

imagine
ONE

A PUBLICATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF ST. JOSEPH

FALL/WINTER 2009 | VOL. 1 | NO. 2

Stand Up
Stand For
Stand With

WHEN OUR FAITH PUTS US TO THE TEST

Our mission as Sisters of St. Joseph flows from the purpose for which the congregation exists: We live and work that all people may be united with God and with one another.

We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, living out of our common tradition, witness to God's love transforming us and our world. Recognizing that we are called to incarnate our mission and charism in our world in fidelity to God's call in the Gospel, we commit ourselves to these Generous Promises through 2013.

- ⊕ We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, promise to take the risk to surrender our lives and resources to work for specific systemic change in collaboration with others so that the hungers of the world might be fed.
- ⊕ We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, promise to recognize the reality that Earth is dying, to claim our oneness with Earth and to take steps now to strengthen, heal and renew the face of Earth.
- ⊕ We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, promise to network with others across the world to bring about a shift in the global culture from institutionalized power and privilege to a culture of inclusivity and mutuality.
- ⊕ We, as the Congregation of St. Joseph, promise to be mutually responsible and accountable for leadership in the congregation.

Aw shucks! You're so kind!

The congregation wants to thank all of you who let us know what you thought of the first issue.

The biggest surprise came when Editor Tom Fox of the *National Catholic Reporter (NCR)* wrote about our first issue on his blog: "In the spirit of offering kudos to our U.S. women religious, let me congratulate the Sisters of St. Joseph for launching the inaugural issue of *imagineONE*, an informative and very good looking publication." Thank you, Tom Fox!

Please continue to let us know what you think about this and future issues. We always learn from feedback. ●

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Where is this?

Photo by: Raul Mosely

This image comes from the grounds of one of our founding congregational centers. Do you know which one? See below for answer.

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by Ginny Jones, CSJ

If you guessed Tipton, Indiana, you are right! The statue, "Our Lady of Fatima and Children," depicts two of the children who reported seeing the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima in Portugal on the 13th day of six consecutive months in 1917.

Sister Jeannie Masterson, CSJ

Reflects on...

Standing Up, Standing For, Standing With



Just as this issue of *imagineONE* was going into final production, Pope Benedict XVI issued his latest encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth). Reflecting on the global economic turmoil of our times, the encyclical addresses so much of what this issue of the magazine is all about: economic hard times, the least of our sisters and brothers, Earth and all creation.

It is no coincidence the encyclical and our congregation are on the same wavelength. The conditions and times we live in affect how we need to live the Gospel; how we live our mission of unity and reconciliation; and how we Sisters of St. Joseph and associates live our Consensus Statement:

Stimulated by the Holy Spirit of love and receptive to God's inspirations, the Sister of St. Joseph moves always toward profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction, from whom she does not separate herself.

The definition of *dear neighbor* has taken on greater meaning in today's globalized society. People the world over understand that what any of us (or corporations, or governments) does affects people all around the world. Our neighbors truly are people in Israel and Palestine, Iran and Iraq, Europe, Sudan, India, Guatemala, Japan and everywhere.

"The common good" is becoming an endangered value, which we must reclaim. It is essential that we stand up, stand for and stand with each other for our common good. Just these few points drawn from the new encyclical make that clear:

- We have experienced an explosion of worldwide interdependence.
- Justice must be applied to every phase of economic activity.
- The primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is the human person.
- Food and access to water are universal rights of all human beings.
- We must prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone.
- We must exercise responsible stewardship of the environment.

It is all about our mission of unity and reconciliation — moving closer to become ONE — and standing with the most vulnerable among us. In this issue you will read about our work with the United Nations, with sustaining Earth, with reducing violence, and our work with and for people in need. We invite you to continue to stand with us.

Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeannie Masterson, CSJ". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and personal.

Sister Jeannie Masterson, CSJ
Congregation of St. Joseph Leadership Team

Three sisters talk candidly *about embracing final vows*

by Ann Hultgren

One would think that the reason a sister decides to take her final vows is a very personal, private matter. Yet, when asked about finalizing their calling to become sisters of the Congregation of St. Joseph, Sisters Theresa Pitruzzello, Joan Manuel and Maria Francisca Izawa openly shared from the heart.

Sister Theresa Pitruzzello and Sister Joan Manuel met at a “Come and See” weekend, a diocesan discernment retreat for men and women. There they met Sister Ileana Fernandez from the Medaille Center who was welcoming and had a spirit-filled influence on them. For Sister Maria Francisca Izawa, it was a personal relationship with Sister Maria Theresia Amakasu from Japan that led her to her religious calling. Here are their stories.

