

winter 2014



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

Living peace

congregation of the sisters of st. joseph of peace

Deeper and Wider
The Challenge of Peace



in this issue



Living peace

winter 2014

Living Peace is a biannual publication of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace. If you wish to change your address, or if you or someone you know would like to be added to our *Living Peace* mailing list, please contact Linda Hanson at lhanson@csjp-olp.org or 425-467-5400.

Copyright: Articles in *Living Peace* may be reprinted. Please include the following on reprints: "Reprinted with permission from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, 399 Hudson Terrace, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632, www.csjp.org" Please send us a copy of the reprinted article.

Jan Linley, Editor

Editorial Board

Eileen Byrne, CSJP
Susan Dewitt, CSJP
Jane Ellis, CSJP-A
Terrence Moran, CSJP-A
Coralie Muzzy, CSJP

Cover Art

We are in awe of Adam Schallau's breathtaking photography. The cover photo, by Adam, is a winter storm at the Grand Canyon. Adam is an American landscape photographer featuring work from across the southwest and beyond. His photography has graced the covers of *Arizona Highways* and *New Mexico Magazine* and has been printed in many others including *Sunset*, *Backpacker*, and *Men's Journal*. His photos have also been used by many companies and organizations, including Apple, CNN, National Audubon Society, Grand Canyon Association, and the National Park Service. In 2014 Adam published his first book of Grand Canyon photography titled *Chasing the Light - Grand Canyon*. To see more of Adam's work, visit his website at www.AdamSchallau.com.

Photos: page 7 and 13 by Fiona J. Mackintosh

Design

Beth Ponticello, CEDC, www.cedc.org

- 3 Message from Congregation Leadership:
May Your Roots Go Down Deep
by Terry Donohue, CSJP
- 3 Our Table Is Groaning
by Jan Linley
- 4 The 22nd Congregation Chapter –
Deeper and Wider: The Challenge of Peace
by Susan Dewitt, CSJP
- 6 We Need Renewal of Imagination and
Renewal of Hope
with Anthony Gittins, CSSp
- 8 Grateful, Stolen Heart
by Sheena George, CSJP
- 10 Ignited on the Edge
with Gail Worcelo
- 12 Peace through Justice: Our Gift
by Terry Moran, CSJP-A
- 14 Shaped by Rivers
by Jan Linley
- 16 Frank Talk on Justice and Peace
by Frank McCann, CSJP-A
- 17 The Darkling Thrush
by Thomas Hardy
- 18 Sleeping Windows and Blue Sky Morning
by Linda Millemann
- 20 History and Roots: Reclaiming Peace
by Susan Dewitt, CSJP

Leadership Team Message: May Your Roots Go Down Deep

by Terry Donohue, CSJP

The title of this issue of *Living Peace, Deeper and Wider – the Challenge of Peace*, was the theme of our 22nd Congregation Chapter that occurred in September 2014 in Seattle WA. Our Constitutions define the essence of Chapter – “The Congregation Chapter is the highest decision making body in the Congregation. In this event we celebrate our unity, renew our life and spirit, reflect together on the call of the gospel, and make decisions in fidelity to our charism.” Surely all of those elements and more transpired during our time together at Chapter. The first section of our Constitutions speaks of peace – “Peace is God’s gift to us, given in Christ, a gift we experience and enjoy now, though not in its completeness. We believe that peace points beyond itself in hope to the fullness of time.”

After the days of Chapter, I found myself reflecting often on these two paragraphs from our Constitutions as I tried to integrate all that happened at Chapter into my being. The days of Chapter were full of grace and

blessing as well as challenge and peace. There was time for deep listening and contemplative prayer; time for sharing conversations and meals; time for fun and laughter; and even time for sorrow and loss. During our Chapter days, one of our Sisters, Anita Heeran became very ill and died peacefully a few days later. Anita’s sister Monica, as well as my sister Maureen and I were with Anita when she peacefully and effortlessly transitioned from this life to the next.

Anita had been able to attend the Chapter for the vow ceremony to celebrate with the ‘young Sisters’ and she had wonderful visits with many friends, particularly from the Eastern USA where she had spent the majority of her religious life. In all of the planning and preparation and attention to detail that goes into organizing a Chapter, surely the death of one of our Sisters was not anticipated. For me that spoke of how God is indeed the one doing the planning and God’s grace will lead us and guide us and show us the way.

continued on page 9

Our Table Is Groaning

by Jan Linley

One of the rarely stated goals of *Living Peace* is to engage our readers in the Congregation’s charism of peace through justice. We want to release that charism and encourage you to join us, whatever that might mean—reading more on the topics we cover, starting or reinvigorating a meditation/prayer practice, showing up for a justice event in your area, staying informed, getting involved. To date we’ve chosen to do this by focusing on a theme for each issue. Those themes cover canvases too large to be contained on any museum wall, real or imaginary: Spirituality of Peace through Justice, Nonviolence, Care of Creation and Climate Change, Prophetic Risk, The Art of Peace, Healing Journeys, Right Relationships, Contemplative Stance and now Deeper and Wider – The Challenge of Peace.

Sometimes I think we’ve set our sights too high, bitten off more than we can chew, our eyes are bigger than our stomachs. The table is groaning with so much to digest, but it’s both our desire and responsibility to examine what’s there and consume at least some of it to fuel action, even—especially—if that action starts with reflection and contemplation.

Peace is a challenge. If it were not, we would live in a nonviolent world and individually, we would never experience times of tumult and negativity (anger, frustration, sadness, shame, envy, despair). We go deeper—through meditation, prayer, reflection, and learning the root causes of injustice—to seek peace. We go wider—by sharing our wisdom and knowledge, by seeking more information and by acting on injustice—to spread peace and effect change.

The theme of this issue is taken from the 22nd Congregation Chapter. More than a meeting that occurs every six years, this is a pivotal moment in the life of the Congregation. It is the rare occasion when Sisters and Associates gather in one location for two weeks to determine their future direction and elect new leadership. Two years of planning lead up to Chapter. Susan Dewitt, CSJP does a great job of outlining what takes place there. And in *History and Roots*, she writes of how the Congregation reclaimed its history and its name during past Congregation Chapters.

continued on page 9

The 22nd congregation chapter

Deeper and Wider: The Challenge of Peace

by Susan Dewitt, CSJP

Every six years, as Associates and Sisters gather for a Chapter, we mark a new stage of our lives as the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace: we remember the events of the past six years, we are inspired by our Congregation Leader and our speakers, we pray and reflect together, we elect new leadership and we agree on a focus for the coming six years. The Chapters mark the stages of our lives as community, much like the chapters of a book.

