



pursuing justice, we  
seek god's gift of peace

spring 2013

# Living peace

congregation of the sisters of st. joseph of peace

right  
relationships

Chapman





# in this issue



spring 2013

# Living peace

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#### Cover Art

The cover painting, "Young Love," was done by artist Elizabeth Chapman. The two hearts in relation to one another beautifully capture love, the heart of right relationships. Elizabeth lives with her family in the Ozarks in Missouri and describes her work as contemporary expressionism. She says: "It brings me much joy just to be the brush in the Master Painter's hand and to realize that His creations are made to bring great joy to all. My paintings are a form of song, dance and praise in response to the beauty of life." To see more of her art, visit her website at [melizabethchapman.artspan.com](http://melizabethchapman.artspan.com)

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# Leadership Team Message: Is Compassion the Key to Our Next Evolutionary Stage?

by Kristin Funari, CSJP

**Last night I decided** I could not read, watch or take in one more piece of news, chatter or commercially driven consumption. Thank God for PBS and its Nature series. I was gifted with a simple documentary of a young couple's year-long journey into the wilderness of "Idaho's River of No Return." All that had been rumbling around my mind and heart for the last month finally came into focus through the unfolding of their story and the communion and balance found in all of creation. God continues to surprise and bless when I least expect it.

There was an episode in their journey that will remain with me for a while. Wolves were hunting elk. The communication within the pack and among the herd holds some lessons for modern day devotees of instant connectedness and messaging. Attentiveness, community and survival drove the hunters and hunted. One injured elk separated from the herd and sought higher ground. What an easy pick for the wolves! The wolves were circling from a distance and readying for the kill. Another healthy elk chose to leave the safety of the herd and stand with the injured and defenseless one. What were the odds for defense in the face of a hungry pack, which had themselves and young ones to feed? The wolves made an approach and the elk stood her ground protecting the lame one. In one amazing

moment the pack decided to desist. Was it the compassion of one species for its own that communicated a deeper level of universal compassion to the wolves transcending the power of hunger, advantage and the material plane? Is it compassion that holds the key to our next evolutionary stage?

I found myself lost within the lusciousness of creation and the reality of the paschal mystery as I searched for a single-hearted path into the mystery of God. Is it true what Hildegard of Bingen said that "Everything that is in the heavens and earth is penetrated with connectedness, penetrated with relatedness"? If so, how at this moment in time, are we called to proceed? To consider the lilies of the field, to smell the newness of life in an infant's skin or in freshly tilled soil, to absorb the life learning of elders while absorbing the signs of the times—the human face of hunger, violence and injustice, the devastating effects of climate change—creates a severe dissonance in both body and spirit. And yet birth, life, death and resurrection continue to unfold and feed our insatiable longing for meaning. The urge within the universe and our human spirit toward expansion and communion will keep me looking for the one single-hearted path that continues to invite in the marvelous and diverse faces and voices of the living God.

## Right Relationship: A Call to Action

by Jan Linley

**From the moment** we are conceived, we are in relationship, perhaps the closest, most loving relationship we will ever know. If we are lucky, we are born healthy and into a loving family where already we have a head start over those born into poverty, addiction, war zones, environmentally-stressed countries or with health challenges. Our circle of relationships continues to grow and expand and later in life contracts again. Life experiences are enhanced by being in right relationship.

What do we mean by "right relationship"? It can sound like a judgment but really it is a call to action, a call to examine how we are in relation with one another and with our environment. In his article, "Dreaming and Making Dreams Real," Terry Moran, CSJP-A writes about the power of women working together to manifest big dreams in the face of resistance. Frank McCann, CSJP-A draws on his own experiences and Sharon Strand Ellison's book, *Taking the War Out of Words*, to illustrate the practice of nonviolence and good communication, crucial elements of right relationships. Sue Sanderson, CSJP-A talks about what it means to be an Associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and how it feeds her spirit.

Mindy McDonald writes, "Righting relationships at any level is a complicated and painstaking process." Yet she is able to find seeds of hope springing from the atrocities of Rwanda. Kathy Lewis, CSJP-A shares the story of Esperanza and the healing powers of a safe haven and supportive relationships. Ruby Chowdry speaks about reconciling a difficult childhood. And Lilia Lopez talks to Amalia Camacho, CSJP about the challenges of being an immigrant and overcoming an abusive relationship to care for her children as a single mother.

We have all experienced the pain of conflict in a relationship with a loved one. When we hurt our environment or the people we are connected to or interact with, we not only diminish life, we threaten and sometimes extinguish it. Peace is gained, restored and maintained by right relationship. Our environment, which feeds us physically, emotionally and spiritually, is kept healthy and in balance. We are meant to connect with one another, with life; our spirits need and yearn for that.

**A quick style note:** Articles written by a writer from the UK retain the British spelling.



# Dreaming and Making Dreams Real: The Power of Women Together

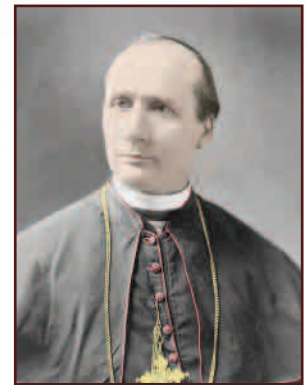
by Terrence J. Moran, CSJP-A

**This year we celebrated** the 100th anniversary of a march on Washington. On March 3, 1913, 5,000 women suffragists from across the country gathered in Washington, DC to demand the right to vote. The elaborate parade, which marched from the U.S. Capitol to the Treasury Building, included nurses, college students, academics, and clergywomen united in the struggle for women's suffrage. Opposition was intense during the three hour parade. The women were tripped, groped and beaten, and lit cigarette butts were thrown at them. Eventually federal troops were called in to restore order and over 100 marchers were hospitalized.

