



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

autumn/winter 2013

# Living peace

congregation of the sisters of st. joseph of peace

# prophetic risk

# in this issue



## Living peace

autumn/winter 2013

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### Cover Art

The cover painting, "The Angels Dance," was digitally painted in Photoshop by artist Tyler Young. He says, "Art is my passion and I'm just trying to leave my mark on this crazy world. I one day would like to be doing art for movies, video games, and music." You can find more of Tyler's work at: <http://tylercreatesworlds.deviantart.com> and <http://artoftyleryoung.daportfolio.com>

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- 3 Message from Congregation Leadership:  
Accepting the Challenge to Risk  
by Margaret Byrne, CSJP
- 3 Where Angels Dance  
by Jan Linley
- 4 Shameful Secrets, Healing Energy  
by Terrence J. Moran, CSJP-A
- 6 Human Trafficking: Prophetic Risk for the Possible  
by Susan Francois, CSJP
- 8 The Gift and Challenge of Story  
by Suzanne Golas, CSJP
- 9 At Prayer with Mary  
by Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB
- 10 Contemplating Prophetic Risk with  
Nancy Sylvester, IHM
- 13 Immigration's Challenge to Justice  
by Susan Dewitt, CSJP
- 14 Women and Poverty: Seeing through the  
Eyes of the Heart  
by Millie Gorman, CSJP-A
- 16 Fresh Perspectives: How Prophetic Risk  
Speaks to Me  
by Katrina Alton, CSJP, Chero Chuma, CSJP, Jane Ellis, CSJP-A  
and Juliana Iwuagwu, CSJP
- 20 Into the Future  
by Soul 05041959



# Leadership Team Message: Accepting the Challenge to Risk

by Margaret Byrne, CSJP

**What's the connection** between these two words, "prophetic risk"? I've been pondering that question as I reflect on the theme of this issue of *Living Peace*. I like to think of prophecy, prophetic, as witnessing to God, and, in particular, pointing the way to God in the often difficult circumstances of the here and now. And "risk" – we all know what risk is; many of us are, advisedly, risk-averse, and yet it seems that to be prophetic is necessarily to put oneself at risk. Then suddenly, as I ponder the meaning of the two words, I'm seeing prophetic risk everywhere – in the liturgical readings and the church feasts being celebrated, in the Peace Prayer of our Congregation and in the many invitations to take action on one or another issue of justice.

I am writing this during August and in the Gospels we hear Jesus dismissing his closest disciples, telling them to get behind him, and all because they want to protect him from danger; he, Jesus, will suffer and die. Moreover, anyone who wishes to be like him must risk the same fate. Likewise we hear Mary speak of the God

who casts down the mighty and lifts up the lowly. Into what risky territory the Magnificat leads us.

The liturgical calendar for the month of August is filled with heroic persons whose lives are especially prophetic in showing us who God is and what discipleship means. There's Edith Stein and Maximilian Kolbe, both of whom died at Auschwitz; there are several early martyrs and there are those who brought extraordinary dedication to the ordinary work of their lives. Then, the 50th anniversary of the prophetic March on Washington and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a Dream" speech remind us of our responsibility to continue the unfinished work of justice. And, of course, the juxtaposition of the Feast of the Transfiguration and the use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima – this surely calls us to prophetic risk regarding nuclear disarmament.

Nearer to home, the Sisters and Associates throughout the Congregation join in a special weekly prayer for peace compiled by Carmel Little, CSJP. The words always point the way to God, as a prophet must,  
continued on page 5

## Where Angels Dance

by Jan Linley

**The cover art for this issue** is called "The Angels Dance." It wasn't chosen for its title, but it might well have been. It was chosen for the wild burst of colors and the suggestion of something big, bold and beautiful happening in some unidentifiable place way out there in the universe in which we live.

As you will discover from the different voices in this issue, everyone has a slightly different take on prophetic risk. What they have in common is the notion that prophetic risk is itself a voice, one that cannot be ignored, one that pushes and guides an individual to act, either solely or as part of a group. That voice may come from within or in the form of a charismatic, visionary leader such as Susan B. Anthony, Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. Prophetic risk requires the courage to stand at the edge and be the voice that the majority is unwilling or unable to hear. Or to recognize the truth in such a voice and have the courage to follow it when it's not the popular path. It often speaks where there is injustice and compels people to act even in harm's way.

Writing about trafficking, Susan Francois, CSJP implores us not to be overwhelmed by what at first glance appears an insurmountable problem. She suggests instead, "we can begin to discern the nooks and crannies where possibility for change can break in and justice might reign." And Susan Dewitt, CSJP reminds us that prophetic risk is part and parcel of being an immigrant.

Suzanne Golas, CSJP and Nancy Sylvester, IHM both explore the need for new ways of interpreting our spiritual stories as we learn more about the science of our universe and the interconnectivity of everyone and everything.

Millie Gorman, CSJP-A writes about some of the women today and in the past who have had the courage to risk for change. Terry Moran, CSJP-A discovers Mother Clare, the founder of the Congregation, relegated to "Hell," the stacks in the library where "the books on the Catholic Church's Index of Forbidden Books were stored" sending him on a different kind of voyage of  
continued on page 5

# Shameful Secrets, Healing Energy

by Terrence J. Moran, CSJP-A

*And now I stop my  
wandering pen*

*My ship in anchor lies  
to plough*

*The broad Atlantic waves  
to Columbia if she is free.*

*And I'll think of my own  
native land and none to  
it compare.*

*And I'll bid adieu to all  
my friends and the  
Nun of Sweet Kenmare.*

**Sister Bridget O'Shea, CSJP remembers** her father singing the plaintive immigrant's ballad *The Nun of Sweet Kenmare* which ends with the words at left. As a child in Kenmare, County Kerry, she recalls stories about the generosity to the poor of the fabled nun. When Sister Bridget entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Newark, she had no idea that the founder of her Congregation was that "Nun of Sweet Kenmare," Mother Francis Clare Cusack.

A novice dusting Cloister Hall is puzzled to see on a plaque with the names of deceased sisters, a sister who died in 1884 – when she had just learned in a novitiate conference that the Sisters of St. Joseph of Newark were founded in 1888. "How can this be," she asks the novice mistress – and is given a sharp lecture on unhealthy curiosity but no satisfying answer.

My own first meeting with Margaret Anna Cusack, "the Nun of Sweet Kenmare," was under equally perplexing circumstances. I was sent to dust the stacks in a remote locked tier of our seminary library that was called "Hell" because the books on the Catholic Church's Index of Forbidden Books were stored there. They were mostly obscure books of German philosophy which I had neither the inclination nor the ability to read. But my feather duster fell on one volume in English, *The Nun of Kenmare*, the autobiography of Margaret Anna Cusack, written shortly after she left the community she founded. I became fascinated with this inventive, outspoken and complex woman. I too, knew the Sisters of St. Joseph of Newark but had no idea that the author of this book was their founder.