Born to Mike and Mary Pitruzzello and raised in Huntsville, Alabama, Sister Theresa is the oldest of three daughters. She attended a Catholic elementary school and a public high school, where she was involved in basketball, played cornet in the band and had a brief run in the drama program. She was an altar server and singer at Good Shepherd Catholic Church before attending Loyola University in New Orleans, where she received a bachelor’s degree in music therapy and a master’s degree in pastoral studies.

Meeting sisters from our congregation and others at Loyola prompted Theresa to research religious communities. It was through prayerful discernment that she felt the gentle energy urging her to pursue her vocation, “However, I told God that I needed to graduate and work for a few years first,” she said.

She found a perfect fit with the Sisters of St. Joseph. Sister Theresa has a strong desire, “to love God, love people and grow to be my best self with sisters who are real, down-to-earth and have a spirituality that resonates with my own.”



Sisters Maria Francisca Izawa, CSJ, and Theresa Pitruzzello, CSJ

Two loving parents raised Hiroko Izawa, their only child, in Kyoto City, Japan. They were Buddhists, yet when their daughter attended a Catholic high school where she learned about Jesus and Christian doctrine, which began her journey to Christianity, they did not object. In fact, they learned all they could, offering their support and trusting in her decision to become a Sister of St. Joseph.

Her work as a music therapist at the Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) in New Orleans offers participants quality in living their lives. She incorporates playing the guitar and, as she puts it, “functional piano” while the participants play the rhythm instruments. She also facilitates recreational activities such as trivia games and sing-a-longs. In addition, she periodically leads a communion service, which is special to her ministry.

“Many people today are seeking God and spirituality, seeking connections with others, and wanting to make a difference,” she observed. Sister Theresa thinks religious life is a wonderful way to be and to do these things.

Sister Theresa professed her final vows on August 8th in Loyola’s Ignatius Chapel. She said they are a ratification of all that has been on her journey and a resounding YES to her future. As she says, “God is good!”

Following high school, Hiroko became a nurse, a career path that influenced her values regarding religious life. “Nursing skills help me to listen to the voice of the *dear neighbor* whether they are in a hospital, nursing home, church or in the convents where our elderly sisters are,” she explained.

Sister Maria Theresia Amakasu, CSJ, was instrumental in leading Hiroko to the Sisters of St. Joseph. “One person pointed out the Sisters of St. Joseph to me. God’s way is often like this. This is the divine mystery,” she said. She entered the novitiate in 2003, convinced the real motivation for her decision didn’t come from her, but from God, and only God. As a novice, she chose the name Sister Maria Francisca.

Though very content with her nursing career, Sister Maria Francisca has a desire to study theology and pastoral care and to continue improving her English. Sister Maria Francisca made her final vows on August 30th in the Wichita Center’s Resurrection Chapel, as this issue of *imagineONE* was being delivered to the post office. “My final vows will be my guidepost now,” she said. “I believe God’s love and blessing has no limitations and my hope is that at the end of my journey, I will continue walking and obeying this guidepost.”

Sister Joan Manuel will be making final vows on October 31st at St. Aloysius Parish in Baton Rouge. To her, they are a profession of belief in the future. "It is a time of affirmation that I am where I am meant to be at this time of my life. I believe you make the commitment every day when your feet hit the floor, or, as in my case, when I pray during those first sips of coffee."

Sister Joan was born in a small rural town in south central Louisiana, the second of John and Jane Huckaby's eight children. Though raised in the Catholic Church, she attended public schools the majority of her life. She was married in 1975, the same year she received an associate's degree in nursing, and divorced ten years later. With an annulled marriage and two sons to raise, Joan dated but was always bothered by an unidentifiable restlessness. "My spiritual director assured me that God would help me and encouraged me to remain open and attentive to the movements of the Spirit," Joan recalled.

Upon meeting Sister Ileana, Joan immediately identified with the Ignatian spirituality and recognized the CSJ charism in her heart. When a profound prayerful experience took hold, she emphatically knew she was to live life in a radically different way than she was at the time. She spoke with her grown sons. Though they were concerned about her accessibility to them, she assured them that she would always be their mom and they would always be able to contact her. Then, they heartily supported her.

During Sister Joan's pre-novitiate year, she completed a one-year residency program of Clinical Pastoral Education and, in her novitiate year, attended Loyola University, New Orleans, where she studied theology. Involvement in pastoral ministries there led her to develop a scripture study/faith sharing program for adults. Later, she received a Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree with a major in theology from Our Lady of the Lake College in Baton Rouge.