This march was a vivid public manifestation of something even deeper and more powerful—women in small groups, in church halls and at kitchen tables, dreaming, planning, supporting, and believing in themselves and one another. These women had to fight the perception that trivialized their relationships and painted them as negligent homemakers. It's a large and powerful story made up of small acts of solidarity and risk. One of those small and beautiful stories is that of the friendship between Mother Francis Clare Cusack, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, and Mother Evangelista Gaffney her collaborator and successor in leadership in the community.

Their meeting was casual—the 28-year-old school teacher Honoria Gaffney saw the already famous Nun of Kenmare at Mass at the shrine in Knock, Co. Mayo, Ireland—and was not very impressed! But something about the meeting lingered and Honoria decided to join the fledgling Sisters of Peace community and became one of the first members in 1884 taking the name Sr. M. Evangelista. Mother Clare recognized Evangelista's gifts for leadership and entrusted her from the beginning with responsible positions in the community. In the first year

of the community's life, Clare and Evangelista traveled together to the United States to explore possibilities for the Congregation's mission there. Unfortunately, Mother Clare, an energetic, imaginative, articulate woman, did not find the reception from the American hierarchy that she had hoped. She was plagued by a series of rumors and false allegations of wrongdoing and disobedience. One of these unfortunate exchanges was with the influential Bishop of Richmond and founding rector of the new Catholic University in Washington, John J. Keane.



Bishop John J. Keane

Keane was a rising star and was entrusted with fundraising for the ambitious venture of a Catholic University sponsored by the American hierarchy in the nation's capital. His nickname among the bishops was "Sugar" because of his sweet disposition. Mother Clare was not to see this side of him. When a prominent Catholic layman appealed to Keane to help Mother Clare his response was brutally harsh – he accused her of having mental problems which compelled her from one part of the world to another in pursuit of her fantastic schemes and suggested that she go home to her place in Ireland. A bishop who underestimates and slanders a woman religious is unfortunately not a rare story in American Catholic history. The response of Mother Evangelista is. She and Sr. M. Ignatius Casserly penned a letter that praises Mother Clare's "great zeal for souls and wonderful energy in good works," and assures Keane that she acts with the permission of her Superior,





Novices circa 1920



St. Joseph Academy, 1923

Bishop Bagshawe of Nottingham, and of Pope Leo XIII. They refute Keane's charges point by point, accuse him of calumny and prejudice and demand a public retraction. The following quotes give the flavor of their letter:

*"You are one of the bishops who has written what was most scandalous and calumnious of our beloved superior and we have the evidence in your own handwriting...As you have the formation of the characters of future priests, we suppose you will teach them that justice to poor as well as to rich, and that reparation for wrong done, is as much the duty of the priest as the layman...We trust for the sake of the Catholic faith and for your lordship's own easement of conscience, that you will obtain from all the bishops a public denial of the charges made against her."*

They also offered to stage their own small march on Washington and to present their evidence to the bishops when they assembled for the laying of the cornerstone of the new Catholic University.

There was never any public retraction or even a response to their letter from Bishop Keane. Mother Clare, exhausted and embittered by controversy, would leave her beloved Sisters of Peace community in 1888 and eventually the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless she always tried to maintain contact with her sisters and even said she wished she could rejoin them – provided it didn't mean rejoining the Roman Church! In the last year of her life she sent money which she could ill afford for a treat for the sisters. The local priest forbade them to accept it.

Certainly nothing in the upbringing of Evangelista and Ignatius as young girls in 19th century rural Ireland would have prepared them for the task of instructing bishops in the basic principles of morality and the duties of their state. But there was something in that company of women formed by Mother Clare that did. The feminist psychologist Jean Baker Miller gives the following five characteristics of a "growth fostering relationship":

- Each person feels a great sense of "zest" (vitality, energy).
- Each person feels more able to act and does act.
- Each person has a more accurate sense of her/himself and the other person(s).
- Each person feels a greater sense of worth.
- Each person feels more connected to the other person(s) and a greater motivation for connections with other people beyond those in a specific relationship.

Imagine Mother Evangelista and Sister Ignatius writing their letter; clearly the early community of the Sisters of Peace was a place of relationships that fostered growth; where women felt a greater sense of self-worth and of the "zest" that comes from making common cause in a great mission. Now imagine them passing paper and pen to you...or a smart phone or an iPad. With whom are you being called to connect? What injustice calls to you to challenge? What community of vitality and zest reaches out to catch your hand?

# Soul-Force: Recipe for Relational Bliss

by Frank McCann, CSJP-A

**My parents were married for 47 years** before Dad died, and Mom was always proud to say, “We never had a fight.” They were amazing parents, but 47 years of life together raising nine children, putting them all through Catholic schools, losing a business, being fired several times for taking principled positions, always in tight economic constraints is not a normal recipe for relational bliss. I admit that in the 18 years I lived in the house I never heard them fight, but the truth is we do ourselves a great disservice if we understand never having a fight as the measure of a healthy relationship.

Conflicting feelings and needs occur in any relationship. If we want to engage those challenges to maintain healthy relationships, look at some of the great work being done in the area of nonviolent communication. Again, using the word nonviolence may seem a low bar to set, but an understanding of the word in the light of Gandhi’s work is a great place to start.

The word nonviolence was coined in the mid-twentieth century as an English counterpart to Gandhi’s term *satyagraha*. Our English term has none of the sense of *satyagraha*’s application of love and truth to the conflict, oppression, anger and injustice that arises in personal and social and political relationships. *Satyagraha* is often defined as application of soul-force or truth-force. It does not mean silence or passivity or surrender in the face of conflict.

Nonviolence begins with a vision of oneness with God and our sisters and brothers. When conflicts arise that threaten that oneness, it takes a vision of what a relationship should be and a desire to work to repair those important relationships.