Our 22nd Chapter, *Deeper and Wider - the Challenge of Peace*, held from September 5th through September 16th in Seattle, Washington, brought us beginnings and endings, great joy and great challenges. For the first time Sisters and Associates at home could share the major moments through streaming video; for the first time we celebrated as four of our Sisters made vows; for the first time we mourned together as we held a Vigil for our beloved Sister Anita Heeran.

All of our days at Chapter began with song and a long period of contemplative silence, a good habit we formed at our Congregation Retreats with Nancy Sylvester, IHM. At the other end of the days we were a lot noisier, as we gathered to talk and socialize with new and old friends.

The challenge of peace was framed for us by Congregation Leader Margaret Byrne, who invited us to seize the moment as an opportunity to “begin again.” Our deep story, she said, is “the memory that compels us to begin again, to go out to those who today are saying, “Give us something to eat.” She reminded us that Mother Clare called for “brave, noble, large-minded, courageous souls,” and asked us to respond again and whole-heartedly to that call.

Fr. Tony Gittins’ theme was discipleship and its costs: he asked us to reflect on our discipleship and its fruits: who sits at our table and whose feet do we wash? How do we encounter the poor? Today “our job as religious is to keep the vision alive, not my vision but God’s vision.” Sr. Gail Worcelo invited us into the evolutionary heart of Christ and encouraged us to thrive on the living edge through humility, imagination, intentionality, mutuality and the capacity to influence and be influenced. She engaged us through song and dance to follow our Chapter theme, being pushed and pulled to go deeper and wider.



TOP L to R: Newly elected Congregation Leadership Team Sisters Melinda McDonald, Sheila Lemieux, Margaret Shannon, Kristin Funari and Susan Francois



BOTTOM L to R: Katrina Alton, Sheena George, Juliana Iwuagwu and Dorothy Verna took vows at the 22nd Congregation Chapter

Then we heard from the seven Sisters who have made vows in the last ten years and from members of the formation team. Strong links among all were evident in their commitment to Mother Clare’s vision of a common humanity, to a sense of empowerment, and a need to engage in service to those on the margins of society. Each expressed a desire to respond to the needs of today – immigration, refugees, human trafficking - and to do so living in community.

Drawing on the wisdom of all our speakers and input from Chapter participants, the group charged with writing a Chapter Act (a commitment to a plan of action for the next six years) decided that instead a very simple and direct Chapter Call was needed. This call to “recommit ourselves to Jesus’ way of radical hospitality” in company with poor and marginalized

people will be a daily challenge to us over the next six years. We agreed that our commitment to care of creation and nonviolence, the two Chapter Acts from 2008, continues to engage and challenge us. And we approved the Congregation Comprehensive Community Plan, the culmination of two years' study, consultation, and community input.

The first half of the Chapter concluded with the presentation of the Peacemaker Award to Geri and Charlie Mulligan of Knoxville, TN. They were the third recipients of this award given to a person or persons who exemplify the work of peace and justice in the spirit of our foundress, Mother Francis Clare. Geri and Charlie established LC Construction Company, "Clean Sweep" cleaning company and have been responsible for neighborhood beautification efforts. They also established Tennessee Immigrant Empowerment Solutions (T.I.E.S.) and work at the Center for Literacy, Education and Employment (CLEE) and minister to those in jails and detention centers. These are some examples of their practical, common sense actions on behalf of those who are marginalized, in particular, immigrants. They are models for us all.

After two days of free time to explore Northwest sites, the Chapter reconvened, and we thanked and celebrated the present Leadership Team – Sisters Margaret Byrne, Terry Donohue, Kristin Funari, Anne Hayes and Corky Muzzy – and to begin the work of electing a new Congregation Leader and Leadership Team. Sr. Sheila Lemieux was chosen as the next Congregation Leader; Leadership Team members are Sisters Kristin Funari, Margaret Shannon, Melinda (Mindy) McDonald and Susan Francois.

Our heart-filled Chapter days included a ritual at the nearby wetlands and ended with a peace witness outside the nearby Armed Forces Career Center and a joyful celebration of all that had been said and done during these twelve packed days to prepare a new chapter in our Congregational life and to sound a new call to live radical hospitality in community.

The Chapter Call
22nd Congregation Chapter
September 2014

Disturbed by the Spirit,
we recommit ourselves to
Jesus' way of radical hospitality.

**We are called to a deeper and wider
living of community for mission
in company with poor and
marginalized people.
Our contemplative discernment
pushes us, individually and as
Congregation, to action;
deeper mutual support enables us
to take risks for justice, peace and
the integrity of creation.**

**As disciples of Jesus, we respond anew
to the call of Mother Clare
to be "brave, noble, large-minded
and courageous souls."**

“More than the fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by fear of remaining shut up within structures that give us a false sense of security...within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying: ‘Give them something to eat’.”

– Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

We Need Renewal of Imagination and Renewal of Hope

Space limitations do not allow us to cover all of Fr. Anthony (Tony) Gittins' presentation, so we've chosen to focus here on his input on hope and imagination, divine gifts that allow us to keep moving forward—finding joy, love, purpose, inspiration—even when our hearts have been repeatedly broken. We have the capacity to be the bearers of hope. It is only the limits of our imagination that keep us bound.

Anthony Gittins, CSSp

Father Anthony Gittins is a member of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (CSSp) and has been Emeritus Professor of Theology and Culture at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago since 2012. There he held the Bishop Ford Chair of Mission Theology and Culture.

He offers workshops and seminars, as well as retreats and keynotes. He has done so in more than 30 countries.

He has extensive experience as a hospital chaplain in Albany, NY. For the past 25 years he has worked with and among homeless women on the streets of Chicago and in a shelter. For seven of those years he was part of Genesis House.

Before coming to Chicago in 1984, Gittins worked for almost a decade among the Mende people of Sierra Leone, West Africa, as a missionary pastor, linguist and ethnographer. Since then he has done missionary anthropological work in a number of countries beyond Africa, including Pakistan, the Trobriand Islands and the Republic of Kiribati in the Central Pacific.

He is the author of 15 books, among them: A Presence That Disturbs: A Call to Radical Discipleship, Come, Follow Me: The Commandments of Jesus; Where There's Hope, There's Life. Women's Stories and Practical Theology; and Called to be Sent: Co-Missioned as Disciples Today.