Sister Joan Manuel, CSJ

Currently, Sister Joan teaches theology courses in church history and morality/social justice to girls at the Congregation's Saint Joseph Academy of Baton Rouge. She also works on renewing Earth by promoting sound practices of sustainability. "These practices are as grassroots as recycling, but more than that. We need to share the importance of using safe products for the earth, of conserving fossil fuels and preserving our water resources," she emphasized. In working with the Academy administration and other sisters, she is encouraged about raising awareness to help heal Earth.

Looking forward to her final vows, she said, "They have to be a profession that you truly believe in and are committed to the congregation's mission, the charism, the vows. They are also an expression of the love I have for Jesus — my brother, my redeemer, my friend, who has brought me through such difficult times and who has inspired me in my best of times."

We rejoice in the milestone of final vows with Sister Theresa, Sister Joan and Sister Maria Francisca and thank them for sharing their hearts with us. We offer prayers for continued blessings in their lives! ●

ST. JOSEPH WORKER HOUSE TAKES three giant steps forward!

You may remember the story in our last issue on St. Joseph Worker House, a new program sponsored by the Congregation of St. Joseph. Since then, the program has taken three huge strides forward.

First, we are delighted to announce that **Sister Jackie Schmitz, CSJ**, has been named as the new **Program Director**. Sister Jackie has extensive leadership experience, planning, organizational and operational skills, and excellent communication, motivation and community-building experience. She has served in leadership in her founding congregation in LaGrange Park, Ill., and as assistant principal of Nazareth Academy, mission effectiveness coordinator, director of student activities, campus minister, guidance counselor and assistant dean. Her love for music and dance, her skills as a spiritual director, and her ability to “live large” will serve the St. Joseph Worker program and its young adult women well.

Second, we have selected the first class of St. Joseph Workers. These four amazing young women joined Sister Jackie in New Orleans on July 31, 2009, and are now “on duty.” Their volunteer year will end June 30, 2010.

Rebekah Clark graduated from West Virginia University in Morgantown, W.Va., in May 2006 with a bachelor of science degree in nursing. Experienced as a telemetry nurse in a hospital setting, she is also passionate about education and care for those who cannot afford healthcare. She has volunteered as an emergency relief worker with the Red Cross. Born in Minneapolis, she has also lived in Chicago and Hampton, Va. She is also an avid supporter of animals and the environment. Rebekah will be working as a nurse care manager at the Carrollton Medical Center, as well as visiting other healthcare locations for training, orientation and professional experiences.

Becky Kleive graduated from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., in May 2009 with a double major in women’s studies and environmental studies. While in college, Becky also engaged in an off-campus study experience called “The Oregon Extension,” a program teaching intentional community building in a remote, mountainous environment. Her creative leadership at St. Olaf’s included co-directing theater, hosting a radio talk show and educating audiences about the environment. Becky is passionate about education, community



(L-R) Rebekah Clark, Rian Kistner, Sister Jackie Schmitz, CSJ, Becky Kleive, and Traci Salisbury at the St. Joseph Worker House.

Companions in Mission

organizing and direct service work. This summer, she spent some time in Samoa visiting her father, who is in the Peace Corps. Becky will be working with the St. Vincent De Paul Adult Learning Center for Empowerment.

Rian Kistner graduated from the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio, in May 2009 with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering and a minor in music. In recent years, Rian served as a team leader for the Teens Encounter Christ program and music ministry leader in Dayton's Campus Ministry department, as President of Dayton's chapter of the Society of Women Engineers and as an International Living and Learning Community member. As a St. Joseph Worker, she will work with the Community Center of St. Bernard as a community service advocate — a direct contact with community members seeking assistance to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Traci Salisbury graduated from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., in May 2008 with a major in international business and a minor in global studies. Traci has served as a hospitality assistant at a women's shelter with the Mercy Volunteer Corps, a facilitator with Just Faith Ministries for teens, a soup kitchen volunteer and a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity. She will be working with Lowernine, an agency dedicated to teaching home rebuilding to volunteers and community residents; facilitating access to social services; working with youth; and experimenting with models of sustainable economic development in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans.

The third big step is that we located a wonderful house for the St. Joseph Workers. It is located in a diverse neighborhood of New Orleans and is close to the ministries in which the women will be working. There is even a statue of St. Joseph in the front yard with a sign that reads: "St. Joseph, hold us as you hold Jesus." How welcoming that is! ●



Rehabbing a Catholic Worker Peace House in Kalamazoo, Mich., was one of the ministries Amy Swager (left) worked with when she and seven other women volunteered for the congregation's "Companions in Mission" program this summer. Jen and Mike Dewaele (center and right) live in and staff one of two houses in a low income neighborhood that serve as a community center. The center offers a community garden, a playground and afternoon activities for youngsters.