We are in the midst of celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) which revolutionized the Catholic Church and whose blueprint for renewal is unfolding to this day. Vatican II called religious congregations to renew themselves by returning to the original spirit of their founder. When the Sisters of St. Joseph of Newark entered into that enterprise they had no idea the secrets that were going to be uncovered and the treasure to be revealed.

Largely through the research of Sister Dorothy Vidulich, CSJP, with the support of her lifelong friend, Sister Jeanne Celeste Keaveny, CSJP, the Sisters were to discover that they were founded by Mother Francis Clare Cusack in 1884 and not, as they had long believed, by Mother Evangelista Gaffney in 1888. Sister Dorothy once wrote an article about their quest called "Finding a Founder." This "finding" released tremendous energy and not a little controversy in the community. They reclaimed their original name of Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and their founding spirit of seeking peace through justice. Some sisters were thrilled to learn that they belonged to a community whose founder was a prolific author, musician and controversialist whose activities in her lifetime were reported in newspapers as far away as India and New Zealand. Other sisters felt uncomfortable with a founder who spent her life as loggerheads with the church hierarchy and who eventually left the Catholic Church and became an anti-Catholic controversialist. They felt more allegiance to Mother Evangelista who took over the community after Mother Clare's departure. Mother Evangelista, after all, by her perseverance and shrewdness, had saved the community from extinction. Others came to make peace with both women, discovering,



in the words of Sr. Beth Taylor, CSJP - "Because she loved us, Mother Clare left. Because she loved us, Mother Evangelista stayed."

The reasons for the suppression of the memory of this extraordinary woman are complex. It was not in the interest of a fledgling religious order looking for Vatican approval to have a founder who was an outspoken critic of abuses of power by church officials. Bishop Edward Bagshawe, bishop of the Diocese of Nottingham in which the community was founded, colluded in this deception by writing an article on the Sisters of Peace in the 1917 *Catholic Encyclopedia* – changing the date of foundation and naming himself as the founder, something he surely knew was not the whole truth.

Twelve Step programs have made famous the aphorism, "We are only as sick as our secrets." Buddhist teacher Pema Chödrön teaches the paradoxical truth that when we run from shameful secrets, our life energy is exhausted in flight. When we face our shameful secrets, we release new life-affirming energy. For the Congregation of St. Joseph of Peace, "finding a founder," grappling with the complex and flawed woman at the heart of their history has released tremendous energy. They have discovered a past that was richer than they had ever dreamed. Each of us as well by looking courageously at the truth about ourselves and our world, even when confusing and painful, will find healing energy for the transformation of our world and ourselves.

Leadership Team Message, continued from page 3

and the prayer for August 6th was no different. Carmel quotes Pope John Paul II: *To remember the past, he says, is to commit oneself to the future. ...In the face of the...calamity that every war is, one must affirm and reaffirm again and again, that the waging of war is not inevitable or unchangeable. Humanity is not destined to self-destruction.* Given the financial incentives of the arms trade and the power of the military-industrial complex, these words of John Paul challenge us to speak up and speak out, even when the future is unclear.

And that reminds me of another prophet, Oscar Romero; we know what happened to him for speaking out. A poem by Bishop Kenneth Untener but often attributed to Romero, *Prophets of a Future Not Our Own*, begins with the comment that *"the kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision."* And therein lies a risk – that because our dreams are too small or seem unlikely to effect change, we hold to the known path and refuse the challenge. But as the same poem also reminds us, *"We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well."* That "something", done well, may be both prophetic and risky.

Where Angels Dance, continued from page 3

discovery and healing. In "Fresh Voices" CSJPs Katrina Alton, Chero Chuma, Juliana Iwuagwu and Associate Jane Ellis each give meaning to prophetic risk both personally and in a larger context.

As Nancy Sylvester, IHM points out, "It is not our role to say we are prophetic. Others look at what we are doing or saying and name it a prophetic response." And "It comes from such a deep commitment to the value and vision you have that you have to do it." I have to believe that wherever that commitment lies angels are leading the charge and yes, even dancing.

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING

# PROPHETIC RISK FOR THE POSSIBLE

by Susan Francois, CSJP

Have you ever noticed that some problems seem so complicated or insurmountable that it is difficult to imagine what difference one person or a small group could possibly even make? Human trafficking is one issue that seems to engender this response in well-meaning, justice seeking people. Every person of good will agrees that it is wrong to enslave another person. We are rightly shocked by stories of trafficked persons in newspapers or television shows. “This is wrong,” we emphatically state, but then we stop in our tracks, perplexed. What might we possibly do that would have an impact? Where can we start?

First, it is important to remember that our God is bigger than any problem, situation, or evil. We must not give in to despair, but instead recommit ourselves to using our creativity, energy, and resources for justice. As Pope John Paul II reminded us in *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, we cannot “take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the world.” This provides a helpful context for understanding CSJP Constitution 12: “Our charism of peace challenges us to prophetic risk so that God’s reign might be more fully realized.” Instead of seeking refuge in impossibility, we are called to risk the possible for the most vulnerable among us.

## Casting a Critical Eye

Second, it is important to cast a critical eye on the “impossible” situation. We must first understand the dynamics and systems at play before we can begin to discern the nooks and crannies where possibility for change can break in and justice might reign.

Human trafficking, often called “modern day slavery,” is the recruitment, harboring, or transporting of a person for the purpose of forced labor or commercial sexual acts through the use of force, fraud or coercion. Human trafficking is illegal in every country, yet thriving everywhere. The International Labor Organization estimates that as many as 20.9 million people are in



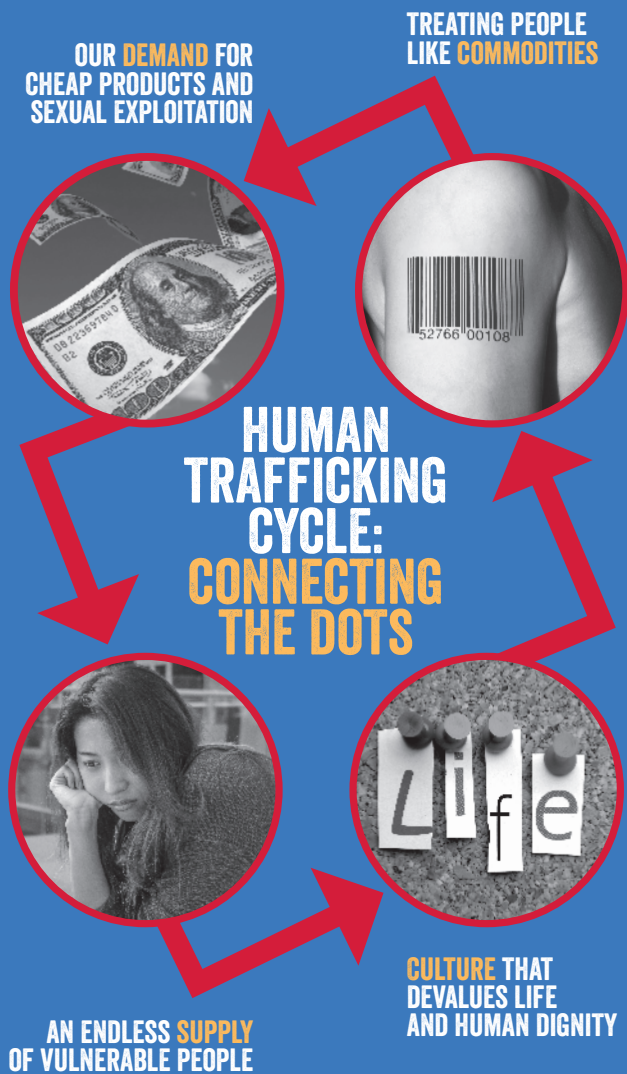
CSJPs attend a monthly human trafficking vigil in Seattle sponsored by the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center.

