thing that everybody said, was ‘Oh, the Haitians are so resilient,’ and it’s true, and that’s a positive attribute. The problem is when resiliency becomes the end state then it becomes an insult after a while because what are you supposed to be in life? Are you supposed to be just resilient? Resilience should get you somewhere else.” In order for that to happen, Maguire suggests we help our Haitian friends and neighbors by treating them with dignity and showing them respect as we work with them hand in hand to rebuild their world. But, as he also pointed out, that’s complicated.

Haiti's environmental challenges are enmeshed with problems of governance, poverty, education and health care. Haiti is at constant risk of natural disaster,

primarily in the form of hurricanes and tropical storms. If its environment is not stabilized, it stands to lose any developmental gains, which keeps it in a constant cycle of repair and rebuild.

In 2009, the Congregation of St. Joseph of Peace chose to honor its 125th anniversary with a significant project in a country with dire needs where they could assist in any way possible—through a presence and through fundraising, educating, organizing and prayer. The Congregation chose Haiti because the perfect opportunity presented itself through Dr. David Butler, an Obstetrician/Gynecologist at Holy Name Medical Center, one of the Congregation's ministries in Teaneck, New Jersey. For nearly 20 years, Butler has been going to Milot, Haiti (about 70 miles north of Port-au-Prince) to help out at Hôpital Sacré Coeur. The hospital, a nutrition center and several mobile clinics are sponsored by an organization known by the acronym CRUDEM (Center for Rural Development of Milot). CRUDEM was looking for a religious, pastoral presence to replace the one they previously had with a community of Sisters who served in Milot for 10 years.

Initially three Sisters from the Congregation answered the call to minister in Haiti. Sisters Maureen Boggins, Ann



Partially denuded hills in Haiti

Crawley and Marilee Murphy arrived there in October 2009, approximately one year after four destructive hurricanes and just three months shy of the earthquake that together have left Haiti struggling to get back on its feet. Sister Marilee has since returned to the United States while Sisters Maureen and Ann remain in Milot. Sister Maureen teaches overflowing classes in English as a second language to staff. Sister Ann is a nurse and looks after the nutritional needs of the patients, amongst other caretaking and pastoral responsibilities.

They have experienced the resiliency of the Haitian people as well as their hospitality, gratitude, creativity, spirituality and joy. They have also experienced the many scenic views Haiti offers of mountains, rivers, waterfalls, beaches and some flora such as the aptly-named flamboyant tree, the delicate spider lily and the exotic bird of paradise, and fauna, like the red-tailed kite. But much of the natural environment has been depleted and with it the species for which the forests provided shelter. With two percent of her forests remaining, Haiti now has one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world. Even where the slopes appear to be green, often they are covered, not with trees, but only scrub.

For a while Milot seemed to be an exception to this pattern. When after the 'quake, helicopters brought in the injured from Port-au-Prince, Sr. Maureen remembers that the crew commented on how beautiful it was. "How green!" they exclaimed. They said it was like a desert on the other side. However, even in the relatively short time since then, extensive changes to the surrounding hillsides can be seen: the dark green of trees is being replaced by a lighter shade of scrub or by the brown swathes of



What future lies ahead for these Haitian children?

regain their rightful place in the world. Dr. Maguire points out the importance of involving the Haitian people in the work of restoration, not only in decision-making but in providing jobs for wages, not just food. Restoring rural communities will help the environment as well as

*“Poverty **eliminates options**. Day-to-day survival often trumps healthier choices for the environment.”*

completely denuded hillsides. This means that when heavy rains come, the soil erodes and is washed into the sea, or even worse, the rains trigger mudslides that can bring tragic consequences. In Gonaives in northern Haiti hundreds were killed during the hurricane seasons in 2004 and 2008 due to flooding and mudslides, many of which were caused by deforestation.

Deforestation began with the French colonizers in the 1600s when they cut down Haiti's trees to ship wood to Europe. Today the hills continue to be depleted as many trees are cut down by local people to provide charcoal to cook food and also to sell as a source of income. Poverty eliminates options. Day-to-day survival often trumps healthier choices for the environment.

There are many efforts underway, far too many to name or illuminate here, to help Haiti and her people

provide food and economic support. The rehabilitation of watersheds is another important environmental initiative, as is the reforestation effort and looking for alternative means of fuel to get away from reliance on wood and charcoal. Underlying the environmental issue, and the parallel problems of infrastructure, education, health care and development, is the non-negotiable need for Haiti's government to become strong and fully functional, so that all of these efforts are not stalled.