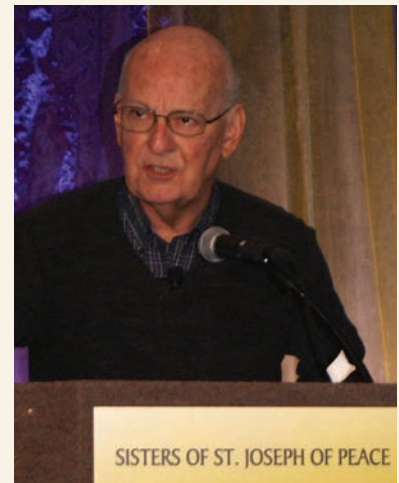
Currently he is writing a book tentatively called "From International to Intercultural Communities: Theological and Anthropological Challenges."

We've been broken by disappointment. Sometimes we've been broken by appointment. We've been brokenhearted by other people—individually or maybe even institutionally. We have had our hearts broken. We have had our hearts broken by our unrealized great expectations or we have had our hearts broken by our own dashed hopes. And we have surely had our hearts broken by our own sin and our own shame. There should be no doubt that we are among the brokenhearted. And Jesus says, 'I have come to you in your broken-heartedness. I also come to you captive.' And each one of us is a captive. We are captives to so many things; we are captive to our own addictions, our own habits, our own patterns of behavior. We are far from free. We are all captive to our self-centeredness. And the spirit of the Lord has come to people who are imprisoned and we are surely imprisoned.

One of the great prisons that enclose us is the limitation of our own horizons, the limitations of our own imaginations. We're caught. We're trapped within. The limitations of our own hopes imprison us. We cry out to be free but we're in prisons of our own makings, caught and trapped and paralyzed. We need renewal of imagination and renewal of hope. And then the spirit of the Lord has come to those who mourn. Some of us mourn the passage of youth, some of us mourn the wounded priesthood, all of us mourn some kind of shattering of some kind of dream, all of us mourn something in our past that could or should have been different; so we mourn.

Tony reminded us that God is "terribly, terribly biased on our side." God gives the "oil of gladness" and "for despondency praise." We gain by affirming one another, providing encouragement, praising each other for the kind of people we are capable of becoming, raising one another up when we are not yet raised. Hope will sustain us, but hope is not to be confused with optimism. Tony described the difference between hope and optimism.

You don't wait until tomorrow to hope; hope today; hope against tomorrow so when you wake up tomorrow, you'll still be hoping. Hope and optimism are thoroughly different. Optimism is a kind of rational thing. Optimism is a judgment you form based on the information you have. You can be optimistic or pessimistic about all kinds of things. Hope is not



a rational judgment. Hope is a theological gift. It is a virtue. It is a gift of God and it endures. Three things endure: faith, hope and love. You cannot look around and modify your hope accordingly. Your hope burns brightly through the darkest night. Hope is the non-negotiable. Hope is the standard behavior for the believing person.

"We live in a time when confidence is badly wounded and trust is deeply impaired," Tony said. He said we each have the possibility of renewing people's trust and providing a reason to inspire people to continue to hope. We can do that by being people who are living in hope and finding the places in our broken world where there is no hope.

Of imagination, Tony said, it is a rare combination of wisdom and knowledge. Imagination is what allows us to put hope into action.

Imagination is a use of our wisdom and our knowledge in order precisely to address looming issues out of the experience that we have generated through the course of our life. The essence of imagination is to ask open-ended questions. Imagination doesn't ask rational questions. Imagination says: "What if?" and "Why not?" "What if I was to think differently?" "What if I were to act differently?" "Why not try this?" The Reason says, "Oh, we can't do that because..." And it gives you 10 reasons why you can't do it. Imagination asks one more time, "But why not? Why not give it a try?" A failure of our imagination is a failure to touch on the Holy Spirit.

In closing, Tony gave us a call to action encouraging us not to muzzle the Holy Spirit and to allow ourselves to be disturbed and uncomfortable. Think about God's spirit—very powerful and wanting us to share our food and disturb our complacency, to surprise us, to light a few fires under us and even to make some of us uncomfortable, but if we can muzzle the Spirit then life can go on and we can remain secure and undisturbed and unaware. We try to muzzle the Holy Spirit precisely for that reason: the Spirit is powerful enough to interfere with our plans, and often we don't want that. We can then hear and see nothing out of the ordinary. We don't hear the cries of the poor anymore. That's exactly why St. Paul urges believers not to muzzle the Spirit because it is the Spirit's job to make a commotion, to sound the alarm, to wake us up, to galvanize us and to help to change the world. The very mission of the Spirit is to renew the face of the earth. We muzzle powerful rather than domestic animals. This is no Spirit of domesticity like a pussy cat and no docile beast of burden like a donkey, so beware and be willing to be disturbed by the Spirit and to change the world. This is the acceptable time. Today is the day of salvation.



Quotes on Hope Shared by Fr. Anthony Gittins

Optimism is the belief that things are going to get better. Hope is the belief that we can make things better. Optimism is a passive virtue, hope is an active one. It takes no courage to be an optimist, but it does need courage to hope. (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)

Hope is a risk that must be run. (George Bernanos)

And the day came when the risk to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. (Anais Nin)

There can be no hope without fear and there should be no fear without hope. (Baruch Spinoza)

The future belongs to those who give the next generation reasons to hope. (Teilhard de Chardin)

Hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive. If life is to be sustained hope must remain, even where confidence is wounded, trust impaired. (Erik H. Erikson)

Grateful, Stolen Heart

by Sheena George, CSJP

Shortly after Sr. Sheena George took vows at Chapter, she left to accompany Sisters Ann Crawley and Maureen Boggins in ministry in Milot, Haiti. Here she shares a reflection of her time there.

My stay in Haiti is winding down. I have been here for two months, and things are becoming familiar. Each morning, I welcome the sight of women carrying loads on their heads to their stalls in the marketplace and those on the side of the road selling homemade baked goods, bananas, avocados, and boiled eggs. Early morning, schoolchildren gather under streetlights to do their homework. Young schoolgirls in their uniforms with their hair braided and tied with brightly colored ribbons call out to us, "Bonjour, ma soeur!" (Hello, sister). People are setting up for their day of work or just chatting amongst themselves.