trafficking situations today. This equals three out of every 1,000 persons worldwide. The majority—14.5 million (68%) are in situations of forced labor exploitation, while 4.5 million (22%) are in situations of sexual exploitation. The remaining 10% are in state-imposed forms of forced labor, such as prisons or armed forces. Women and girls make up 55% of all trafficked persons and 98% of persons trafficked for sexual exploitation.

In our global economy, human trafficking is both a local and global reality. It is present in every local community, with both native and foreign born persons being trafficked. It also connects communities across the globe through an intricate web of exploitation and systemic injustice.

## Cycle of Demand

Poverty puts people at risk of trafficking, creating a seemingly endless supply of vulnerable people, in the midst of a culture that devalues life and human dignity. Profits fuel the multi-billion dollar human trafficking



industry, in which human beings are treated as disposable commodities. We cannot stop our analysis here, however. We must also look critically at *our* role if we are to discern where we might break the cycle (see chart).

The path toward prophetic risk takes shape when we look honestly at our role in the cycle. Consumers demand cheap products at any cost, while our sexualized culture normalizes sexual exploitation. How might we use our power as conscious consumers and our role as members of society to help break this cycle?

### Choosing the Possible

Sisters and Associates of St. Joseph of Peace have been educating themselves about human trafficking and asking these tough questions. Human trafficking was one of the key issues explored during last year's Congregation Experience in London. This in turn inspired the development of a prayer and reflection process that

was used by small groups across the Congregation earlier this year. Several Congregation Small Groups have now committed to learning more about human trafficking and discerning ways to engage the issue locally.

In our Western Region, the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center (IPJC), a CSJP co-sponsored ministry, continues its decade long project of educating the larger community about trafficking through parish presentations, middle school webinars, and its website ([www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org)). In the UK region, the CSJP community collaborates with other religious communities in the Trafficking Awareness-Raising and Campaigning Group (TRAC) of the Medaille Trust. TRAC organizes education campaigns for high schools, universities, and parishes. Both IPJC and TRAC use the "Stop the Demand" framework for their education efforts.

Through our participation in the Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment (NWCRI, Western Region) and Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment (Tri-CRI, Eastern Region), the Congregation participates in corporate shareholder advocacy and dialogue on key issues, including human trafficking. NWCRI has been in dialogue with Hershey Corporation since 2010 on the issue of forced child labor in cocoa harvesting. As a result of this dialogue, Hershey recently committed to source all of its cocoa from suppliers who do not use child labor by 2020.

Tri-CRI is organizing a large grassroots anti-trafficking campaign in anticipation of the 2014 Super Bowl in New Jersey. CSJP Sisters and Associates will participate in this campaign which seeks to engage hotels in trafficking awareness and training.

When the Congregation gathers outside Seattle for our September 2014 Chapter meeting, we will be staying at a hotel that has provided anti-trafficking training to its employees and participates in the Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking organization.

These are all ways that we are using our collective power to help stop the cycle of demand. We can also make choices in our daily lives to help break the cycle of demand:

- Challenge language which degrades women or normalizes sexual exploitation.
- Mentor young people to decode our society's messages about sex.
- Be a conscious consumer. Buy fair trade products.
- Calculate your slavery footprint ([slaveryfootprint.org](http://slaveryfootprint.org)) and make changes in your habits.

In the words of Pope Francis: *"I ask my brothers and sisters in faith and all men and women of good will for a decisive choice to combat trafficking in persons, which includes 'slave labor'."*

**The choice to risk the possible is ours.**

# The Gift and Challenge of Story

by Suzanne Golas, CSJP



by Gabe Collazo, [www.gcpics.com](http://www.gcpics.com)

**We live our lives in and through stories.** They give us meaning and purpose. Stories define our values and influence the goals we set for ourselves. They shape the spirituality that consciously connects us with the holy.

Some of these stories could be called the *big* stories. These are stories that shape cultures and influence the lives of many people. An example would be the American story. Some earmarks of this story are the struggle for highly valued freedom, the seemingly endless possibilities in the settling of a huge country and the impression that hard work and determination can enable the individual to significantly improve her life.

We also have our personal stories. We have been shaped, for example, by our families, the experiences of our childhood, our successes and failures, our relationships with those who have loved us and those who have not, our dreams and our hopes, and our educational opportunities. Sisters and Associates of St. Joseph of Peace have been shaped, especially since the Vatican Council, by the rediscovery of our founder, Margaret Anna Cusack, and the legacy of peace through justice which she has passed on to us.

Those of us within the Christian tradition are guided and inspired by a religious story rooted in the Gospels. It is the story of a loving God who especially connects with the human experience through Jesus Christ, the human embodiment of this love. Through Jesus, we learn and are empowered to become self-giving, compassionate, forgiving lovers. Through Jesus we become whole.

Within the past hundred years another story has emerged through the discoveries of modern science. This story of the Universe encompasses all other stories, enriching their meaning while inviting us to reflect on seeming contradictions.

In various ways, this Universe story has spread. An increasing number of people know that it is the story of an incredibly old Universe – 13.7 billion years old. The size of the Universe is breathtaking. Less than a hundred years ago, scientists wondered if there were galaxies other than our Milky Way galaxy. We now know there are over a hundred billion galaxies.

Perhaps most significant, is the discovery of the interconnectedness of all that exists. All comes from the same source. The potential for everything that is was present in that “Big Bang” cosmic event of 13.7 billion years ago. We are all made of stardust. We now know that we humans share genes and genetic history with all living beings. We are kin, interdependent with one another within one web of life.

For nearly 20 years the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace have stated in our official documents our belief in a spirituality and mission that responds to the Universe story. These statements include: “We are committed to a spirituality of peacemaking which compels us to live in right relationship with the entire community of life.” “Ours is a partnership with rather than a domination over all of creation.” “Earth is a revelation of God. We recognize



that the exploitation of Earth's air, water, soil and species is a sacrilege."