Repairing damaged relationships requires risk and vulnerability. I may have a great vision about the possibilities in a relationship, but I can’t impose my vision on anyone. I can expose my heart and needs, but they can be rejected, sometimes coldly and cruelly. That hurts. I know because I’ve seen the hurt I’ve caused when I’ve done it.

In a workshop run by Pace e Bene in Chicago a few years back they recommended Sharon Strand Ellison’s good work, *Taking the War Out of Our Words*. The book is an eye-opening analysis of behaviors and tools we use to either resolve or exacerbate conflicts.

Ellison begins by recognizing that in any conflict we quickly, almost instantly become defensive. We cast conflict as a power struggle and erect barriers to real communication. The “other” is cast as an adversary and someone to be defeated. Using numerous examples throughout, Ellison goes on to identify three behaviors we use to “win” conflict in relationships. In each of the behavior categories she suggests passive and passive-aggressive ways we act.

**Surrender** – Instead of confronting offensive behaviors we just go along and allow others to manipulate us out of fear, guilt or habit.

**Withdrawal** – This can mean physical, emotional or intellectual withdrawal from an engagement. As I read her work I could recognize this as a behavior I adopt frequently.

**Counterattack** – We can retaliate by making excuses or justifying our behavior, blaming the other or making ad hominem arguments.

She goes on to identify three communication tools that we can use or misuse to resolve or exacerbate relational difficulties. *Questions* can be rhetorical in which we ask in a way to suggest we already have an answer, or they can be genuinely inquisitive, open and honest. *Statements* can be clear statements of our opinion couched as “the truth,” and allow little compromise. Alternatively, they can be statements that indicate we have been actively listening to the other and are trying to communicate what we are hearing. *Predictions* about the future of the relationship can be made as threats or they can be honest and open assessments of what the continued behavior will do to the relationship, leaving room for a change in direction.

The insights from her book have been extremely helpful in understanding behaviors that I have adopted throughout my life

Top:

Frank McCann’s parents on their wedding day

Bottom:

Frank and wife Eileen McCann (bottom left) with family, Christmas 2011





# Moving Beyond No Common Ground

by Ruby Chowdhry with assistance from Eileen Byrne, CSJP

**I was seven-years-old** and had just moved into my adoptive family's home with my twin sister. Life was good and exciting and, if I thought about myself and my place in this family, I was not aware of any tensions at that time. I was living in a new situation with a mother and father who mirrored the kind of households I had been brought up in so far, a mix of English and Asian. My sister and I are Bangladeshi. My new mum, Vicky, was a pale, light-haired English woman. Kay, my dad, was Pakistani/Asian. Vicky's son, Imran, was 10-years-old, and we had fun riding our bicycles and exploring the area around our new town. Vicky was a dutiful mother who prepared meals, took us to school and dressed us in colourful handmade dresses. Kay took us swimming and gave us the experience of family life with a mixture of fun, dining out, and dedication to hard work to provide for the family. My life was filled with new sensations and learning experiences – travelling to Wales to meet new cousins, flying for the first time to Pakistan to meet grandparents and see an exotic world. I had no time to reflect on my inner life, on who I was, where I was in relation to my new mother and father, how I was to grow into the person I would be. My sister and I were children and life was a test of survival in an almost alien culture. Yet, there were moments of great happiness when I felt bound to Vicky as she cared for me. I felt a deep affection for Kay who was protective and caring and I believe I knew then the joy of the father-daughter bond.

When I look back, I am amazed at how much trust I placed in these people I had known for less than a year. It was reassuring to have my twin with me and to have visits from my Social Worker, and we had occasional contact with Sister Eileen Byrne, but this contact grew less, and I was sad knowing other children were taking her attention as our relationship diminished with every visit; however we never lost contact with her.

As the years passed, I went to school and did my domestic chores. Gradually, I came to question why Imran did not have to do the same kind of chores. I didn't understand why I clashed with my elders. With hindsight, I know I felt threatened by Vicky's assumptions that I would behave as a typical Asian girl in the context



of Asian Society. I didn't have any say in decisions made about me. When I did express my feelings, I felt misunderstood. Over time I grew into the realization that I was being prepared for a life of domesticity in the home, the life of a typical Asian housewife, and that was the future I saw for myself. I dreaded every day when school was out. I was a good student, particularly in drawing and art, and I was a discriminating reader with many outside interests. I was good at being a child in the eyes of an adult, but my intellectual pursuits were side-lined.

What is now called a breakdown in my relationship with Vicky is a simplistic term for a whole set of complex situations which developed as an outcome of dislocation, confused cultural identity and basic human development in my case. On Vicky's side there was her inability to hold the conversations I so desperately needed. There did not seem to be common ground where we could have discussed our differences. I realise now I wanted to be valued and that was missing. I wonder what I should have done or been to gain approval.

Finally, our presence in that family with Vicky, Kay and Imran proved too disruptive. When we were 14-years-old, my sister and I returned to the care of the Local Authority and lived in care with foster families until we were 17-years-old. From there, we moved on, followed our career paths, gained degrees in branches of art. Throughout that time we were in contact with Sister Eileen who was a sounding board for me and always a source of support, as she is still today.

I am now in touch again with Vicky. I was able to approach her with openness and honesty, speak about the past and even visit. The day I received an email from Vicky in which she said "sorry" for not being the mother I needed was the day I truly healed my relationship.

*Ruby is 38 years-old and lives in Brighton. She completed a degree in Illustration and went on to study Part 1 of a Masters in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy at Roehampton. She intends to return to study to complete a course at London's Tavistock Centre for Human Relations to become a psychotherapist.*

# In Rwanda Seeds that Will Nourish the Future

by Mindy McDonald, CSJP



**What do right relationships** in society look like in Rwanda, where most adults remember a loved one who was killed by another Rwandan, often a friend, neighbor or family member? What can right relationship mean in that setting?