The congregation sponsored another "Companions in Mission" week in the Chicago area for 10 St. Joseph Academy students from Cleveland and one from Indiana. The purpose is to invite young women to experience ministry and prayer with the sisters and with local nonprofit agencies. ●

New ministry stands with immigrants in times of need

A lack of the basic necessities and freedoms of life can cause personal disintegration, suffering and division in families and neighborhoods. That is the premise upon which the newest sponsored ministry of the Congregation of St. Joseph is founded.

Taller de José ("Joseph's Workshop" in Spanish) is a resource center in Chicago for persons seeking assistance with problematic situations in their lives. The ministry helps people with the human sufferings caused by, but not limited to, hunger, domestic abuse, addictions, homelessness, sickness, immigration issues and violence.



*Taller de José Director
Sister Kathy Brazda, CSJ*

Kathy became aware that immigrants and their families in the Little Village Area of Chicago did not know how to access services. The program opened last year and does not duplicate existing services but, rather, connects people to agencies and groups that they may not be aware of.

"Since September, Taller de José has listened to me and has accompanied me to many places to help with the needs of my new daughter and me. They are more than an organization to me; they are friends who I can count on," said a client.

The ministry has been very creative in securing the resources needed. They painted, repaired, and renovated an unused former convent at Our Lady of Tepeyac parish and rounded up used furniture and supplies donated for the offices and waiting room. The staff includes a social work intern from Dominican University;

Sister Kathy Brazda, CSJ, director, says, "Taller de José provides a safe environment for women, men and children to come to tell their story and to connect with a person or agency who can help them." A staff member or trained volunteer walks with (or accompanies) the client until the client no longer needs this life-navigating partner.

Chicago is a city rich with many agencies and groups to help persons in need. Sister



Associate Director Lisa Monnot accompanies a client and her daughter to take care of business at the Office of Vital Statistics in downtown Chicago.

a volunteer from Amate House, a young adult volunteer program of the Archdiocese of Chicago; a BVM sister; a Sister of Providence; and a CSJ sister who also volunteers. Next year, students from three other universities will be joining the staff, and Lisa Monnot, above, is our new associate director.

Taller de José is one of thirty-five sponsored ministries of the Congregation of St. Joseph in seven states who stand with *dear neighbors* in their needs and in their good times — neighbors who are teenagers and adults; infants and elderly; immigrants and victims; and people who are unhealthy, poor, rich, or those who seek deeper spiritual meaning. ●

Caregiver Companions • assist families

Volunteers, employees and sisters in our sponsored ministries have a long history of standing with our *dear neighbors* in need. A great example of this is the Caregiver Companion program in Indiana, dedicated to improving the quality of life for caregivers of sick, frail and disabled loved ones.

Sister Veronica Baumgartner, CSJ, founded the ministry fifteen years ago as a response to a growing need for support for caregivers. She found that most people in poor health want to stay in their homes as long as possible, and unless there is adequate help for the people who care for spouses, parents and other family members, this time at home is greatly reduced.

Caregiver Companion matches volunteers with caregivers and provides services ranging from respite care to grocery shopping, light housekeeping, transportation, laundry, errands and simple repairs. This service is even more valuable in today's economy because people on small fixed incomes could not afford to pay for professional caregivers.

"I joined Caregiver Companion because I saw the need to help elderly people live on their own," said one of the volunteers. "I watched my own mother struggle to do the everyday tasks that once were no problem for a woman who raised 10 children.

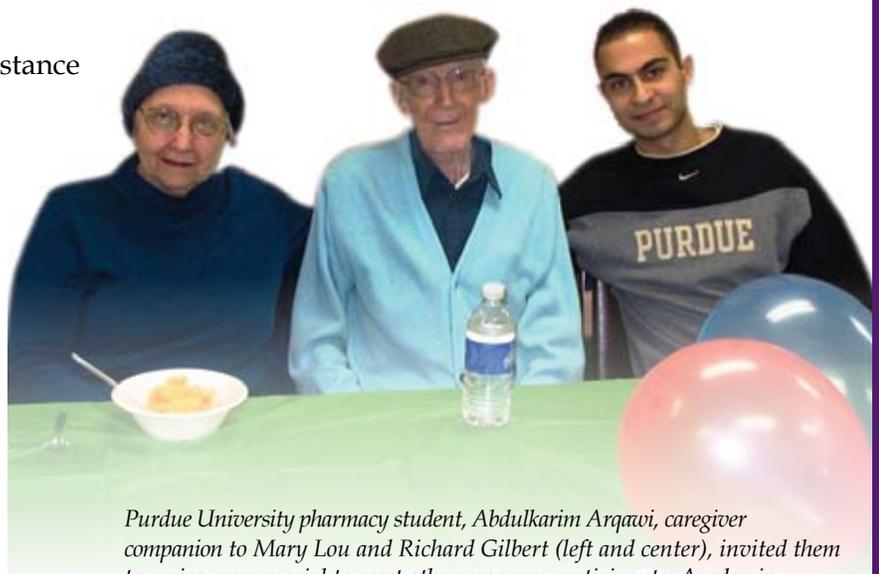
"Families often are too busy with jobs or live a distance away, leaving elder relatives without someone to converse with them," she added. "Listening is sometimes the greatest contribution that anyone can give. Besides, I have learned something new from every person I have helped through Caregiver Companion and it has taught me never to take life for granted."