It's going to take time, patience and persistence to turn Haiti around. Success is gained one step at a time, and while we can continue to admire and respect the resilience of the Haitians, we live in hope that they will only have to draw on this particular attribute as needed in the future, instead of all the time.



# Where Land Meets the Sea, Humans Meet Nature

by Beth Millemann

When people talk about “the environment,” it can sound a bit abstract and removed from our own day-to-day reality: snow-covered mountains in some faraway place, or thick forests seen on calendar pages. What may not come to mind is the part of the environment that nearly all of us experience, whether it’s once or twice, or every summer: the coast. It may be the Jersey shore or a Florida beach, an island off Texas or the wild Pacific Northwest, a walk along Cape Cod or hiking along the coast of Cornwall. It could be swimming at the Outer Banks, or a stroll along a Michigan dune, or surfing off of El Salvador. The coast is where land meets the sea, and humans meet nature.

It’s not surprising that we are drawn to the coasts, either to live near them or vacation along them. The ocean has been a source of solace and inspiration to humans from time immemorial. The great scientist and writer Rachel Carson, whose book *Silent Spring* helped launch the environmental movement, wrote that, “To stand at the edge of the sea, to sense the ebb and flow of the tides. . . is to have knowledge of things that are as nearly eternal as any earthly life can be.”

We have flocked to the coasts in ever-increasing numbers. By the beginning of this century, more than half of the population of the United States had settled within 50 miles of a saltwater or Great Lakes coast. The construction that comes with millions of people has had an enormous impact on the coastal environment. Pollutants run off streets and parking lots into coastal waters that support a wide diversity of sea life. Coastal wetlands are paved over, yet they are nature’s nurseries. About three-fourths of our commercial fish and shellfish depend on coastal marshes at some stage in their lives. Small wonder that a popular North Carolina environmental group has as its motto, “No Wetlands, No Seafood.”

The coasts are also home to beloved animals whose existence is increasingly imperiled. Sea turtles depend on untrammelled beaches to lay their eggs, yet what they seek for survival is what the sun-loving public seeks for recreation. The green sea turtle is so ancient that, as National Geographic notes, “it watched the dinosaurs evolve and then become extinct,” yet it is no match for coastal realtors bent on making a profit from building homes with an ocean-front view.

The polar bear is another coastal resident at risk from powerful economic interests: the oil and gas industry. There is growing pressure to drill for oil in the polar bear’s dwindling habitat in Alaska. Ironically, what threatens the bear’s existence is global climate change, which is fed by emissions from cars and power stations. These emissions contribute to warming temperatures in Alaska, which are



Coast of St. Croix

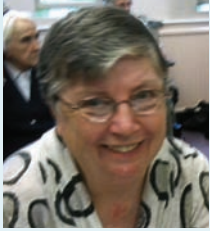
melting the bear’s icy habitat. Drilling for oil and gas – which will continue to add more pollutants and intensify the warming trend – will imperil what little space the polar bears still have.

The fate of polar bears and sea turtles is more than a matter of animals facing an uncertain future. Our fate is also intertwined with that of the coast’s. Sea level rise caused by global air pollution is creeping toward some of the world’s biggest cities, imperiling people as surely as it imperils coastal habitat that is crucial to animal life.

There are steps that we can all take to help protect the coasts. Keeping car tires fully inflated can reduce fuel usage by 10 percent. Bringing reusable bags to the grocery store reduces the number of plastic bags that wash off landfills into rivers that lead to the sea. Using non-chemical cleansers like Bon Ami or Seventh Generation products protects water from toxins. Other tips for protecting the coasts can be found at the website of Clean Ocean Action, a New Jersey-based environmental and business coalition, at [www.cleanoceanaction.org](http://www.cleanoceanaction.org).

We return to our favorite spot along the coast not unlike the sea turtle digging its nest on the beach, or the polar bear building its den by the sea. We return to the coast because it is precious to us. Now it’s time for us to help this magical interface of land and sea, not only for generations of humans yet to come, but for future generations of all of the creatures that depend on the coast.

**Beth Millemann** is an environmental consultant in Washington, DC, and the former Executive Director of the national environmental group, *The Coast Alliance*.