After the 1994 civil war in Rwanda, the new Tutsi government did not want to repeat the dynamics of the past that led to all the killings. The effort was for all to be represented in the government and to put the divisions of the past behind. The theme “We are all Rwandans” was publicized and taught in schools. South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation efforts were in the minds of many as the rebuilding started.

In Rwandan culture, obedience to authority is a strongly held value. One does what one is told to do. Certainly the mass killings could not have happened any other way.

After the war, in the tiny villages all over the country, the old, old tradition of village gatherings was reinstated as a court of law. Weekly “gacaca” meetings (the word means “on the grass”) were held on the hillsides and some local war crimes were tried. If the verdict was guilty, and the defendant claimed innocence, they went to prison. If the perpetrator confessed face-to-face to the victim or family, the sentence was reduced to a work program.

Was there abuse? Of course. And public reconciliations also occurred, with honest remorse and forgiveness. Not easy when it’s your neighbor or coworker. But still the efforts toward right relationships were begun.

The challenge, of course, is to continue the momentum. We easily slip back into old patterns of prejudice, and power can tempt us to become comfortable in presuming our relationships are right without examining them. We don’t like to hear opposing views or critiques that cause us to look more closely at our relationships. That, of course, is true in Rwanda. These tensions are quietly palpable despite the impressions of unity in Rwandan society.

But always, examples of hope can be found. The Carmelite Sisters I stayed with for a few months told me that during the war, when their convent was under siege, they were taken out of the country and took refuge with a Carmelite community in France. The Rwandese



Carmelites were both Hutu and Tutsi, and had friends and family members on both sides of the conflict. As sisters in community, they shared stories, heartache and prayer, and deepened their right relationships.

After the war, school teachers were instructed to teach the “We are all Rwandans” campaign as part of the national school curriculum. There would be no more first day of school roll-call lining the handful of Tutsi children in the class against one wall and all the Hutu children on the opposite wall. “Look around. See who’s with you and who’s against you.” No, no more of that. “We Are All Rwandans Now.”

Students caught the spirit and embraced the new inclusivity. But in the mountains, some of the militia weren’t happy that the war had concluded. Sometimes they would appear in a school in the countryside, make the children divide up by tribal heritage, and massacre the Tutsi students, leaving a powerful message for everyone.

One day in Nyange Secondary School, armed men burst in and ordered the students to divide up. Hutu here, Tutsi over there. The students sat still at their desks.

A Hutu student named Chantal Umujawamahoro (which means ‘one who works for peace’) said, “There are no Hutus or Tutsis here; we are all Rwandans,” and was shot at her desk.





At Left:  
 Top: Mindy with a colleague  
 Bottom: Home destroyed during 1994 war

At Right:  
 Top: Fishing cooperative on Lake Kivu, on the border  
 Right: Children in a rural village  
 Left: Simplest of Rwandan homes without plumbing, electricity or windows

One of the men said “I’m not playing. I said Hutu here and Tutsi over there.” Still the students refused to move. Another student, a Tutsi genocide survivor, repeated, “There are no Hutus or Tutsis here; we are all Rwandans,” and was also shot. Still the students refused to be divided.

The enraged gunmen opened fire on the whole class. Most of the students died before help arrived. Some, who survived with bullet wounds, later became ambassadors for peace, and traveled around the country and beyond, speaking and teaching peace and right relationship.

Another government initiative intended to heal relationships among neighbors is another “olden days” tradition. On one Saturday every month, everyone spends the morning working together on some community project, such as planting trees, or cleaning up a public area. Often neighbors gather for cold drinks and relaxation afterward. But again the tension between power and relationship shows up. Tickets can be issued that morning to people on the streets who are not joining in a work effort.

The impulse toward working together was clear in some of the health centers where we mentored and taught.

The staff was so hungry for training and education that they would sit packed onto backless benches for hours, drinking in new information. They were Rwandan health care workers caring for Rwandan HIV+ patients, and happy for help in doing so more skillfully.

Relationships nested within networks of relationships make up a society. Righting relationships at any level is a complicated and painstaking process. In a postwar society it is an ideal, a horizon, more than a reality, but it is the only direction. Seeds of hope can be found and watered. They are the seeds that will nurture the future.

**Mindy McDonald, CSJP**, a nurse fluent in French, spent about six weeks in each of several rural clinics in all regions of the country. She worked with the local health care workers as they learned both to use the new medications effectively and to educate their patients in taking them. To read some of her journal entries and more about her time in Rwanda, visit our website at: [www.csjp.org/ministries/mindystory](http://www.csjp.org/ministries/mindystory)



# Hope, Reconciliation and Renewal at Jubilee Women's Center

By Kathy Lewis, CSJP-A

**I have the pleasure of working** at Jubilee Women's Center in Seattle which was founded in 1983 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace in honor of the community's 100th anniversary. Sisters Ann Wetherilt, Joan Leonard and Margaret O'Neill, whose ministry was working with homeless people on

the streets of Seattle, were appalled by the plight of so many women who had no place to eat, sleep or find refuge from the cold and dangerous life they were leading.

The Sisters purchased a former convent and opened their doors in the beginning to women and children. I spoke to Eleanor Gilmore, CSJP recently who was Provincial at that time. She was so happy to tell me that she was the one who signed the contract to purchase the building. Time and circumstances have changed the face of Jubilee. It now supports and cares for single women of all ages.