Although most of the volunteers come from the community at large, an innovative collaboration with Purdue University provides an added dimension. Pharmacy and medical students become caregiver companions for a semester as a complement to their academic program. The personal and relaxed interaction with seniors in

their own homes each week has produced enriching experiences for these young students, as they prepare for their future careers.

"I will never again just see an old person across the counter; now I will see an individual," said one of the pharmacy students. "I hope that next year's students can perceive her bit of wisdom, as she had quite an impact on my budding medical career," said one of the medical students about the elderly person he cared for.

This small ministry has had a huge impact on hundreds of persons. Helen Klemme and Marilyn McTague, in Lafayette, Ind., currently coordinate 98 volunteers serving 108 neighbors. Jamie Vonderahe, in Tipton, coordinates 34 volunteers serving 32 neighbors, with plans to expand to a nearby town. ●



Purdue University pharmacy student, Abdulkarim Arqawi, caregiver companion to Mary Lou and Richard Gilbert (left and center), invited them to an ice cream social to meet other program participants. Academic requirements for students to do community service introduce them to the human dimension of their future work.



RETURN TO *Africa*

Sister Jacqueline Goodin, CSJ, (left) said this elder of a Masai family grouping couldn't have been more gracious. The Masai are a nomadic people.

In January 2009, Sister Jacqueline Goodin, CSJ, embarked on a physical and spiritual journey to Songea, Tanzania, a small rural town in southwest Tanzania, an East African country. She went at the invitation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry, France, who sponsor two missions there, to discern whether she could be of service in ministry. Since returning in February, Sister Jackie has spent the last several months searching her heart to determine whether she would return.

With the guidance and support of other sisters and associates in the CSJ community, her friends and family — and certainly the Holy Spirit — Sister Jackie has decided to return to Tanzania at the end of this year. Because Tanzanian youngsters, especially girls, have few opportunities for secondary education, the Chambéry sisters established St. Joseph Hostel, a residence for teenagers. This ministry provides a safe and caring environment that allows the teens to complete their high school education in the town. She will work alongside other Sisters of St. Joseph from India and Brazil at the hostel, caring for the girls' day-to-day needs.

“While I have been very happy in my past ministry of social work and counseling, the January trip opened my eyes to how few resources there are for the educational and social development of young women,” Sister Jackie noted. “I am pleased and excited to return to Tanzania to join with other CSJs in this cross-cultural, cross-congregational mission of helping young women become the hope for their developing country. I plan on packing the Gospel of Jesus, the Generous Promises, and the support of the congregation in my suitcase, since surely I will need it all for this most challenging journey ahead.” ●

CSJ ASSOCIATES' MEMBERSHIP *grows*

Associates of the Congregation of St. Joseph are lay men and women who share in the mission and charism of the Sisters. While associates usually relate most closely with the founding congregation nearest their homes, the entire congregation is enriched by the relationships and friendships of all our associates.

By the end of 2009, more than thirty people will become new CSJ Associates.

Cleveland welcomed thirteen new associates on August 6: Kathy Byrda, Carol Creek, Patrick Creek, Nancy Dale, Helena Hoogstraten, Meagen Howe, Gerry Jones, Maryanne Kersey, Ann O'Connor, Sheila Rock, Julie Rugh, Rosemary Welsh and Stephanie West.

LaGrange Park will celebrate five new associates in October: Anne Blazjak, Edie Emmenegger, Erin Makowski, Grace Skalski and Jeanette Barczak.

In **Minnesota**, which is part of our **Medaille** founding community, four new associates have joined us: Diana Bourque, Joyce Johnson, Mary Nomandin and Gaye Wick.

Nazareth will have four new associates by the end of 2009: Jan Denby, Theresa Filan, Terry Blundell, and Anita Rosenberg.

In **Wichita**, twelve people responded to a call to share in the CSJ mission of unity as associates: Pat Andra, Ann Buckendahl, Shelly Chaffin, Bill Gress, Ann Jambor, Tina Landess, Julia Layman, Stacy Leiker, LaVerne Marts, Gwendolyn Stepanski, Steve Vassey and Kristin Walker.