Though we learn the facts of the Universe story, we risk missing the profound spiritual meaning and connection with the religious story out of which we have lived, a connection that would enable us to change our behavior to address the serious issues we are now facing. Now we know that Jesus, the self-communication of God in human form, was born of matter. Like us, Jesus came from stardust. Like us, Jesus shares the same genetic ancestry as bacteria, birds, puppies and whales. Like us, he is kin with all creation. All creation is holy. All creation is endowed with spiritual power.

The story of Jesus is the story of what human beings are called to be. Jesus calls us to wholeness in every way. Do we now understand that wholeness as intimately connected with all other life forms? Does the compassion, love and self-giving that we have learned from Jesus extend to all our kin, to all creation?

There is another risk involved in missing the deeper meaning of the Universe story. In recent UN reports, over 1,300 scientists from 95 countries gave a stark warning that human activity is putting such a strain on the natural functions of the Earth that the ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain life of future generations can no longer be taken for granted. We know that we are at a crisis stage as we experience the results of climate change, like floods, super storms, droughts, the rising of the seas and increase in large forest fires. Such devastation of the planet is the result of the overconsumption, exploitive use of resources, and increased pollution that are products of a world view rooted in domination, greed and a deep disconnect from the inter-relationships that are at the heart of creation.

Band aid remedies cannot solve such problems. The good news is, though still young and relatively small, there is a growing consciousness of the relatedness of all life and what it means to be human within this web of interconnectedness.

A contemplative approach toward life can lead to this consciousness. Contemplation is the awareness of what is around us, really seeing what we see and hearing what we hear. It involves removing preconceived notions in order to recognize new possibilities and new stories from which to evolve. It is within this presence we sense the oneness of creation. It's not just a matter of knowing a little science. We also experience the holy, and in this moment the best of our stories come together."

## at prayer with mary

*Come, Spirit,  
make me docile to your voice.  
Help me debate angels.  
Let your will be done in me  
even if it means  
misunderstanding,  
rejection,  
scandal.  
Give me wisdom to find you  
in the irrational:  
heavens gone awry,  
astrologers' predictions,  
songs in the night.  
Give me such hospitality of heart that  
family,  
foreign seers,  
poor shepherds and animals  
find a home in my presence.  
Let me protect innocent children from  
oppressive power.  
Make me fearless of foreign lands and  
unknown journeys.  
When I cannot find you  
do not let me rest until I search  
home,  
highway,  
and temple.  
Let me always insist on miracles to  
celebrate love.  
And when all I love on earth  
lies lifeless in my arms  
let me offer it to you with such freedom  
of heart  
that I am swept up into the heavens.  
Amen.*

Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB  
Benedictine Sisters of Erie

# Contemplating Prophetic Risk with Sr. Nancy Sylvester, IHM

We recently had the good fortune to talk with Nancy Sylvester, IHM about prophetic risk. Nancy is the founder of the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue (ICCD), a past president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, former National Coordinator of NETWORK, an author and a speaker, to name just a few of her accomplishments. Nancy recently led a retreat process for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace. To learn more about Nancy and ICCD, please visit ICCD's website: [www.iccdinstitute.org](http://www.iccdinstitute.org)

## How would you describe prophetic risk in terms of women religious?

First let me say I am always uneasy for someone to say what she is doing is prophetic. It is not our role to say we are prophetic. Others look at what we are doing or saying and name it a prophetic response.

Having said that when I think about prophetic risk I am reminded of the biblical prophets who had a two-fold task. They *denounced* the injustices they saw, and they *announced a new way of seeing*.

Jesus continued in this tradition. He denounced what he saw as unjust and announced a very new way of being. When he lived in first century Palestine there was a very strict purity code in effect. Everyone had their place on that spectrum from revered to outcast. Jesus totally rejected this. He knew it wasn't a loving way to be and so he embraced every person as good and acceptable. He didn't try to change the law; he simply lived what he believed. And in the end that was such a threat to those who were in power, they crucified him. Jesus was a prophet who was willing to both denounce injustice when he saw it and announce the kingdom of God by living in loving ways.

I believe that women religious have been denouncing injustices for quite a few years through the work of political advocacy with groups like NETWORK; through shareholder resolutions; in boycotts and demonstrations to name a few ways.

Today I believe we are being invited to focus more on the announcing part of the prophetic task; being invited to live out the vision that we believe in.

What might that look like? Let me give you some possibilities.

- Many congregations of women religious have made a commitment to care for Earth, to sustainability, to ecological concerns. We not only denounce the culture that has become so separate and alienated from Earth we also announce new possibilities by creating ecological centers, renovating buildings based on sustainable principles and beginning to ask challenging questions of ourselves and our consumerist and individualistic lifestyles.
- Living sustainably however is linked to an emerging spirituality and faith that has its foundations (as all theology does) in cosmology. We are beginning to understand that the very origins of our Universe are so different from what most of us grew up with, especially if you came out of a Judeo-Christian tradition, and that invites us to interpret our faith in



new ways. I believe that is part of “announcing” for it is asking us to let go of the old frameworks and live into the new. It is a faith that is more experiential than doctrinal. It is a faith rooted in contemplation and in the mystical tradition.

- We are announcing a more inclusive church. I believe most congregations believe that women are moral agents and have the capacity to serve in any and all roles within the church. We need to keep living out of that, and I think that’s a prophetic risk, given our church today. We can’t just compromise or go silent on these kinds of issues even if it may be problematic or cost us something.
- A new area where I believe we are invited to announce a new way of being is that of aging. Our country portrays aging as a fate worse than death itself. So many fears are generated around aging as well as worrying whether or not the resources will be there when you need them. Could women religious live into our aging out of abundance and not scarcity? Could we make critical decisions regarding the use of our own resources from this attitude? Can we see diminishment and possibly the end of our congregation in new ways, ways reflecting what we are learning about our Universe?

The stars can help us here. A supernova is formed by the explosion of an old star. As it starts to get old and degenerate, a star shrinks just like we do, but in that shrinking comes this intensification of energy so that when it dies, it basically explodes and spreads stardust all around creating other stars and even our Sun. For us to live in this way and not just live out of what society says it means to get old, I believe, is a prophetic risk.

Prophetic risk is not logical - analytical. It comes from such a deep commitment to the value and the vision you have that you have to do it. You just cannot, not do it.

### Can you say a little bit more about the new cosmology?

When I grew up as a good Catholic girl we were taught that the Universe was three tiered. There was a heaven above and a hell below and we lived on the Earth in the middle. We conceived of these as places and painted them with many human attributes and faces. Today we now know that the Universe came into existence about 13.8 billion years ago in a great flaring forth where a dense singularity of energy exploded having within itself all the elements we would eventually need for our evolutionary journey. The Universe continues to expand and is changing. We are learning that we all came from the same stardust. We are all connected.

For some this is very scary but I believe for women religious this cosmology has invited us to deepen our faith; to continue to explore the Divine within this evolutionary path as well as abiding within each of us. The women religious whom I have met over these years desire to live out of their faith at the deepest level. For many that means to engage in contemplation—a form of prayer that invites you to surrender so as to access the Divine dwelling within you. It is an experience of Divine indwelling and opens you to explore new articulations of your faith enhanced by our new understandings of cosmology.