# The Transformation of a Creation Philistine

by Bridgetta Rooney, CSJP

**God had certainly a sense of humour** when I was asked to be part of the Care of Creation and Climate Change Group (C4) working on our chapter decree. As a youngster whose life was mostly spent in and around Glasgow, the only climate change I was aware of was when my mother tapped the barometer in the morning and then told the family if raincoats were needed, or on holiday in the West of Scotland watching to see if the sheep were going up the hill in the evening as that usually meant a fine day the next day.

There always has to be one on any committee who knows the least and who represents any vast majority with little knowledge and that was me. I was soon introduced to the world of carbon footprints, alternative energy and the disappearing polar ice cap. However, for me the most important discovery was how climate change was affecting vast numbers of people all over the globe. I listened in awe as a member of the C4 group described the work of the Jersey shore coalition to protect the coastline from pollution and erosion. Wells had dried up, air pollution was causing disease, and even the Chelsea Flower Show had to change some of the floral categories as flowers had bloomed too soon this year. And the draught in the Horn of Africa causing people to flee to neighbouring countries because of famine and loss of cattle is just one of the most recent horrors of climate change.

With my newfound knowledge and enthusiasm, I went to Copenhagen to the World Climate summit in 2009 and, along with others, marched, sang and lobbied but to no avail – the world governments remained impervious to the pleas of the developing countries whose very survival was at stake, along with the rest of the world. I have followed the other summits with enthusiasm but also with a growing realisation that fine sentiments are one thing, but if they are not backed up with money and commitment to the cause then the climactic New Jerusalem is a long way off.

Back at our home in Rearsby, where I live in Leicester, England, I realised I needed to be glocal—think globally and act locally. Once again I had to bring myself up-to-speed. Our trees are considered the best and most varied in the neighbourhood thanks to Sister Mary Doyle’s loving care and knowledge. Along with being the focus on days for Quiet Gardens retreats, they were also recently examined by foresters, tree fellers and council workers. I have become more conversant with their variety and beauty and also the floral beauty which surrounds us, especially as the many visitors we get remark on how close they feel to God in our garden.

Every two weeks the recycling van arrives and all the recycling work tackled by Sisters Mary Teresa and Evelyn

Sheridan goes off in colourful purple sacks to be sorted, reused and processed. The garden and kitchen waste are used for compost for our garden. Leicester was the first environmentally friendly city in Britain and it has worked hard to maintain its position. This is a change from my experience in Nottingham where all our recycling had to be carried to the nearest superstore carpark and placed in varied colour containers.



There have been innumerable petitions about Climate Change and Care of Creation by organizations in the UK, including CAFOD (the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development), Progressio and Tearfund. The most recent one was a joint rally in Manchester followed by a prayer vigil outside the Conservative Party Conference to give the topic more prominence on their agenda and ask for funding commitment.

In Britain we are also fortunate to have alternative sources of energy – wind, wave and solar energy are available if the government had the will and people were not adopting a NIMBY(not in my backyard) attitude about wind farms.

In our Congregation, we link our Care of Creation and Climate Change Chapter Act to that of Growing in Nonviolence, and while “Nature is often raw in tooth and claw,” it is the more idyllic world of Yeats’s *Lake Isle of Innisfree* where “Peace comes dropping slowly” and Edward Thomas’s *Adlestrop*, which we associate with the gentleness of Nature.

Creation may rage in its hurricanes, tsunamis and tornados but worse is the destruction created by large mining companies in the Philippines, South Africa and South America, and the deliberate taking of water from desert areas by multinational companies. Our nonviolence then must not be passive or soporific but active and creative in responding to Nature’s cry.

So, while we try to improve our own environment, save energy and lessen our carbon footprint locally, we cannot be blind to global tragedies and issues. It is for all of us to help to make the world a better place for the future and for the survival of the human race and the preservation of its precious resources.

I now know that before I took this decree seriously “I looked into my heart and found a desert there.” (George Barker) But now it has made me focus on many issues and on myself— a Creation Philistine—and hopefully I will find myself more in tune with Nature and with God. I await like Elijah, for God, not in the rushing wind or in the fire, but in the gentle breeze, which will transform me and others to bring about a world where people and nature are both respected and loved.