Over the years Jubilee has grown and changed. It has provided not only shelter for 33 women, but many resources to assist the residents in housing, pursuing schooling and finding work. Jubilee residents have the time to heal from physical, mental and emotional trauma and to go on to have fulfilling lives. Women throughout Seattle can also take advantage of the new Education Center where many classes are offered, and the boutique where they can select beautiful clothes free of charge.

Years of working with women who have suffered trauma in their childhood or in adulthood at the hands of an abusive person or living situation have taught me so much about the human ability to recover, grow and change, and to transform what might have been life-threatening to new life. Again and again I have been surprised and amazed at clients' ability to work through the grief, the destruction of self-esteem, crushing poverty, and lack of desire to go on with life, and not only recover but turn the negative events of their lives into something productive. I have met brave women who, far from trying to avoid the real pain of the wounding they have experienced, have instead really come to see beauty in the world and use their own pain to reach out to others.

I would like to share the story of Esperanza, one such woman, who came to live at Jubilee this year. She came to the United States with her husband five years ago, leaving her home in Latin America, her family, her friends and her profession in the Arts in order to be with him. It became very clear quite early in her immigration to this country that she was in a very abusive relationship. She was kept from learning English, from working, from forming friendships outside her husband's circle of friends. In a word, she was imprisoned. Only through great courage did she

finally take steps to leave him and try to build her own life. With the help of her one friend she escaped, not only to safety but to begin a new life. She worked very hard with immigration to obtain a green card, legal residency, to apply and begin attending ESL classes at a community college, and to apply for benefits through the Department of Human Services. The pain she suffers from her many surgeries doesn't stop her from continuing her schooling. A talented painter, Esperanza has painted beautiful nature watercolors and has given them to other residents as gifts. Sadly pets are not allowed, but Esperanza found a way to feed that need. She saved what little money she had and purchased a hummingbird feeder to put outside her window of her bedroom. "The hummingbird family is my anti-depressant. I wake each morning to hearing them and they are always there for me to make me happy to begin my day."

During her stay at Jubilee, Esperanza has lost several loved ones in her former home. It has been devastating for her to have to grieve these deaths being so very far away. Even with this sorrow she displays an amazing spirit. Always smiling, always comforting other residents, cooking for the community, offering little gifts of her paintings; she is a model for the best of community living.

In her continuing effort to establish herself, she applied for U.S. citizenship earlier this year. From the beginning of the application she thought she had several months to study for the examination, only to learn the next week that her appointment for testing and taking the oath would be in three weeks. With the help of a dedicated Associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace volunteer, she studied day and night, never for one moment thinking that she would fail. What a pleasure it was to accompany her to the testing, and after getting "100% of difficult questions," to return the same day along with her tutor to be with her when she took her oath as a U.S. citizen!

What's ahead for Esperanza? She will continue her schooling, and her dream is to find work in social services, perhaps assisting other refugees who are fleeing from abuse and finding themselves in a strange culture, alone and frightened. My guess is that she will be most successful, and offering her amazing spirit, will give hope to many.

**Kathy Lewis, CSJP-A** has been a Care Manager for Jubilee Women's Center for five years. For 13 years prior to that she worked for Catholic Community Services at Rose of Lima House, a transitional housing program for homeless women.



# A Foundation of Prayer and Love: Being an Associate

by Sue Sanderson, CSJP-A

**A couple of weeks ago** I was driving home from a friend's 70th birthday party with another friend whom I had not seen for a while. She was telling me about the job she was doing at the moment. It soon became clear that she was not enjoying the job. Actually it was not the job that was the problem but the people she was working with. Never before had she worked with people who were so uncooperative and obstructive. This set me thinking about relationships and how they can be life enhancing or life diminishing, liberating or enslaving. One relationship which has been continually life enhancing for me has been the one which has slowly grown between myself and the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace.

I do not recall my first meeting with the Sisters but it must have been in the context of justice and peace. Gradually I came to meet more of the community. I was impressed by their energy and enthusiasm and love of life. There was a calmness and certitude about what they were doing but also a willingness to listen and reflect. I came to know the Sisters better when I was appointed chaplain to the Pyramid of Catholic Schools in North East Lincolnshire. I took over from Sister Liz Kenny who not only showed me the ropes but also made me feel very welcome. The other Sisters at Grimsby and Cleethorpes made me feel equally welcome, but Sisters Breege Leddy and Margaret Redmond have been a continuing presence and support.

I had no idea that there were such people as Associates until one day in St. Pius church, putting up an exhibition, I happened to glance at the table with leaflets on it and saw one for the Associates of the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace and picked it up. The rest is history, as they say.

I went through the process of discernment with Sister Margaret Redmond and Associate Una Cunningham as my guides. The life and work of the founders, Margaret Anna Cusack and Honoria Gaffney, inspired me. These were strong and determined women. The Sisters' Constitutions give a blueprint for living a Gospel-filled life and this, coupled with prayer and reflection, enabled me to feel part of the community. Meeting with other Associates was wonderful, with their different backgrounds and experiences. I truly felt at home. I was among like-minded people.

Once I had made my commitment as an Associate I felt a real sense of joy at being part of the community. That joy has never left me. I love the vibrant, uplifting and meaningful liturgies we celebrate, and which have been prepared with such care. They truly are the work of the



Top:  
Associates at commitment ceremony in the UK.



Bottom:  
Sue Sanderson, CSJP-A

people. The fact that everything flows from them and is inspired by them is a spiritual source of strength. The small group meetings and the Associate programme have given food for thought and time for reflection.

I was fortunate to be part of the Congregation Programme, which took place last September in London. I learnt so much, not only about the content of the programme but also about the participants and their work. There were times when we were looking in-depth at trafficking and other issues when I wondered how people could be so abusive to others. But there were other times when the goodness of people shone through. There was laughter as well as sadness, joy as well as sorrow. It was an experience I won't forget.