For information on how to become an associate of the Congregation of St. Joseph, visit our website at www.csjoseph.org and click on "How To Join Us." ●

Bid bon voyage!

to Sister Carol Crepeau, CSJ;
named to the International
Centre team



Sister Carol Crepeau, CSJ

Sister Carol Crepeau, CSJ, will be leaving on a jet plane soon to begin a three-year appointment in September to the team that guides our International Center in LePuy, France. A joint venture of all

congregations of St. Joseph who trace their origins to LePuy in 1650, the Centre provides opportunities for members, associates and friends to visit the sacred places of the congregations' heritage and study and deepen their awareness of our history, tradition and spirituality. Through programs, the staff will assist visitors in deepening their understandings of our mission and charism. The programs will do this in an international setting and with a global focus.

Formerly, Sister Carol was the president of the founding congregation of LaGrange Park, served as president of Nazareth Academy, and, most recently, was a consultant/facilitator for religious communities of women and men and other not-for-profit groups. ●

CSSJ representative to the United Nations works on behalf of the world's poor

One voice, when united with others and fueled by Gospel compassion, can change the world. The focus of non-governmental representation in the United Nations is to collaborate on sustainable systemic change in policies that affect the world's poor.



Sister Carol Zinn, SSJ

Sister Carol Zinn, SSJ, from Philadelphia, serves as the NGO (non-governmental organization) representative to the United Nations for

Congregations of St. Joseph around the world numbering 15,000 sisters and thousands of associates serving in 57 countries. The sisters are accredited members in order to help improve conditions for the *dear neighbor* around the world, focusing on human rights, poverty, education, health, women, children and the environment.

The sisters are asked for input on a variety of issues affecting economic and social policies. This role is a logical extension of the sisters' ministries. With a strong history of offering direct services (education, health care), the realization that these services demanded systemic change compelled Catholic religious to engage in activities that could bring about significant and sustainable changes.

In her role as NGO Representative for Sisters of St. Joseph, Sister Carol keeps sisters and associates informed on international concerns and activities. Additionally, Sister Carol

talks with sisters around the world to gather information about what is actually taking place in villages, towns and cities where the sisters have a presence. She provides reports to various United Nations departments based upon her findings.

When asked about the effectiveness of participation in the United Nations, Sister Carol enthusiastically and humbly shares what the international community says about Catholic religious in NGO positions at the United Nations:

- Women religious serve all over the world.
- They serve in very demanding places and in difficult circumstances.
- When the going gets tough, the sisters don't leave the difficult situations.
- They do much with very limited resources.
- Whenever sisters "come to the table" the issues are not about the sisters; the focus is on those they serve, not on themselves.

"In the United Nations, conversations are about the world and the common good," Sister Carol said. "It is enlightening and inspiring to watch people who have no common language, who come from divergent cultures with serious differences actually sit down together with a common agenda and make peace."

Sister Carol has brought the Joseph family closer together by helping to make global connections among the sisters, but more importantly, among our many neighbors who are served.



Sister Griselda Martinez Morales, CSJ

Sister Carol began in this position in 2001 and will transfer the office to Sister Griselda Martinez Morales, CSJ, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon in the Mexico province. It was

a deliberate decision on the part of the CSSJ Global Coordinating Committee to appoint a sister from the global south. Conversations at the United Nations, as well as other places of influence, often don't include the voices of those who are most affected by the policies and decisions made. 'Global south' is a political/economic descriptor for the very poor countries; the 'global north' is generally representative of the more affluent nations.

"My great hope for our United Nations' work is that our presence there heightens our own awareness," Sister Carol said. "I hope we can deepen awareness of our charism within ourselves. In fact, we are becoming our charism. Perhaps that is our gift for the life of the world." ●

The Hazard Family is called to share



“We are all ONE, so why wouldn’t we?”



That is how Mary Jo and Steve Hazard responded when asked why they included the CSJs in their Will and Trust. Mary Jo graduated from Nazareth Academy in LaGrange, Ill. and she and Steve are members of the community as associates. Mary Jo spoke about the important influence the sisters had on who she is today and how gifting the CSJs through their estate is an appropriate way to express both gratitude and unity.

What about their children and grandchildren who could benefit from their assets? Mary Jo said that their kids would be surprised if they didn’t share part of the estate with charity, namely the CSJs. “Our hope has been to role model for our family that God blesses us abundantly and, honoring our charism of unity, we are called to share, not keep all of it for ourselves.”