### In light of that, do you think, then, that instead of this being a time for women religious diminishing and burning out, that it’s more of an exciting time of transition and reinterpreting everything?

I do. I feel it is a very exciting time and that our legacy has something to do with this deepening faith/spirituality journey we have been on these past decades. In this sense I wish women of a certain age would be more facile in the use of our new technology; using Twitter, Facebook and other social media to communicate what we have been learning and more importantly what we have been experiencing. I believe we can help seed future generations just like the supernova helps seed other stars. How can we take what we know—not just keep it for ourselves—but keep giving it away in some new forms?

### How do you do that?

Well, one thing is you keep talking about what you have come to know and experience. You live out of it. You are not afraid. You’re willing to engage with others whom you know will probably look at you and wonder “Where did you come from? Where did you get that idea? You believe what?”

Sometimes I think women religious tend to talk to ourselves more than the people with whom we minister on some of these issues. I think we should be doing exactly the reverse. We need to engage the people with whom we work and minister on some of these issues so that we can invite them to begin to shift their consciousness.

### And the transformation of consciousness - would that be more people understanding that we’re all

## connected and understanding that the universe is not necessarily what they think and that faith has a place in all of that?

That would be part of it, yes, for sure. It is that shift. What a lot of people are writing about is how our consciousness evolves in a developmental way, and that doesn't mean necessarily better or worse, it just means it gets more complex, just like the Universe. Although he lived much earlier, Jesus had a very developed consciousness; one which we are still trying to live into.

We are living in a post-modern era where the consciousness that has brought us here and which has served us well cannot carry us into the future. The extreme individualism and gross consumerism coupled with the alienation we experience from Earth have brought us to a critical point. The prophetic risk needed now is to denounce such life denying values and live into a new consciousness which sees that we are more united than separate; that can delight in difference and has a sense of the communal—a sense of both the importance of the individual but also of the whole Earth community.

We need to be concerned about each other and about the planet. I think so many people deny global climate change because for many it's just so overwhelming. They look at it primarily through the data, the facts. They've yet to experience being truly connected to Earth. Such an experience was certainly that of our ancestors and our earlier generations. How do we take that wisdom and understanding and offer it to 21st century people of faith?

You can't force people to change their consciousness. It doesn't happen that way.

Did you see "The Butler" by any chance?  
Yes, I just saw it. It was great.

I thought it was extremely powerful. It shows the power of film to invite you into your own process of how your consciousness changed, how you faced into your own white racism or internalized oppression. It even invites you to do it again, to go deeper into what you believe and how it impacts how you see everything.

I think we need media to help us feel this evolutionary shift in consciousness. I'm delighted that people like Jan Novotka and Holly Near write music about this and Brian Swimme and Barbara Marx Hubbard make it come alive in film. Alice Walker and Mary Oliver write poetry helping us to experience this new consciousness. All of it is needed so that we will be touched as "whole" persons and choose to make the shift.

We live in evolutionary time but think in terms of an individual lifetime. Things take a long time in evolution to change, to develop, to evolve and each of us contributes to that journey.

## Do you think that kind of change can and will happen before we destroy our planet?

That is difficult to say. Take the issue of global climate change. Here in this country we cannot even agree that it is a critical issue. There is no overall energy policy or global climate change policy and we still think we can do it alone isolated from the rest of the global community. So, we're just losing time, and that's not helpful. I think people are conserving and recycling and that is important, and I do think younger people are beginning to understand the need to have a different relationship with Earth. But our structures and systems are not helping us. They are serving the old consciousness and the old values. We need to decrease our energy use and instead our craving for electricity is increasing as we want the latest gadgets, all needing to be charged! We'd have to really make a major turn. There are many people who are doing that and we still have to keep denouncing and announcing. We have to keep saying, "We can't live like this any longer. This is what is possible. This is what we need to do."

## And how does the average person get on board with this? How do we bring people along?

One thing is educating yourself and others. Another way is getting involved at some local level, doing something concretely in your own ministry or in your own family so that you can see you're doing something.

We're learning that every individual can make a difference. Even setting the intention is doing something. Quantum physics teaches us about energy fields and intentionality. So when you are intentional about something and then share that with others the momentum starts to grow.

I think what people feel sometimes is that their actions are cancelled out by bigger actions by big oil or government or something else.

That's very natural and of course, reading the newspapers you think that is absolutely true. But there are thousands of people out there already living into this new future.

I don't think anyone changes by being yelled at or by being made to feel guilty. Rather we need to experience something that speaks to this deeper connection.

continued on page 18

# Immigration's Challenge to Justice

by Susan Dewitt, CSJP

**My friend Elisa came north last year**, traveling from El Salvador through Guatemala and Mexico to enter the United States illegally, leaving her 10-year-old daughter in her family's care. Her father Tomás told me she left because gang members had been knocking on her door at night, threatening her. Elisa is part of a large, poor and loving campesino family; she had wanted to get education beyond high school that they were unable to afford. I imagine she hopes that she can earn money and send it back so her daughter will have better possibilities. I don't know what happened to her on the journey, but women and children seldom complete this passage without being raped and brutalized.

Elisa went to join a *compañero* in Boston, a man she knew from school days who had become her boyfriend via long-distance phone calls. A few months later her father Tomás died after a stroke, and she couldn't go home to join the family in mourning. When I last asked about Elisa, I heard that she was struggling with depression, but was afraid to seek help, afraid to venture out with her limited English, afraid to leave her home in this strange new country, our United States of America.

Elisa's story is our story, the story of all our ancestors who left one country and came to another fearing conditions in their homeland, hoping for and believing in a better life in another country, moving for justice. Her country has long been economically dominated by the United States; naturally enough, when pressed too hard by fear of violence, by poverty and by lack of employment, she headed for the place that has been gathering the riches of her country for generations. Europe, for similar reasons, is the destination of choice for many Africans.

Our parents came, and new immigrants come, to create a more just world. That might not be a goal Elisa or any immigrant would name, but it can be an effect of immigration when it leads to a more even distribution of wealth and opportunity in our world. I would also name immigration as a gift of the Holy Spirit to our first world countries. Immigrants bring our countries new energy and vitality; they offer our society the gifts of their fierce work and family ethic; their children grow up as natural ambassadors, fluent in two worlds.

But for all the gifts that immigrants – documented or undocumented – offer our rich world, there are also huge wounds and losses caused by immigration that call

continued on page 18



You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God.

Leviticus 19:34



Violence in families and violence from gangs motivate many immigrants. Here residents of Suchitoto, El Salvador, march against violence in response to a murder in the town.

# Women & Poverty:

## Seeing through the **Eyes of the Heart**

by Millie Gorman, CSJP-A

“In the final analysis all life is interrelated. No nation or individual is independent; we are interdependent. **We are caught up in an inescapable network of mutuality.** As long as there is poverty in the world I can never be rich, even if I possess a billion dollars. . . Strangely enough, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be.”