When my journey began the Congregation was in the process of becoming a Congregation without Provinces, blending three regions into one. I think the way that has developed epitomises for me the spirit of the community. The fears, anxieties, hopes and sorrows have been expressed and confirmed in consultations. Consensus has been sought. A willingness to look forward has emerged – all this built on a solid foundation of prayer and love among Sisters and Associates.

# The **Power** of *Tradition, Faith and Family*

by Amalia Camacho, CSJP and Lilia Lopez

**I first met Lilia Lopez**, a single mother of three, in 2004 when I was asking the Latino community for help with the Sacramental Preparation of children preparing for First Communion. I instinctively knew she would be someone I could count on in this commitment.

Lilia is 42 years old, born in Mexico City of Oaxaqueño parents. She has two brothers and three sisters. At the age of 19, Lilia decided to migrate to the United States because her life in Mexico as a child was very difficult. She would soon learn that living as an immigrant in the states was not an easy life either. Not long after arriving in California, she met the man who would be the father of her three children, Angelie, Erik and Yesica who were all born in Los Angeles. In 1994 her relationship with her husband was not healthy, so they returned to Mexico thinking that this would help. Matters only got worse and she decided to leave him. Her children were then four and three years-old with the youngest just eight months. Her husband threatened to take the children from her. She knew that she had to do all she could for them, so she returned to the US in 1995, temporarily leaving her children with her parents knowing that she would do everything possible to reunite with them as soon as she got settled.

She writes: *"In March of 1996, during these months, the separation (from my children) was very hard and painful but in time things would change. God was always with me even though I did not have the knowledge and personal relationship with Him. I believe that through this journey of life we always ask of God, but... we don't have a personal and direct relationship with Him. This was a most difficult time of my life and the needs grew greater. I was not able to maintain daily cost of living.*

*I baptized all three of my children in January of 1997 and in this same year, they returned to Mexico with my parents because I was not able to care for them. Being separated from them was a most difficult and painful time for me. I decided that to be poor together was better than being separated, and not having a parent in their lives was not just. This is how I came to Bellevue (Washington) and decided to make the most of life. I started English classes, I learned to drive and one of the most important things of all this, was that I started to do independent work cleaning houses. This is how I supported myself and my children.*

*My children were now getting older and Angelie and Erik made their First Communion and soon after Yesica did, too. Little by little, in 2004, I felt my faith growing and my involvement with the church was also growing. In 2006, Angelie turned 15 and in the Latino community, our*



*Top – Left to right:*  
Angelie, Yesica, Ramiro, Lilia,  
Erik and Alexander

*Bottom – Back to front:*  
Angelie, Erik and Yesica



*tradition is to celebrate this time with a Mass and fiesta afterwards with family and friends. During this time, my younger daughter Yesica, now 13, was very rebellious and uncontrollable, but thanks to God, I had Sister Amalia as a spiritual guide to help during these most difficult times. I also had other friends who gave me encouragement and support and with faith in God, I would put all my worries at his mercy and pray for my daughter. My daughter ran away from home and at age 15 became pregnant and lived in an abusive situation. This, too, was very painful, but with God's strength and Sister Amalia's and Ramiro's care and listening, it helped me sort out my thoughts and feelings. If I did not depend on God and in prayer from my parents in Mexico and friends, I would not have been able to endure this pain. With lots and lots of prayers Yesica has turned her life around. As a single mother I continue to know God's unconditional love, as I too, love my children and pray for them every day."*

**Lilia** continues to help me with Sacramental Preparation and has been married to Ramiro for three years now. They enjoy their three-year-old grandson Alexander, Yesica's son.



# Right Relationships on the Shores of Reality

by Jan Linley

*“Recognizing the diversity that exists among us, the Chapter encourages continued dialogue on the values, myths and fears that both unite and divide us in order that we may more effectively reflect and forward the reign of God, a reign of right relationship among ourselves, with other people and with all of creation.”*

(Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace Acts of the 19th General Chapter, 1996)

**In a popular television comedy** series in the US called *Modern Family* a bonanza of diversity is encapsulated in one family. Jay, the white, middle-aged patriarch is in his second marriage to Gloria, a much younger Latina woman who has a 10 year-old son. In the current season, they have welcomed a new baby into their family. Jay also has two adult children from his first marriage: a gay son Mitch who with his partner Cam has adopted a Vietnamese girl, and a daughter Claire who has a more “traditional” family with husband Phil and their three children.

Judging from the success of *Modern Family* and the advent of like-minded programs, we have turned a corner in our acceptance of diversity, especially in the United States and many western European countries. However, spend five minutes surfing headlines on the internet or browsing the updates on Human Rights Watch ([www.humanrights.org](http://www.humanrights.org)) or even talking to some of your friends, neighbors, and colleagues—and yes, your family—and you’ll find that fiction begins to recede on the shores of reality where we still have plenty of work to do.

Sure, we all know happy, well-adjusted gay individuals and couples, and most of us know biracial couples. While still not paid as equitably as men, women are supporting themselves, and in many cases, their families. Those families are often so-called non-traditional families as opposed to the nuclear family that many of us grew up in and were the socially accepted norm prior to the 60s and 70s. We have a black president in the United States and more women than ever before—three (still not enough but a start)—on the US Supreme Court. By the time this article goes to print that same Supreme Court will have heard arguments from both sides on the legal right to gay marriage. A decision is expected in late June.