Mary Jo told a story that illustrates sharing from an abundance perspective. When their grandson Connor turned 4, their other grandson Kevin (6) asked Mary Jo and Steve why they didn’t give him gifts at Connor’s birthday party like the other grandparents did, just so that Kevin wouldn’t feel left out. Mary Jo and Steve saw this as a “teachable moment.” They told Kevin about



The Hazard family from Illinois. Top row standing (left to right): Pete Lawrence and Steve Hazard. Middle row seated (left to right): Jean Lawrence, Katie Hazard, Mary Jo Hazard. Bottom row seated on laps (left to right): Kevin, Connor and Clara Lawrence.

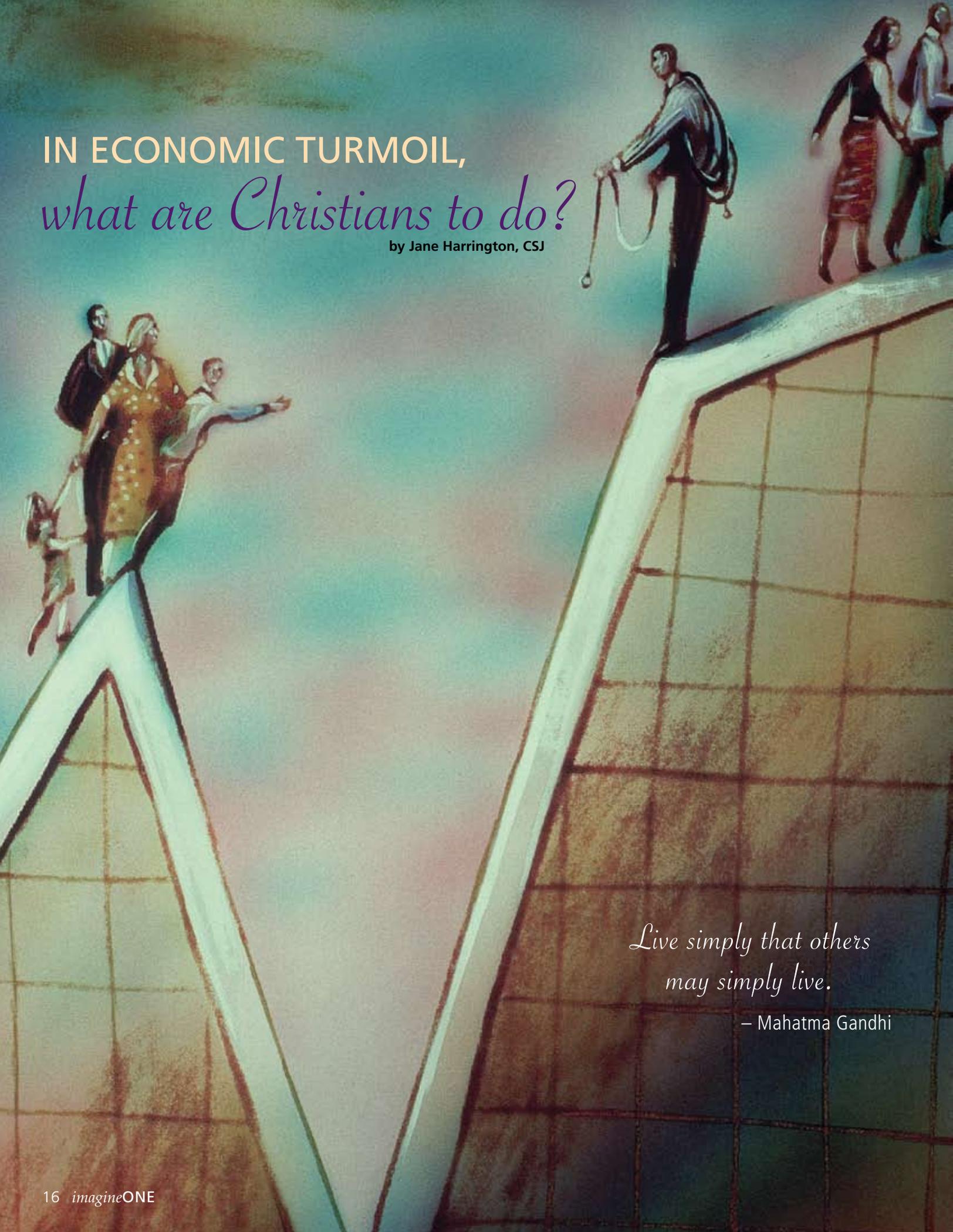
the children in Haiti whom they’d met: little boys with just T-shirts on, little girls with no shoes or socks, most kids without food except for the school lunch. They explained to Kevin that instead of giving him a gift on Connor’s birthday, they would give that money to the children in Haiti who have very little.