(Martin Luther King, Jr, Moorehouse College Address, 1959)

**Poverty is one of the major issues** of our day, worldwide and here in the United States. It affects every segment of population everywhere: women, men, children, families, communities and nations. “Women represent two-thirds of the world’s poor, perform two-thirds of the world’s work and produce 50 percent of the food (in some regions, 90 percent) while earning 10 percent of the income and owning 1 percent of the property.”<sup>1</sup> The issue of poverty however, is not just about money; it is about human persons, their dignity and worth.

Margaret Anna Cusack (Mother Clare), the founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, arrived in the U.S. in 1884 and challenged the Catholic Church to put its resources into meeting the human needs caused by poverty and human suffering; she concerned herself with human rights. We, as gospel people, are called to do the same; our charism challenges us to “promote peace in family life, in the church, and in society... and to confront oppressive situations.” (*Constitution 11*)

Pope Francis, speaking recently to the Argentine bishops, said he preferred “...a church dedicated to service of the most needy... a church working on behalf of mercy, peace and justice...”

In her 2012 presidential address “Navigating the Shifts” given at the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) Assembly, Pat Farrell, OSF spoke to how women religious have been trying to be a prophetic voice for the last 50 years. “It is usually easy to recognize the prophetic voice when

it is authentic. It has the freshness and freedom of the Gospel: open, and favoring the disenfranchised. The prophetic voice dares the truth. We can often hear it in a questioning of established power, and an uncovering of human pain and unmet need. It challenges structures that exclude some and benefit others.”

Mother Clare’s was such a voice. Her words were verbs she lived. In her book *Women’s Work in Modern Society*, she wrote: “So long as your Christianity is merely theoretical, they are very well pleased with you, but once they find you are practical in carrying it out, they part company with you, angrily or scornfully, as their dispositions incline.”

“Let your life speak” is an old Quaker saying. Mother Clare lived such a life. There are many others who lead lives that speak for those without a voice. They speak and advocate for human needs and rights for food, clean water and healthcare, decent places to live and for education. Many, like Mother Clare, see the need to be especially active on behalf of women and children whose voices are so frequently silenced or ignored. Integral to advancing women and children is providing them with education that will allow them to be independent. Among the

CSJP ministries that educate women and children are Kenmare Alternative High School for Women and The Nurturing Place.

Malala Yousafzai, the 16 year-old Pakistani advocate, is one of today’s prophetic voices. She dared to speak up for the rights of girls to go to school. Though severely



*“It is usually easy to recognize the prophetic voice when it is authentic. It has the freshness and freedom of the Gospel: open, and favoring the disenfranchised.”*



injured by the Taliban at age 12, she continues to stand up for the education and rights of girls. Speaking to the UN in July of this year she encouraged all to wage a global struggle against poverty and terrorism. “...books and pens are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education first.” Powerful words from a child whose life speaks truth to power.

As a representative of the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation, Hillary Clinton works to expand opportunities for women and girls, to expand early childhood development and seeks to highlight the need for creating jobs for young people. At the 4th Annual Women in the World Summit, Hillary addressed the role of technology in the advancement of women and girls around the globe. She addressed the need for Americans to break down their own barriers to women’s advancement.

Charito Kruvant, Owner and CEO, Creative Associates International is another woman who recognized, “if you don’t change a system, you don’t have an impact.” She believes women should have choices about their families and communities. Her company works around the world to implement and evaluate development programs. Kruvant is particularly proud of their work in educating girls, from supporting teacher training and making education accessible to girls in Afghanistan to training former gang members for new jobs and better lives in Guatemala and El Salvador. She says, “If we



forgo the opportunity to work with youth, we forgo the opportunity to improve the world.”<sup>2</sup>

Sr. Peggy O’Neill, SC a former educator from New Jersey, works to empower the poor in El Salvador. She has been with the people since the perilous times of civil war and death squads in the 1980’s. Peggy lives among the people, sharing their dreams and their disappointments. In 2005 she and Sr. Pat Farrell established Centro Arte para La Paz as a center for alternative and creative education with the aim of building a culture of peace.

Let us remember Margaret Anna Cusack, a visionary who saw through the eyes of her heart, a daring woman who went to the edge and beyond. She left the church so that her community could continue. Faithful in letting go, she knew God would provide. We stand on her shoulders and follow in her footsteps. We give life to her prophetic vision.

#### Footnotes

1 *Reflections*, Yale Divinity School, Fall 2010, p. 10

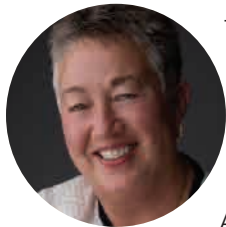
2 [diversitywoman.com](http://diversitywoman.com); *Half the Sky: American Woman Empowering Our Sisters Around the World*

# fresh perspectives: How Prophetic Risk Speaks to Me

Becoming an associate or vowed member of a congregation of women religious might not seem either prophetic or risky, but when you begin to understand the level of commitment required—not just to the congregation, but to the congregation’s charism—and when you begin to really understand that women religious have always served on the margins for the poor and for the planet, you start to understand there might just be some prophetic risk involved. Here we get some fresh perspectives on the topic from Associate Jane Ellis, Sister Chero Chuma and two novices, Sisters Katrina Alton and Juliana Iwuagwu.

## Called to Risk for the Common Good

by Jane Ellis, CSJP-A



Throughout the course of my career, I have worked in nine different hospitals spanning the South and Northeast. Almost all the healthcare systems or hospitals were faith-based, the majority Catholic.

Although a devout Anglican, from my early youth I was drawn to the mission and ministry of Catholic hospitals. The hospital my family used in Alabama was owned and operated by the Daughters of Charity, and I was enchanted with the Sisters, who always seemed to take a special interest in me.

I was particularly drawn to the mystery and intrigue of the Sisters’ lives of prayer and selflessness and their decision to live out their faith in an environment of health and medicine (although I must admit that their long, flowing habits and very tall white cornettes, inexplicably filled me with raw fear).

My infatuation led to a calling, to which I have committed my adult life – working in healthcare settings that are faith-based and dedicated to the care of the poor, the needy and those left behind. I further followed that call to be ordained in the Episcopal Church as a permanent deacon in 2000.

I began a “vowed” life as a servant minister to rededicate my heart and soul to the care of those who are in need, both in my daily work and ministry. I moved to New Jersey in the summer of 2004 to work for Holy Name Medical Center and was introduced to the mission of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace.

I was not a stranger to hospitals. For more than 30 years, I had spent my every day immersed in healing environments, chiefly Catholic hospitals. But, upon arriving at Holy Name, I had the crystal-clear realization that I was “home.” The culture, the interaction of the staff with their patients and with each other, the embracing of

diversity, all reflective of the mission of the Sisters, rang so true to me. I also recognized something of myself in the Sisters’ willingness to be “edge runners,” ready to take risks, if the results would benefit the common good. The Sisters’ unmitigated acceptance and affirmation of ALL, whatever their background or faith, resonated with me.