I am aware that I will be saying farewell to this routine in just a few days. As I look back over my time in Haiti, I am constantly amazed by the contradictions I have witnessed, extreme poverty amidst great beauty, harsh conditions met with a resilience of a formidable people. Families live in shacks without electricity or running water but still manage to send their children to school every day in clean, pressed uniforms. My strong desire to help these people and their children competes with an overwhelming helplessness I feel to do much good.

I am moved by simple joys, the quick smiles and easy laughter of the Haitian people. They are truly inspirational as they struggle together as families, families with hope, courage, empathy, kindness and faith.

I also leave here with many unanswered questions. How can a people that have suffered so much, who live in abject poverty in the harshest of environments, have such hope and joy? Where do we begin to rebuild? As I faced these difficult questions every day, it became clear to me that our presence here is vital to the well-being of the people of Milot. For the last five years, Sisters Ann and Maureen have made a huge impact here. I am so blessed and grateful for the opportunity to have joined them as they ministered to the people.

If you were to ask me about some of the challenges I experienced, I would tell you that the biggest one was learning about myself and how I adapted to this unique and rather confined environment. There were occasions when it was a struggle to enjoy time alone. Some days I just felt "down and out," my energy sapped by the heat. Dealing with such poverty, both worldly and of the soul,



often created a feeling of insignificance, that I could only offer a drop of help in a sea of human misery and that this drop would make little difference.

There are things I learned here that will stay with me long after I am gone. I once asked my computer students what they thought Haiti was most in need of. One of them said education and motivation. When I asked him to elaborate, he said that when you are worried about where your next meal will come from, or where you will sleep, or how you will get clean water to drink, going to school takes a back seat. Parents want their children to be educated and to go to school, but often they cannot do anything about it. If they do have the means to attend school, many do not have any shoes and cannot buy proper school materials such as books, pencils or paper. It's eye-opening to realize that the future of Haiti depends on these children. And they have stolen my heart with their innocent smiles and laughter.

Leaving here, I continue to trust in God's abounding mercy as I present God with my desire to commit myself to Jesus' example of radical hospitality and our wish to be in active solidarity with our Haitian brothers and sisters.

Leadership Team Message, continued from page 3

Our Chapter Call is mentioned throughout this issue, particularly the call to Jesus' way of radical hospitality. Sr Anita exemplified that way of radical hospitality by her life, her ministry and her commitment to the poor. She was a role model for me, and many, on how Jesus' way of radical hospitality can be lived. Anita never talked about radical hospitality or used those words to describe herself, but radical hospitality was the essence of her being. Truly her passion for being with those who are poor and forgotten by society called her to share her gifts of hospitality, friendship and outreach. Anita lived in a peaceful oneness with God, and her peace-filled dying was just a continuation of how she lived.

The words in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, chapter 3: 17-19 keep coming back to me . . . 'may your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love. May you have the power to understand how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it.' As we strive to go deeper and wider in responding to the challenge of peace, I have changed the word 'love' to 'peace', so it would read: 'may your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous peace. May you have the power to understand how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's peace really is. May you experience the peace of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it.'

Anita's roots went down very deep and I believe she understood fully how wide and how long, how high and how deep God's love really is. She now enjoys that love and that peace in the fullness of time.

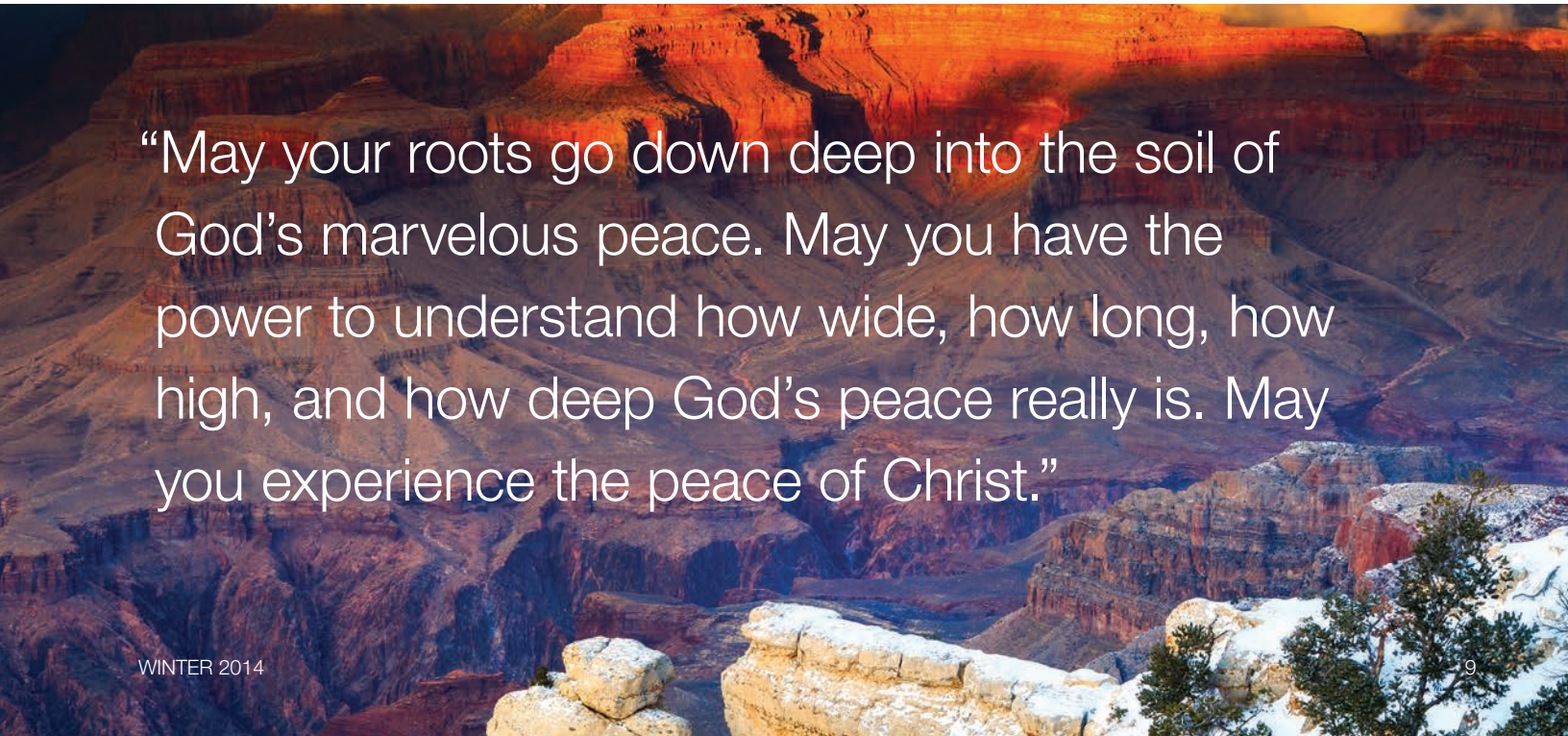
Our Table is Groaning, continued from page 3

In addition to the Congregation Leader, Sr. Margaret Byrne, two presenters, Fr. Anthony Gittins, CSSp and Sr. Gail Worcelo, SGM were invited to provide input and inspiration to the Chapter body. It would be impossible to do each of their day-long presentations justice; however, we tried to highlight areas in each of their presentations that might be practical and of interest to you.