Sounds good, right? Like the river is flowing in the right direction... but we cannot give in to the temptation to float down the river on a raft of complacency. We live in a world betwixt and between the evolution of human rights and full acceptance of diversity. There are still too many places in our world where people are abused or invisible because of the color of their skin, their gender or their sexuality. Does there even exist a place in this world where that does not



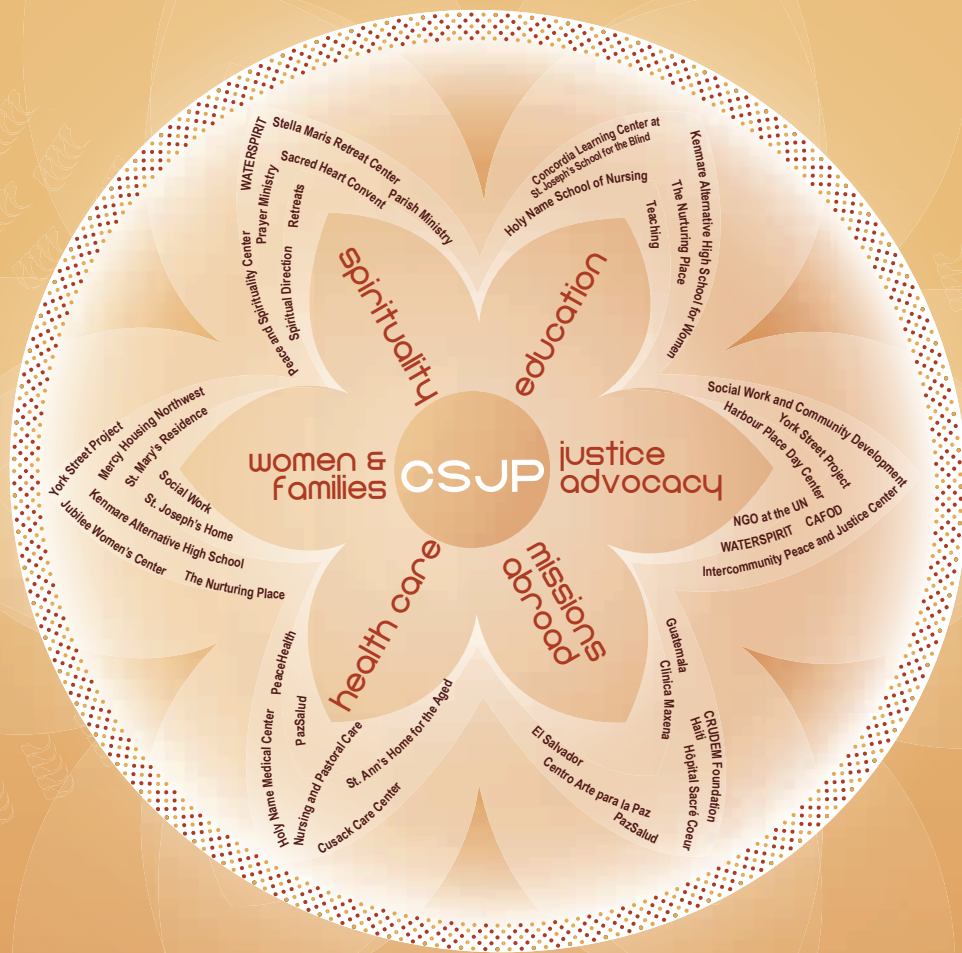
happen? We are marching to different drumbeats, some of us seemingly standing in place banging the same tired song for the same audience and others blending old and new beats to create a fresh sound that invites a mixed group of listeners and participants.

In President Obama’s second inaugural speech in January of this year, he said:

*“We, the people, declare today that the most evident of truths – that all of us are created equal – is the star that guides us still; just as it guided our forebears through Seneca Falls, and Selma, and Stonewall; just as it guided all those men and women, sung and unsung, who left footprints along this great Mall, to hear a preacher say that we cannot walk alone; to hear a King proclaim*

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# ministries of the sisters of st. joseph of peace



## EASTERN REGION

**Concordia Learning Center at St. Joseph's School for the Blind**  
 Jersey City, NJ 07307  
 201-876-5432  
[www.sjsnj.org](http://www.sjsnj.org)

**Cusack Care Center at St. Joseph's Home for the Blind**  
 Jersey City, NJ 07306  
 201-653-8300  
[www.cusackcarecenter.org](http://www.cusackcarecenter.org)

**Holy Name Medical Center**  
 Teaneck, NJ 07666  
 201-833-3000  
[www.holyname.org](http://www.holyname.org)

**St. Joseph's Home**  
 Jersey City, NJ 07302  
 201-413-9280  
[www.yorkstreetproject.org/whoweare](http://www.yorkstreetproject.org/whoweare)

**St. Mary's Residence**  
 Jersey City, NJ 07302  
 201-432-6289  
[www.yorkstreetproject.org/whoweare](http://www.yorkstreetproject.org/whoweare)

**St. Ann's Home for the Aged**  
 Jersey City, NJ 07305  
 201-433-0950  
[www.saintannshome.com](http://www.saintannshome.com)

**Stella Maris Retreat Center**  
 Elberon, NJ 07740  
 732-229-0602  
[www.stellamarisretreatcenter.com](http://www.stellamarisretreatcenter.com)

**The Kenmare School**  
 Jersey City, NJ 07302  
 201-451-1177  
[www.yorkstreetproject.org/whoweare](http://www.yorkstreetproject.org/whoweare)

**The Nurturing Place**  
 Jersey City, NJ 07302  
 201-413-1982  
[www.yorkstreetproject.org/whoweare](http://www.yorkstreetproject.org/whoweare)

**WATERSPIRIT**  
 Stella Maris Retreat Center  
 Elberon, NJ 07740  
 732-923-9788  
[www.waterspirit.org](http://www.waterspirit.org)

**York Street Project**  
 Jersey City, NJ 07302  
 201-451-9838  
[www.yorkstreetproject.org](http://www.yorkstreetproject.org)

**WESTERN REGION**  
**Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center**  
 Seattle, WA 98115-6724  
 206-223-1138/9  
[www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org)  
[ipjc@ipjc.org](mailto:ipjc@ipjc.org)