Beginning my life at Holy Name with the Sisters was a cathartic time in my faith journey, and I realized that I wanted to be part of this community. I needed to be part of this community. I humbly began my journey to become an Associate.

I believe wholly in the charism of peace through social justice, in the belief that, no matter their circumstance or station in life, all of humankind must be honored, and that our good Earth must be respected and treasured in all that we do. Although my own vow as a religious was in a different faith, and I will be true to that faith for life, I believe with all my heart, that the mission and ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace are a perfect fit for me and a perfect vessel through which to live my calling.

## Open to Be Challenged to Prophetic Risk

by Chero Chuma, CSJP

Who is Margaret Anna Cusack? I know her as our founder, a woman who was ahead of her time who fought a lot with the Church hierarchy during her time to the point that she decided to leave the community and the Catholic Church all together. When I heard and read about this what came to my mind was, why? To me, she made this decision for us to survive.



Margaret Anna Cusack is to me a spiritual mother, a friend and role model. My relationship with her became strong while at the novitiate. For those who have gone through this precious step in formation: it is only you who can say how, why, and who got you through the joys, blessings, challenges, and growth of that time. Margaret

continued on page 19



## Jesus Is Born Literally on the Move

by Katrina Alton, CSJP



“Are you here illegally? If so, either go home or risk arrest.” So said the government sponsored billboards around London this summer, in stark contrast to Pope Francis’ words on his visit to Lampedusa in Italy, where he urged us to shake off the “globalization of indifference” and “suffer with” the migrants who risk their lives to find asylum and a better life.

These are not just one-off stories. Questions of immigration, refugees and asylum seekers are a constant thread in our society today. Globally there are over 50 million ‘displaced people’, and we justify our rejection of the migrant’s needs by the story we tell ourselves about their dubious character: illegal, criminal, bogus, scrounger, liar, cheat, terrorist, health tourist.

Words matter here. They frame the story. They affect government policy, media coverage, how officials make decisions on individual cases, and how we as Christians respond.

Margaret Anna Cusack’s response to this very issue was truly “prophetic”, and of course “risky”, when she set up the “Famine Relief Fund”, and then created houses of hospitality for Irish migrant women arriving in the US.

As a Christian I am reminded that the narrative of my faith is founded on a story that is always about journey, displacement, and migration. Jesus is born literally on the move, and at Pentecost the Church is propelled outwards as exiles and missionaries to every corner of the globe. Not only did our ancestors in faith migrate, but the call to give hospitality to the stranger is a central theme. The author of Hebrews reminds us, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to the stranger, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Jesus makes the instruction explicit, “whatever you did to the least of my sisters and brothers, you did it to me.”

In 2009 I had the opportunity to experience this for myself when I came to live at “Dorothy Day House” in Hackney, run by the London Catholic Worker. Living alongside nine men who were “undocumented asylum seekers”, I saw at first hand the human cost of food insecurity, lack of water, war, and genocide. Unable to claim benefits, or work, most had been sleeping on park benches or night buses before they had been referred by organizations such as the “Jesuit Refugee Service”. In London housing is scarce, and without a home it is hard to feel you belong.

As I got to know these men I learned a little more about the Biblical truth that the stranger – the foreigner –

is presented to us not as threat, or even as a subject for pity, but as gift, truth teller and teacher.

My hope for the future would be that we, as CSJPs, would trust this Biblical truth and literally open our hearts and our homes to women who have risked their very lives to seek asylum. To create in word and deed our own billboards: “Stay! My home is your home, my people are your people, and my God is your God.” (Ruth 1:16)

## Generosity and Willingness to Risk

by Juliana Iwuagwu, CSJP



From the two Biblical definitions of prophecy, the one that speaks to my heart because it reflects clearly the Congregation’s charism of peace through justice is the forth telling of prophecy, speaking the mind of God, to be the very mouthpiece of God. Mother Francis Clare, the founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, was that mouthpiece of God without compelling. She asked people to see themselves, the world, and God in a new way and extended this prophetic invitation to those who chose to work with her. This really inspired and empowered me.

When I was growing up, I always felt very uncomfortable with the idea of measuring and deciding what people are by what they do, by their achievements. The strong, the powerful, the more vocal are rewarded more than others. There is an immense gap between rich and poor. In my heart I believe that God’s way is completely different.

I come from a family that is neither rich nor poor, just an ordinary family blessed with the necessary and the basic in life. I was quite happy and satisfied like that. I was also blessed because I grew up in an environment and atmosphere of faith in God lived in situations of everyday life.

God’s invitation of love was for me to make a difference, to be a missionary of his love with my life and a witness of our common humanity. I don’t even know clearly where, how, and in what way. As Rainer Maria Rilke wrote: “The future enters in us, in order to transform itself in us, long before it happens.” Our Congregation Retreat was titled, “In the Wellspring of Experience Our Future Evolves.” Religious life is where I have felt called to let the future evolve and to make that difference with all my being.

The CSJP’s Charism of Peace through Justice is a mission that God uses to speak to me and to the world today, on how to build a just world, which affirms that earth and everything in it belongs equally to everyone and that all human beings are equally co-responsible

continued on page 19

for our attention. Living in El Salvador, I often saw those wounds. Some immigrants were kidnapped by gangs in Mexico and threatened with death unless their families found ransom money. Some immigrants sent money home to families that became dependent on their money and stopped tending their corn and bean fields. Some immigrants stopped sending money home after a while, leaving their families destitute again. Even if money came from the U.S., children whose parents – like Elisa – had left them behind felt abandoned and were often easy recruits for the gangs.

There are also visible wounds among immigrants in the US. Many, like Elisa, suffer from PTSD after their traumatic passage north or from depression in their exile from family. If they are undocumented, like Elisa, they're afraid to call the police even if they are being abused by employers or mates or gangs. They struggle to learn English. They struggle to survive on low wages, often working two or three jobs.

In the long run immigration may lessen the inequities of wealth and opportunity between peoples but at the cost of creating other injustices. The magnet of our richness draws people away from family and community, breaks down communities, and makes developing nations vulnerable to predatory capitalism.

How are we called, as citizens of the rich world? We are called first of all to welcome, respect, and support the immigrants among us – to love the aliens as ourselves, as God directs us through Leviticus.

Many of us are doing that work now, as CSJPs. We teach strangers English, like Sisters Maureen Boggins and Grace DiDomenicantonio, or work among the most outcast of immigrants, like Sister Margie Fort, or visit immigrants in detention, like Associate Frank McCann, or help immigrants navigate legal barriers like Associate Margaret Gaffney. We raise money for scholarships that make it possible for young people to become educated in their own countries, like Sister Margaret Jane Kling. We work to make life better in the developing nations, as Sister Ann Crawley does in Haiti or as PeaceHealth's El Salvador Health Mission does in El Salvador. We petition our governments for more just immigration laws.