We are pleased, with this issue, to introduce a new column, "Frank Talk on peace through justice" by our Justice and Peace Facilitator, Frank McCann. Frank will be both advising on what kind of peace and justice work the Congregation is doing and suggesting practical ways you might become involved with issues of interest.

Terry Moran helps us parse out "nunspeak" and writes about what a charism is and what the CSJP charism of peace through justice means in practice. And finally, I brought a dish myself, which is a reflection on my own history with the Congregation and how the Sisters have influenced me.

I invite you to sample something from our table. May you leave with your spirit filled with hope, your heart full of desire and your passion inflamed. May you remain hungry enough, so that you are emboldened and moved to action by your imagination and longings.



“May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous peace. May you have the power to understand how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's peace really is. May you experience the peace of Christ.”

Ignited on the Edge

with Sr Gail Worcelo, SGM

Gail Worcelo

Sr. Gail Worcelo is cofounder, with the late Thomas Berry, of Green Mountain Monastery located in Greensboro, Vermont, USA, a community dedicated to the healing and protection of Earth and its life systems. Their mission is expressed as "At the Heart of the Universe – In the Heart of God – Ever Evolving Toward the Fullness of Love." Thomas Berry was a mentor and guide to Sr. Gail for nearly 20 years.

She is a retreat leader, teacher and lecturer with degrees in Clinical Psychology and Christian Spirituality. She is also a writer and liturgical dancer and has served on the Leadership Team of her community and as Novice Director.

Sr. Gail writes, "I am passionate about giving myself fully to the fire of Christ's love and his energy to transform the world, and connecting with others whose deep desire is the same." She is committed to women religious and the re-founding of religious life within the context of the Universe story.

Illustrated with brightly colored and imaginative graphics, and delivered with boundless energy, Gail Worcelo, SGM invited us to think about how to live as unity, individually and collectively, and what it means to truly live out of a Christ—or unitive—consciousness. She suggested that in order to experience this unitive consciousness and to move it forward we need to be living on the edge.

Conjuring the image of Indra's net, Gail reminded us of how truly interconnected we are. "Every thought you are having, every action and every movement is affecting

each of us and each of us is affecting the whole. You become aware of the responsibility you have for affecting the space we're in today."

We can raise our consciousness and the energy around us by being aware of how we are thinking and acting. That kind of consciousness-raising can reap deep and far-reaching change. Gail challenged each of us to take responsibility for how we "show-up" because we are all in Indra's net together.

Gail described what she called six moments of grace in the evolution of consciousness in the history of religious life. Each moment of grace folded in a unique gift which is still alive today through an evolutionary process in which each stage is able to "transcend and include" what came before. From the earliest days, believers, such as the desert mothers and fathers, tried to be one with the heart or consciousness of Christ. They left society not to escape but to seek to become divinized.

The second moment of grace, represented by St. Benedict, was the belief that transformation occurred through community, practicing hospitality, liturgy and civility. When we come together as community we become more divinized. For the mendicant orders in the third moment of grace, the path to Christ consciousness was in kenosis or self-emptying in order to be filled with the divine. There was a pouring out of self in the search for truth.

In the fourth moment of grace, Ignatius modeled the intellectual era, developing discernment and bringing head and heart together in order to make a contribution to the whole. While in the fifth moment of grace,



activist religious orders of the 18th and 19th centuries found divinization in breaking the constraints of the cloisters and finding Christ in the streets among the poor.

The sixth moment of grace occurs through a unitive consciousness with all persons and Creation. Teilhard de Chardin, the philosopher and priest, and Thomas Berry, the eco-theologian and priest, saw this as a consciousness of the whole. The beauty and mystery of all these stages of grace is that what came before is not cast aside, but carried forward in the evolutionary journey just as the present moment links to the future moment.

Gail used the beautiful image of leaning back into the heart of Christ as we go deeper and wider and try to lift our consciousness. She suggested four ways that we could lean back in order to move forward, both individually and collectively:

1. Meditation practice – Meditation done on a regular daily basis has been shown to change neurological pathways and even to help physical health.
2. Spontaneous plunge – An experience that catapults you into the unitive field where you experience unwavering knowing. This deep, spontaneous experience cannot be orchestrated.
3. Be in the presence of someone who lives out of a higher consciousness than yourself and manifests that which you wish to be, so they can pull you forward.
4. Through the collective – This means sharing at the heart to heart level with others, one on one and in groups.

Gail asked us to consider this: Our universe is dynamic and still unfolding. Evolution is happening whether you care to consciously participate or not, so why not choose to actively be a positive part of it?



“Every thought you are having, every action and every movement is affecting each of us and each of us is affecting the whole.”

PEACE THROUGH JUSTICE

Our Gift

by Terrence J. Moran, CSJP-A

One of my friends jokes about “nunspeak.” Religious life, like most organizations, has a special vocabulary that is clear to those in the know and perplexing to the outsider. One of those words is charism. Before the changes in religious life after the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) most religious communities would have seen their identity tied up with their “Rule” – a book that detailed lifestyle, dress, spiritual practices and community customs. The Second Vatican Council invited religious orders to identify themselves by their “charism” – a biblical term derived from the Greek word for gift. It’s a beautiful way to look at identity – what kind of gift do we want to be in the world? What does the group have to give?

Every issue of *Living Peace* bears the tag line “Pursuing justice, we seek God’s gift of peace.” Peace through justice – this is the gift that the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Peace and their Associates want to be in the world.