**Jubilee Women's Center**  
 Seattle, WA 98112-3952  
 206-324-1244  
[www.jwcenter.org](http://www.jwcenter.org)

**Mercy Housing Northwest**  
 Seattle, WA  
 206-838-5700  
[intercommunity@mercyhousing.org](mailto:intercommunity@mercyhousing.org)

**PeaceHealth**  
[www.peacehealth.org](http://www.peacehealth.org)

**Peace & Spirituality Center**  
 Bellevue, WA  
 425-635-3600  
[www.csjp.org/peace/pscenter](http://www.csjp.org/peace/pscenter)

**UK REGION**  
**Sacred Heart Convent**  
 Rearsby  
 Leicestershire, England

**EL SALVADOR & HAITI**  
**PazSalud**  
 Suchitoto, El Salvador  
[www.peacehealth.org/paz-salud](http://www.peacehealth.org/paz-salud)

**Hôpital Sacré Coeur**  
 Milot, Haiti  
[www.crudem.org/hopital-sacre-coeur](http://www.crudem.org/hopital-sacre-coeur)

visit us online at [www.csjp.org](http://www.csjp.org) or follow us on facebook



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Soul-Force, continued from page 6

that inhibited the development of some relationships I really valued. I can't count the number of times in the past at work, I have said, "Do it your way," surrendering to another's plan, secretly hoping that the other plan would fail proving me right in the end.

Withdrawing is still my most common initial reaction in the face of conflict. Sometimes, I hear my mother's words, "If you don't have anything good to say, keep your mouth shut." I now understand that I use them to justify my decision to put off any confrontation. But now I know what damage that will do to a relationship.

As we watch our national leaders unable to govern, we have a perfect laboratory to witness the misuse of the tools and the lack of skills in nonviolent communication.

Whether we have a relationship worth saving, or a country to govern, the nonviolent approach to restoring right relationships is a worthwhile investment of time and energy. Resolutions may not come quickly, but they will be able to stand the test of time.

### Further Reading

*Taking the War Out of Our Words: The Art of Powerful Non-Defensive Communication* by Sharon Strand Ellison, Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing, Deadwood, Oregon, 2009.

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Shores of Reality, continued from page 13

*that our individual freedom is inextricably bound to the freedom of every soul on Earth. It is now our generation's task to carry on what those pioneers began."*

In their ceaseless pursuit of peace through justice, The Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace have always tried to live examined lives committed to "right relationships," including informing themselves and acting on behalf of women and children's rights, environmental stewardship, immigrant rights, and justice for all regardless of race or sexual orientation.

Relationships are what bring meaning to our lives. Only in them and through them do we grow and evolve. It is true that we are mere mortals who are not always going to get it right in relationships. Indeed, part of living right relationships is recognizing when to walk away from an unhealthy one or when you've outgrown a relationship for other reasons.

We cannot individually take on the world, but individually and collectively we can practice through our behavior, with compassion and kindness, preserving the integrity and dignity of who or what we are in relationship with—be it a customer service representative from another country, a mentally ill stranger, a homeless addict, a family member, a friend or the beautiful planet we inhabit. We can make a choice to be part of the momentum of the new drumbeat. We can choose to bring our own beautiful sound to the music that is being created, and we can live in hope that the new sound will continue to catch hold and go viral.



we invite you to  
**connect &  
participate**

### consider becoming a sister

Contact Sister Jo-Anne Miller, CSJP, Vocation Director  
jmiller@csjp-olp.org  
In the UK, contact Sister Laurette Bergin, CSJP,  
Vocation Team Member  
laurette1@live.co.uk

### 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. 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  
**www.csjp.org**



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# History and Roots

*“We are beginning a new order and we must have brave, noble, large-minded courageous souls.”* (Margaret Anna Cusack)

“My own darling Ev,” was a common salutation on the many letters Mother Clare (Margaret Anna Cusack) wrote to Mother Evangelista (Honorina Gaffney). That salutation says much about the very close relationship between these two women who were founders of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace.

As a young woman seeking her path Evangelista was quite taken by Mother Clare’s charisma and with her vision to help poor Irish girls and women. She entered the order Mother Clare founded in Ireland as one of the first novices in 1883 when she was 28-years-old. Mother Clare was 54 at the time. Evangelista would quickly become disciple, student, companion, faithful servant, and later, defender of Mother Clare.

Seeking finances in America for the new works in England as well as an opportunity to minister the Irish immigrating girls, the two Sisters received permission to come here not long after the order was formed to establish ministries for poor immigrant women. As Terry Moran points out in his article “Dreaming and Making Dreams Real” on page 4, Mother Clare ran afoul of the hierarchal and patriarchal church on more than one occasion. When she felt there was no hope of mending a breach between herself and Archbishop Corrigan of New York and the local bishops, she came to the painful decision that for the order to survive she would have to leave it. Evangelista was the first to hear her news.

“You must not fail our congregation, my dear. As for me, I wish only to pass altogether out of sight and to offer my defeat for your success.” And that is essentially what she did. Evangelista, with Mother Clare’s blessing, immediately became the temporary Mother Superior until officially elected at the next Congregation Chapter.

The two Sisters had only spent four short years together but were of one heart from the beginning and at this difficult juncture they shared a broken one. Mother Evangelista with more than herself to think of rose to the occasion, taking the seed they had sown and making sure the young community flourished.

The courage and vision of Mothers Clare and Evangelista continue to inspire and guide the Sisters and Associates of St. Joseph of Peace today, not only through the ministries they started that still exist and new ones since developed, but through the words they spoke and lived. The founding charism, peace through justice, informs right relationship in the present and serves as a beacon to the future.



Top: Mother Clare

Bottom: Mother Evangelista