# SIGNS OF HOPE

## Care of Creation & Climate Change

by Margaret Byrne, CSJP and Susan Francois, CSJP with appreciation to Laura St Germain from PeaceHealth who contributed to this article

*"Confident of God's faithful love and collaborating with others who work for justice and peace, we face the future with gratitude and hope." Constitution 12*



TOP:  
Margaret Byrne, CSJP  
BOTTOM:  
Susan Francois, CSJP

**In our Congregation** of St. Joseph of Peace Constitutions, we position ourselves and our collaborative work for justice and peace, toward a future full of hope. Hope is such a beautiful word, a verdant gift from God, coming especially in dry and desert places. It challenges us deeply, even while it provides all we need to meet the challenge. Hope is no cheap grace, and in this dire situation of climate change, one hesitates to cite reasons for hope lest they turn out to be false promises.

Signs of hope are fragile, yet bearing promise of effective engagement with this dangerous situation in which we find ourselves. The signs of hope we cite here are small, given the scale of the problem, but they are on the right side of the scale when joined with hundreds of thousands of other such examples. They

can move us back from that tipping point toward which we seem headed.

Tipping point, a phrase heard frequently in climate change discussions, refers to that point after which it will prove impossible to reverse the trend that is now progressing more rapidly each year. Most scientists agree that global carbon dioxide emissions must be cut in half over the next 50 years. Do governments have the will to do this? It doesn't look like it, unless we show the way. And why would we be involved in this effort? Is it not obvious? This earth, this universe, is God's creation—beautiful, fruitful, magical in diversity, a part of God's self-revelation.

*"Earth is a revelation of God and the sustainer of all life."  
~ Seeds of Peace Chapter Act*

We see signs of hope that this realization is growing, both in religious and secular circles. In his 2009 social encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI very clearly recognizes "our grave duty" to care for creation, "God's gift to everyone."

*"The international community has an urgent duty to find institutional means of regulating the exploitation of non-renewable resources, involving poor countries in the process, in order to plan together for the future. ... The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa."*

That same year the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference spoke of creation as flowing out of the heart of an infinitely loving Creator: *Touched by God's hand, our world is holy...*

*Every action taken in favor of a just and more sustainable environment, no matter how small, has an intrinsic value. Action at a global level, as well as every individual action that contributes to integral human development and global solidarity, helps to construct a more sustainable environment, and, therefore, a better world.*

Space does not allow us to quote the many other religious groups, as diverse as they are numerous, that have spoken with concern about the environment. And there seems to be a synergy at work, as similar language is also emerging at the United Nations. In "Harmony with Nature," a 2010 report by the UN Secretary General, we hear an echo of Pope Benedict's words.

*Ultimately, environmentally destructive behavior is the result of a failure to recognize that human beings are an inseparable part of nature and that we cannot damage it without severely damaging ourselves. ... The holistic concept of sustainable development can guide human beings' efforts to rebalance their relationship with the Earth. Such a rebalancing is urgent, as scientists and researchers remind us we are running out of time.*

Continuing the theme of sustainable development, a report from the government of Bolivia to the UN says that the two central challenges of this 21st century are *to overcome poverty and inequality, and to reestablish balance within the Earth system. Both objectives are intrinsically linked, and one cannot be achieved without the other.* Growth has limits, says the Bolivian report—not yet a widely accepted idea but one which surely offers hope for the future.

We see signs of hope when individuals, communities and corporations actively engage in efforts toward a sustainable lifestyle.

- In July 2010, more than 400 people gathered at the National Justice and Peace Network Conference in Derbyshire, England to explore the connections between food sustainability, agriculture and climate change.
- The April 1, 2011 issue of the *National Catholic Reporter* included a supplement on notable efforts in Catholic colleges and universities to link sustainability on campus to Catholic social teaching—and not only Catholic colleges, of course, for young people everywhere, and at many colleges, are often the first to recognize that creation is a gift to be treasured.
- Faith-based shareholders of Chevron, concerned about the environmental and health impacts of hydrofracking, recently filed a resolution requesting the company to issue a report on known impacts and policy options to

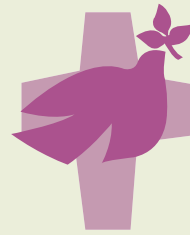


PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center Healthy Hospital Team standing near outdoor recycling bins. Front row: Kristen Wilson, Pierre Provost; Back row: Mike Halabi, Bill Cestnik, Joe Ness, Dusty Mason, Mike Graves, Gerry Howick

reduce environmental hazards. Hydrofracking seeks to extract natural gas by blasting water, sand and chemicals deep underground to break up shale formations. The resolution received an astonishing vote of support by 41% of shareholders!

- PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center in Bellingham, Washington was recently featured by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory as a model facility for *energy metering*, a strategy that both saves energy and reduces costs. St. Joseph was also highlighted as a model facility in a publication geared toward helping hospital facility managers across the country plan and prioritize investments in energy metering. We find it a sign of hope not only that St. Joseph's was able to leverage current resources to implement these metering techniques—a great example of stewardship of resources—but that other hospitals will be able to learn from their example.
- On page 5, see the efforts being made at Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, New Jersey.
- At the other end of Washington State, the *Papercut Campaign* at PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center in Vancouver has a goal of reducing printed paper output by 30% this year. Stack all the printed paper used annually at Southwest and you would have a pile almost as high as nearby Mt. St. Helens. The campaign is educating caregivers, cutting back the numbers of printers in the hospital, and working with a local paper mill to convert used paper into recyclable product to be made into new paper instead of sending it to the landfill.

Our sense of God naturally inclines us toward hope. But are the signs of hope we've listed here so miniscule as to be wholly inadequate? Are we lulling ourselves into complacency by doing something when that something may be quite inadequate? We don't think so. As noted above, *Every action taken in favor of a just and more sustainable environment, no matter how small, has an intrinsic value.* Yes, such actions do have intrinsic value, and together they can move humankind toward that tipping point in consciousness where environmental responsibility is second nature for us. We pray for and work for that day.



we invite you to  
**connect &  
participate**

### consider becoming a sister

Contact Sister Jo-Anne Miller, CSJP, Vocations Director  
jmillier@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](http://www.csjp.org) or use the envelope included.

### request prayer support

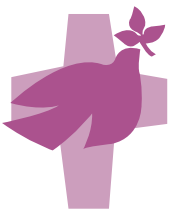
*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*  
—Philippians 4:6

Our Sisters and Associates 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.

### feedback

We invite our readers to send us feedback. You may email us at [livingpeace@csjp.org](mailto:livingpeace@csjp.org) or write to us c/o Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, 125 Michigan Ave, NE, Washington, DC 20017.

learn more about us at  
**[www.csjp.org](http://www.csjp.org)**



Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace  
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Washington, DC 20017



Sisters tend the grounds with help from a friend at the vacation home on Lummi Island, Washington circa 1923.  
From left to right: Sr. Agnes Joseph Bates, Sr. Lelia Hanrahan, Mother Louise McGann, Sr. Martha Kelly and Sr. Bonaventure O'Dwyer

# History and Roots

By Jan Linley written with information contributed by Sisters Helen Haigh and Sheila Lemieux

Our hearts and souls yearn for, and are fed, restored and uplifted by the beauty of our natural surroundings. It is a bond we gladly enter into both out of necessity and desire. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace have long recognized the restorative powers of that bond. Lummi Island was one of the places they chose for rest, relaxation and renewal of spirit.

Lummi is one of over 170 islands that make up the San Juan archipelago and is the closest island to Bellingham, WA where the Congregation's western regional offices were located. For a number of years, the Sisters rented a house on the island which they used for respite from the demands of hospital work and teaching. In the early days, they made the trip entirely by boat. Later they traveled by car to Gooseberry Point where they boarded a ferry to the island.

Early in 1923, Mother M. Alphonsus, the Provincial Superior, had a two-story house erected on the waterfront site of four large lots on the island. The house was hidden among the trees off the main road with a beautiful view of Mount Baker to the East.

In 1952 on the occasion of the sale of the vacation house at Lummi Island, Sr. M. Francis Therese wrote, "As the ideal rest house should, it boasted not only

a warmth and hominess of its own, but loveliness of surroundings, and that which all religious treasure highly—privacy." In the same article, she describes the house and island as a respite that held happiness for everyone. The Sisters enjoyed walking around the shore and delighted in the "privileged look at a rose-embowered mansion, wherein safely stowed away from the wear and tear of New York City lived the celebrated (Nat) King Cole."

Lummi remains a beautiful getaway destination with a year-round population of about 820 that doubles in the summer. It is home to artists, artisans, herons, bald eagles, orca whales and a variety of other life.

Sister M. Stanislaus paid tribute to Lummi in a poem that begins:

Part we now, beloved Lummi!  
Well-loved haven through the years,  
As by your sand-strewn shores we wandered  
Leaving you our toils and fears.

Strengthened in our soul's renewal—  
All your beauty, peace sublime  
Whispered low of the Love Supernal  
Guarding well our march of time.