When you hear the word “peace,” what comes to mind? – perhaps being at the beach with a cool drink and a good book on a perfect summer day; being suffused with a sense of personal well-being; the resolution of all problems and conflicts in your life. The biblical expression for peace, *shalom*, means far more than that. It is not primarily a psychological term. When the Bible speaks of *shalom* it means a state of justice: right relationship in every aspect of a person’s life; with oneself, with others, with God and with all of creation. *Shalom* embraces all of life.

The Hebrew Bible in many places links the word *shalom* with the word *mispit* – justice. “Peace is the work of justice,” proclaims the prophet Isaiah (32:17). How faithful to the biblical vision is the charism of Mother Francis Clare Cusack, founder of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Peace. Her intuitive linking of peace with justice was to open for her a life in the prophetic tradition. She burned with the prophet’s fire. She was broken by the prophetic pathos. She paid the prophet’s price.

The biblical tradition and the life of Mother Francis Clare show us that *shalom* does not imply so much the absence of conflict but rather relationships of integrity. A person committed to a life of *shalom* does not always enjoy peace in the commonly understood meaning of the word. *Shalom* is a relational word and often the one who demands integrity in relationship suffers from the unwillingness of others to live the values of mutuality and equality. This is certainly true of Mother Francis Clare. She reflects on her own experience: “No doubt if I had less used the gifts which God has given me, and had kept silent when I saw oppression, and had not spoken out when I saw the sufferings of the poor, and had observed a respectable mediocrity in well-doing, I should now have applause where I receive condemnation; I should now have good will where I found only opposition,” (*The Nun of Kenmare*, 387). She insisted on calling others to right relationship. She persisted in seeing, speaking, acting, even when her message was unpopular and silence would have brought her approval. Right relationship means that the rich acknowledge the poor as persons, that men allow the flourishing of women’s gifts, that the church face rather than deny grave evils within it. Ironically it is precisely because Mother Clare was a woman of *shalom* that she enjoyed so little of what the world accounts peace. She lived the truth of her own words, “We should never abstain from performing any good work in order to maintain a false peace,” (*The Life and Revelations of St. Gertrude*, 28).

“Peace through justice” sounds like a very active and exacting agenda. But *shalom* demands we live in right relationship with ourselves – realistically acknowledging our gifts and our limitations, our need to contribute but also our need for nurture and



self-care. Thomas Merton has written that the most pervasive form of contemporary violence is overwork: "To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful." Are you one of the 40% of Americans who leave paid vacation days unused? Leisure, balance, recreation, wasting time are all essential elements of a life of shalom. As the early 20th century activist Emma Goldman said, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution!"

A life of peace through justice requires us to transform our relationships with other people by reclaiming the biblical tradition of hospitality. The Bible sees in the coming of the stranger a special visitation of the Divine. How would our day be different if we saw our coworkers as "gift" rather than as "interruption?" How would our political life be different if we saw new immigrants as "divine visitation" rather than "social problem?" How would our personal priorities be transformed if we dedicated our quality time not just to work projects but to sitting with an elderly relative with Alzheimer's?

A life of shalom requires us to commit ourselves to right relationships not just with other people but with the whole Earth community to which we belong. Although Mother Francis Clare lived before the development of the contemporary ecological consciousness, she did have a deep sensitivity to the beauty of Earth and the delicacy of creation. She was deeply moved by the plight of the rural farming



population of Ireland. Her experience of famine taught her that thoughtless human intervention into the processes of nature can cause misery for hundreds of thousands of people. She recognized that the potato famine was not "an act of God" but the result of the unjust political and economic policies of the British government toward Ireland. Faithful to this heritage, CSJP Sisters and Associates joined 400,000 others for the People's Climate March in New York City on September 21, 2014. There will be no peace for earth's inhabitants if there is no peace for earth itself. Many people of faith are accustomed to spending some time at night reviewing the actions and events of the day – was I loving and generous today, open to love of God and others? How was I in conscious relationship to Earth today? How reverent and just was I in my use of land, air, water, animal and plant life?

Mother Francis Clare lived in a time of deep religious searching and bitter religious controversy. Her whole life was a quest for right relationship with God and this quest often brought her into conflict with religious institutions and authorities.

continued on page 19

"How would our day be different if we saw our coworkers as 'gift' rather than as 'interruption?' How would our political life be different if we saw new immigrants as 'divine visitation' rather than 'social problem'?"

Shaped by Rivers

by Jan Linley

Roughly 20 years ago, I responded to an ad in *The Washington Post* for “a part time administrative assistant for a small international agency.” The woman at the employment agency told me that it wasn’t exactly an international agency, but a small international order of Catholic nuns. My immediate response? “I’m not Catholic.” She assured me it didn’t matter. “They aren’t like what you’re thinking.” I had never met a nun. And she was right, what I held in my head was the stereotype of austere women in habits; purveyors of guilt and adjudicators of sin, tormentors of Catholic school children.

I agreed to go on the interview and arrived 15 minutes late having opted for a cab over the Metro. My stereotype of nuns didn’t include tolerance for tardiness. I tried to compose myself before ringing the doorbell of their house on Newton Street. Like many of the streets in the Catholic University-Brookland neighborhood of Washington, DC, Newton Street is remarkable for its suburban look and feel, though only a few miles from the U.S. Capitol. Still, I had been expecting a more institutional building, not a house that, but for the missing bicycles in the yard, looked like home to a chaotic family full of kids.

Sr. Suzanne Golas, then the Congregation Leader, opened the door. “Hi. I’m Suzanne. Come on in. We thought you had changed your mind.”

This was a nun? She was wearing a floral print skirt with a solid colored short-sleeved blouse and a pair of sandals, looking more like someone’s aunt than a nun. I apologized for being late and blamed the cab driver for getting lost.

She gave a sympathetic nod and said, “I told you to take the Metro. It’s just two blocks away.”

We had only just met and already I felt myself wanting her forgiveness. Suzanne showed me to the living room where I was introduced to Sr. Margaret Healy, the Assistant Congregation Leader. Margaret, a tall, slender Irish woman with a gentle smile on her lips and in her eyes, was dressed similarly to Suzanne and immediately put me at ease. Was this going to be a good nun, bad nun interview?



The three of us talked for over an hour. Margaret showed me the offices in the basement, where I demonstrated that yes, I was familiar with the software on the computer. They asked me for a two and half year commitment that day through the end of their leadership term. As with most experiences in my life requiring commitment, I was tentative. While I gave them my verbal commitment, I assured myself that really, I could leave any time.