The harder work – harder because it calls for us to work against the system of rewards we have all grown up with – lies in changing hearts and minds, so that we as peoples stop seeing money, riches, as the greatest goal in life and begin to value the gifts of the poor world – family solidarity, generosity, warmth, human kindness, joy – more highly.

As Pope Francis said, “we remember that when we heal the wounds of refugees, displaced persons, and victims of trafficking, we are practicing the commandment of love that Jesus has left us.” When we learn to love the immigrants among us as ourselves and to value the gifts they bring, we begin to rebuild our own shattered communities, our rich world made cruel by the lust after money and power. Instead, we build the kingdom of God.

We are each important and what we do contributes to the whole. Just think about the people who read this publication. You are not alone and perhaps as a CSJP community you will consciously move forward together—now that is power!

### **Just one more thing, do you have any sort of vision about the future for women religious?**

Well, I think there is a future. I don't think religious life will ever have the large numbers that we experienced in the 20th century. I think we're still exploring and living into possibilities. I have a sense that younger women might be interested in a religious congregation which is open to exploring what religious life means within a new theology shaped in this evolutionary way. I sense they would be attracted to congregations who risk new work among the economically exploited and discover how best to respond to the needs of this time. I feel they would be eager to explore as full partners and

moral agents new approaches to the moral and sexual issues facing us as a people and a church. They would find strength living in a community of women who are committed to a deep spiritual practice of contemplation and who would worship as equals within a Eucharistic community.

### **Does that require change from the institutional church or is that something you're suggesting could be lived out or maybe already is in some ways?**

Prophetic risk means not having the okay before you act. You don't need to ask. Jesus didn't ask the Jewish high priests and the Roman officials if it was okay if he invited lepers and prostitutes and tax collectors to his feast. He didn't get permission because he knew what was right. He knew he had to live it.

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Open to be Challenged, continued from page 16

Anna Cusack was one of those that helped me. It was during this time that I could hear her telling me as she wrote in the letter to the Congregation, "My dearest child, One day you will know my heart and understand how it is that I scarcely cease to think of you, yes, you and wonder what you are doing at that moment and how you are doing it, and are you trying to be saints! Never will you know the heart of a Spiritual Mother – you may think because I am not with you that I do not think of you, – but I do – of those I have lately known quite as often as of those I have long known." General Letter to the Congregation from Mother Clare, 1885.

I left my own land, Kenya, almost 13 years ago to further my studies in the USA. This was the beginning of a new life in a foreign land that pointed me towards an unforeseen future that I now live. As a Sister of Peace and inspired by the works of our founder, I have sought ways to respond to the needs of my time by reaching out, building relationships, promoting peace at my health care ministry and connecting to the Kenyan community both locally and globally. Being called by our founding spirit, I strive to further the work of peace in all areas of my life—whether on the phone giving advice to a brother or sister of someone who is facing tough times in the USA, or going with other community members to tell someone that a loved one has died in Kenya, or on my radio show discussing issues of justice, especially those impacting women and people who are living in poverty. I practice making the spirituality of peace key to my ministry of healing and presence to my patients at the hospital and now at school.

As I continue living my life as a Sister of Peace, I remain open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit to challenge me to prophetic risk.

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Generosity and Willingness, continued from page 17

with God in helping to protect the dignity of everybody and everything.

Taking a prophetic risk is to face the unknown with trust, faith and love in God's work and at the same time to try to live realistically in our world. As CSJPs we can still be countercultural in trying to take the risks necessary today to be in the best service of the less advantaged. This requires an appeal to the heart that is so deep, free and open, so universal. It also requires generosity and willingness to risk, because certainly it will not guard against mistakes.



we invite you to  
**connect &  
participate**

### consider becoming a sister

In the USA contact Sister Jo-Anne Miller, CSJP,  
Vocation Director

[jmiller@csjp-olp.org](mailto:jmiller@csjp-olp.org)

In the UK, contact Sister Laurette Bergin, CSJP,  
Vocation Team Member

[laurette1@live.co.uk](mailto:laurette1@live.co.uk)

### consider becoming an associate

Women or men who share our concerns and charism  
Contact Sister Sheila Lemieux, CSJP

Formation Director

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### 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. Send a request online by selecting "Prayer Request" from our website home page menu, [www.csjp.org](http://www.csjp.org) or by mail in the US using the return envelope.

### 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, Attention: Jan Linley 399 Hudson Terrace, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632

learn more about us at  
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# Into the Future

by Soul 05041959

**In the year 3013**, the 2013 Leadership Team of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, now light souls, gathers in the Post-Earth viewing room for their favorite Earth reality show, *The Seeds You Planted*.

Kristin: "I just love this show."

Margaret: "Yes, it's so clever."

Terry: "I wonder what it will be about this week."

The theme song, "I Am Standing on the Shoulders" begins to play. Anne begins to sing along.

Coralie: "Shhh... it's starting."

Anne lowers her singing to a quiet hum. On the screen a multi-colored spaceship with a large peace decal zooms forward, piloted by two young women, Sakina and Elektra.

Sakina: "It's so nice to fly over Haiti. Isn't it just gorgeous? So lush and healthy."

Elektra: "I know, right? I just love that it's become the world's center for the arts. It was so scary seeing what it was like on that 2010 podcast in history class yesterday, wasn't it?"

"Can you imagine? It used to be so poor and they had all those environmental troubles. That generation nearly killed the entire planet." Sakina holds her thumb and forefinger together, "We were this close to being extinct!"

"I had to look away in parts. My stomach was absolutely *churning*. Can you *believe* a large segment of the population—mostly those in control—didn't even believe there was a climate problem? And all those wars fought over oil. Oil!!"

"Pure insanity. It's no wonder they had all those phobias and diseases back in the day. And they thought they were so enlightened."

"Well, to be fair, Sakina, there were some really good people, people who planted the seeds to turn things around."

"I know you're right." Sakina fingers a cross she's wearing on a pendant. "I love this cross that was my Mom's Great Great Great Aunt's. She was a Sister of St. Joseph of Peace just like your Great Great Great Godmother was."

Elektra smiles and touches the pin on her lapel. "I'm so proud of that, Sakina. They were working for peace and climate change decades before the Big Turn took place."

"Oh right, when all those young people in every country around the world became a global force through social media."

"The tweet that saved the planet! They staged those contemplative sit-ins and fasted for change. Millions of them."

"Right? So Gandhi-esque."

"And the Sisters were right there with them."

"I know, Elektra. They truly planted the seeds for change. I hope somewhere, somehow they can see the difference they made."

The former Leadership Team members smile at each other. Margaret says, "Isn't it wonderful how the invisible work of God always manifests?" Kristin replies, "It is. But I really miss food." They all laugh.

Sakina and Elektra get out of their seats and bump fists and do a little dance. "Thank heavens this ship can pilot itself, Sakina!"

They look out at their virtual audience and give a peace sign. "Peace out from the Peace Ship until next time!"