Fast forward 20 years and here I am editing *Living Peace* and very committed to these remarkable women who have been living on the edge and serving the world since they took their vows. Each year in those 20, the myths about women religious (aka nuns) have been shattered a bit more. When we planned this issue one of the editorial board members suggested we find someone to write about a transformational experience that occurred as a result of her relationship with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace (CSJPs). I offered myself for this task, not because I want to sing their praises (oh, but I do) but because they profoundly affected my life in a way that might illustrate our theme of deeper and wider.

When I think about going deeper, different images spring to mind, for example, diving off a cliff into the ocean, plummeting downward and deep into the water in a rush of gravity and fluid motion. And then there is the depth and breadth of a canyon formed gradually over time by a wending river. Both images could apply to my experience with the CSJPs.

When I began employment with them, I was not exactly hurled, but certainly quickly immersed, into a counter culture completely foreign to me. I was a lapsed Episcopalian, and at the time, considered myself agnostic bordering on atheistic and not seeking to be otherwise. My new job required learning a new lexicon and while initially my inclination was to joke around with my friends about all of it, I quickly became humbled and awed as witness to women who were walking their talk.

They were living their charism of peace through justice with a fidelity to Jesus and the church while also reading the signs of the times so they could minister where they were most needed, all the while with an eye towards what might be needed in the future. Their efforts to serve a wounded world were, and are, far-reaching—from care of creation to nonviolence, serving the poor and marginalized, especially women and children. They are constantly evolving, incorporating the scientific data about our universe into their understanding of spirituality. Their

vitality and commitment to mission and ministry continue to inspire many of us every day.

I left my job with the Congregation after two and a half years, staying infrequently in touch, only to return to full time employment eight years later. Would I say I'm converted? Well, yes and no. I'm still not Catholic. I'm still not a practicing Episcopalian, nor could I claim to be a practicing Christian, except maybe in accepting Jesus as a good model just as I think the Buddha is a good model. But I like to think I've learned and grown—and continue to learn and grow—by witnessing and interacting with the CSJPs. I have a regular meditation practice that I believe connects me to God or Source. (I'm still looking for the word that's comfortable for me.) Whereas once upon a time I worshipped at the altar of randomness, now I believe all of life is connected, that truly we are one, something I ponder a lot these days. I'm more like the evolving canyon than the cliff diver, allowing myself to be shaped by the rivers that flow through me, deepening at a slow, nearly imperceptible pace.

“Their (CSJPs) efforts to serve a wounded world were, and are, far-reaching—from care of creation to nonviolence, serving the poor and marginalized, especially women and children.”

FrankSpeak on justice and peace

By Frank McCann, CSJP-A, Congregation Justice and Peace Facilitator

Which are we to have, the real Christianity taught by Christ himself, with all its sacrifices, or modern Christianity, which makes the way of life easy for the rich and cruelly hard for the poor? – Mother Clare in *Anti-Poverty and Progress*, 1887



The Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace Constitutions and Chapter Acts provide evolving community wisdom about expressing the charism of seeking peace through justice and care for the environment. The work of a congregation's justice and peace facilitator is to help the congregation, from its own traditions, raise its prophetic voice and to participate in prophetic action. Educating about issues, organizing responses, unearthing underlying issues, supporting Sisters and Associates in their ministries, all account for part of the responsibilities. Being as spread out as our Congregation is, communicating what goes on in each region is also very important.

In this column, I plan to bring particular issues to light that are being addressed by Sisters and Associates, and to communicate how we are working to establish peace and care for Mother Earth. I invite you to participate with us in any way that moves you.

Throughout the U.S. and U.K. we see a growing disparity in wealth between those who have and those who have nothing, as well as the slow erosion of the middle class. Recent American elections show how the exorbitant accumulation of wealth can be used to sway voters, and buy influence with elected officials.

Current prospects show that inequality could appear to be getting even worse in the near future. The recent American elections empowered those favorable to the business elite to join with an already too corporation-friendly Supreme Court to allow the powers of multi-nationals to expand nearly without limit. Due to the influence of the U.S. in markets around the world, the consequences of actions in the U.S. will not be limited to these shores. Already, in the UK, the five wealthiest families have more wealth than the lowest 20% of the population.

Pope Francis addresses inequality as a global issue:

Peace in society cannot be understood as pacification or the mere absence of violence resulting from the domination of one part of society over others. Nor does true peace act as a pretext for justifying a social structure which silences or appeases the poor, so that the more affluent can placidly support their lifestyle while others have to make do as they can. Demands involving the distribution of wealth, concern for the poor and human rights cannot be suppressed under the guise of creating a consensus on paper or a transient peace for a contented minority. The dignity of the human

person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges. When these values are threatened, a prophetic voice must be raised.

Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel: Evangelii Gaudium (#218)

We cannot be satisfied with continued, much less expanded inequality. Perhaps that is what is behind the Spirit's disturbing Call at the Chapter to practice Jesus' radical hospitality. If we are to seek peace, and address inequality we must be in solidarity with those who suffer from unjust distribution of wealth. We must know their stories.

Because we live in first world nations, we are challenged to follow the example of Mother Clare and speak and act prophetically with leaders of these businesses that drive inequality. Our message has several layers; not only is inequality a matter of injustice and an impediment to peace, but restoring some measure of equality is in the best interest of the businesses. Such is the meaning of common good. Achieving the common good creates what is best for all, not just one part of the community or nation.

The Chapter theme "Deeper and Wider" also suggests something of the nature of the work of Peace and Justice facilitation.

It's not enough to identify injustice. We need to *go deeper* and look at the causes. Good analysis of justice issues is rarely done in corporate-owned media. The truth is accessible, but must be sought; often it is hiding under press releases and public relations statements. Frequently, finding the roots of injustice means following the money, asking who has the power in a given situation.

Going wider is necessary to affect change. Many who have gone before us have discovered that change is not going to occur simply by revealing an injustice and saying, "Pretty please." No one gives up power without a struggle. Part of facilitation is organizing for change. Organized people with a shared cause can successfully compete with the power of organized money.

As we as a Congregation live into and out of the Chapter Call, may the radical hospitality lived by Jesus take root in our lives and witness. It is also my hope that we will engage some of you to join us in living out that call.



The Darkling Thrush

By Thomas Hardy

I leant upon a coppice gate
 When Frost was spectre-grey,
 And Winter's dregs made desolate
 The weakening eye of day.
 The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
 Like strings of broken lyres,
 And all mankind that haunted nigh
 Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
 The Century's corpse outleant,
 His crypt the cloudy canopy,
 The wind his death-lament.
 The ancient pulse of germ and birth
 Was shrunken hard and dry,
 And every spirit upon earth
 Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
 The bleak twigs overhead
 In a full-hearted evensong
 Of joy illimited;
 An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
 In blast-beruffled plume,
 Had chosen thus to fling his soul
 Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
 Of such ecstatic sound
 Was written on terrestrial things
 Afar or nigh around,
 That I could think there trembled through
 His happy good-night air
 Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
 And I was unaware.



Sleeping Windows

By Linda Millemann

In the sleeping windows lie
the battered
dream drenched souls
curled into their tight repose
before their rise into
the winter's cold.

So many set to battle,
so few with open arms go forth.
The world can lack a welcome,
and loneliness lurks,
offering its harsh love to you,

while just a breath away
the sun rises to spread bright shelter
from the dark,
and skies awake to blue.
The maple trees hold stubbornly
to their red brilliance
even against the snow,

and the whisper of hope
rides with you on the bus,
stands before you on the corner,
rings with the bell as the door opens.

It is possible to choose love.
Over and over again
despite its bruising.
Over and over
if only for yourself
or even for the world
or just for the stranger
coming through the door.

Blue Sky Morning

By Linda Millemann

The sky is blue this morning,
completely blue.

The half moon lingers
like a prop left on an empty stage.
One jet makes its way
across the dome of sky,
rippling a long white tail behind.

Morning has floated her magic cloak across us
and would have us believe in only this –
this bright blue world.

But I slept out last night
and stared and stared
until my eyes no longer could
and know that above her bold blue trick of day,
and all around
and as far as far can be,
lies the deepest black universe
in which we float
like a wish,
like a fragile glass ball in the sea,
improbable vessel.

Day's bright amnesia
invites us to believe in only this –
the road to work,
the floor we sweep,
our search for love –
invites us to forget
our one small piece in this immensity,

until night returns
and we know ourselves again
to live among the stars.

Poetry by Linda Millemann from her book *Along the Way: New and Selected Poems*, which can be purchased from The Tattered Cover Book Store, Phone: 800-833-9327 or directly from Linda. Email her at lmillemann@earthlink.net

.....
Our Gift, continued from page 13

Like many contemporary seekers, Mother Clare learned to trust her own experience of God:

- A God who seeks human collaboration; as she remarked, “I was obliged to use all reasonable means of success” and not simply rely passively on providence.
- A God who is met as a companion on the journey. She looked to religion for security and she found a Pilgrim God who again and again set her on the road.
- A God who rejoices in the full flowering of the human person; especially a God who rejoices in the full flowering of women and who can be imaged as a woman. Reflecting on the prophet Isaiah, she writes, “Even the inspired author tells of this mother comfort as the best earthly image of the eternal love of God,” (*Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, p.9).

Does this dream of a life of peace through justice resonate with you? Take some time to light a candle and brew yourself a cup of Irish tea. Invite Mother Francis Clare to join you. She looks at you (as she was once described by a journalist) “full of life and vivacity, fun sparkling in her eyes.” Let her tell you of the ways of the Spirit. Let her spark in you the fire of justice. Let her walk with you the ways of peace. Invite her to help you discover the gift you are called to be for the world. You may want to pray in these words drawn from the Constitutions of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Peace:

*God of Justice and Peace, your prophet and friend,
Mother Francis Clare Cusack,
was moved by a special love of the poor
and had a particular concern for justice for women.
The weight of suffering and oppression, borne by so
many people today,
cries out to us for action.
Strengthen us to respond by a firm commitment to
work for peace through justice
in solidarity with our brothers and sisters and the
whole community of Earth.
Amen.*



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

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 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 or by
mail in the US using the return envelope.

subscriptions/feedback

We invite you to subscribe to *Living Peace*
at no cost. Please send feedback to
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



Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
Congregation Office
399 Hudson Terrace
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632

History and Roots Reclaiming Peace

When Margaret Anna Cusack, Mother Clare, founded the community in 1884, we were called St. Joseph's Sisters of Peace of the Immaculate Conception. Peace was the central concept in that string of names, as our 1884 Rule and Constitutions made clear: "The object of this Institute is, as its name implies, to promote the peace of the Church both by word and work. The very name Sisters of Peace will, it is hoped, even of itself, inspire the desire of peace and a love for it."

After Mother Clare, under attack by American bishops for her defense of a socialist priest, left the community so that it could continue to live, the little community of the Sisters of Peace, under Mother Evangelista's guidance, established schools and hospitals and focused on being kind to "God's priests and God's poor." The name "Sisters of Peace" now recalled a difficult past and controversial founder. By 1908 the Council had petitioned Rome to be allowed to change the name to Sisters of St. Joseph of the Holy Family. In 1929, the Vatican fixed the name as the Sisters of St. Joseph of Newark since the Motherhouse was in the Diocese of Newark, New Jersey. For many years thereafter the founding date was given as 1888, the year when Mother Clare left the Congregation. Mother Clare became the skeleton in our Congregational closet, only remembered in whispers and rumors.

When the Second Vatican Council urged religious congregations to examine their ways of living, the relevance of their mission, and the roots of their communities, we responded. The opening steps were taken in 1967-68 when Sr. Catherine O'Connor gave a talk on charism at a Special Chapter meeting, and Sr. Dorothy Vidulich followed up with a pamphlet, "Return to the Spirit," about Margaret Anna Cusack and the original charism of the Sisters of Peace. "Sisters began pulling letters and writings out of dusty boxes," said Dorothy



L to R, Executive Council, 1978, Sisters Anne Maria Doyle, Patricia Lynch, Margaret Byrne, Dorothy Vidulich, Sheila Lemieux, Cecilia King, Rose Marie Nigro

Vidulich, and though some Sisters were distressed, most were excited by rediscovering the community's origins.

The crucial step came during the 1970 General Chapter in England, when Sr. Joan Ward moved "that at this Chapter we reaffirm our title is Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and that we start bringing this title into use before this Chapter ends." Twenty-nine of the 31 Chapter delegates voted for this motion; the delegates also voted to commission a study of Mother Clare (Dorothy Vidulich's *Peace Pays a Price*) and to set out a new vision of community life, *Response in the Spirit*, a first step toward the re-writing of our Constitutions.

"It was a wonderful thing to reclaim our history," said Sr. Louise DuMont, "and to recognize what had gone before, to acknowledge the falsification that had been done to hide Mother Clare."