Kevin listened intently and asked: “Do they have pants? Do they have sleeping bags? Do they have balls?” Getting a “no for most kids” to each

question, Kevin asked if he could pack up a backpack to send some of his shoes and toys to the kids there. His parents agreed and Sister Marlene Schemmel, CSJ, transported Kevin’s and Connor’s filled backpacks to Duchity, Haiti, on her last mission trip. Kevin said later that even though he sometimes looks for a favorite ball he sent to Haiti, he pictures a little boy down there playing with his ball and that makes him happy. Now Kevin wants to send another backpack next time Sister Marlene goes to Haiti!

imagineONE means that what one family “owns” is not just for themselves, but is meant to be used for the well-being of our sisters and brothers who have so little. Mary Jo and Steve believe that living this world view is part of their legacy to their children and grandchildren.

As a result of their naming the congregation in their Will and Trust, Steve and Mary Jo are members of our Heritage Society, and entitled to all of its benefits. If you are considering naming the congregation in your will or estate plans, please visit our web site at www.csjgiftplanning.org or contact Gift Planning Specialist Gary W. Mulhern at Congregation of St. Joseph, 137 Mount St. Joseph Road, Wheeling, WV 26003; or by telephone at 304-232-8160, ext. 148. ●



IN ECONOMIC TURMOIL,
what are Christians to do?

by Jane Harrington, CSJ

*Live simply that others
may simply live.*

– Mahatma Gandhi

“Perhaps this economic crisis will turn out to be the great leveler of the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots,’” commented the director of one of the CSJ-sponsored ministries. She was responding to my question about the effects of the current economic turndown on the clients of this social service agency located in rural West Virginia. She continued:

“**O**ur folks don’t have IRAs or 401Ks – often, they don’t have checking accounts because of the fees, much less savings in investment accounts. Most are renters, so they aren’t experiencing foreclosures. The ‘economic crisis’ is long-standing around here, and it will, no doubt, get worse; but our issues are not the ones making the headlines.”

Finally, I got it – this “financial downturn” is extending economic distress beyond poor and low-income people and significantly impacting people in the middle classes and above. Perhaps this crisis also has the potential to be a “stimulus package” prodding more people to reflect deeply on the issue of economic justice (or injustice) and its effects across all of society, as well as how we might be part of the solution.

As I write this today, I am aware that yesterday was Trinity Sunday – when we proclaim and celebrate our God as Holy Community. Our God is not a “rugged individualist;” our God is defined by the relationship that exists among the divine persons – Creator, Savior, Spirit. This is also the defining truth about how we, God’s creatures, are to live – always immersed in various relationships, always committed to the common good of all creation and never just our own interests. The paradoxical truth is that by promoting the common good we are indeed promoting our own best interests.

So the questions are:

- “Who are those not partaking adequately in the common good?”
- “What action does God call us to take on their behalf?”

The obligation of economic justice is forcefully stated in the “Catechism of the Catholic Church”:

The development of economic activity and growth in production are meant to provide for the needs of human beings. Economic life is not meant solely to multiply goods produced and increase profit or power; it is ordered, first of all, to the service of persons...and of the entire human community.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in a letter to Congress in March 2009 regarding the Federal Budget, echoes the same obligation for economic justice:

[W]e call on Congress to place the needs of poor families and the most vulnerable in our nation and around the world first in setting priorities in the federal budget resolution. Decisions on how to allocate opportunities and burdens in setting budget priorities are more than economic policies, they are moral choices. A moral measure of the budget will be how it treats “the least of these.”

THE CONGREGATION’S RESPONSE

At our first formal gathering, the General Chapter of the Congregation of St. Joseph in April 2007, we set priorities for the next six years that we expressed as our four Generous Promises. Two of these promises relate directly to promoting the work of economic justice in line with Catholic tradition:

- We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, promise to take the risk to surrender our lives and resources to work for specific systemic change in collaboration with others so that the hungry of the world might be fed.
- We, the Congregation of St. Joseph, promise to network with others across the world to bring about a shift in the global culture from institutionalized power and privilege to a culture of inclusivity and mutuality.

These priorities are deeply rooted in the history and practice of our seven founding congregations, as well as our sponsored ministries. We continue to respond to both the urgent and immediate hungers of the world, and also to work strategically for policies, systems, and the cultures that will promote the “common good.”



Here are a few examples of ways in which the congregation, itself, lives out these promises:

- working to ensure just salaries and benefits for our employees;
- using our portfolio of investments as a vehicle to promote improvements in corporate behavior regarding the environment, working conditions and anti-violence;
- providing funding not only to assist some of our sponsored ministries, but through our gifts and grants programs to respond to needs identified by and/or associated with sisters and associates; and
- advocating for the world's poor and vulnerable people.

The mission of the congregation's sponsored ministries also reflects the General Promises and some are featured in this issue.

OUR RESPONSES

I am coming to believe that this economic crisis, despite the pain and suffering and fear, could also present a "wake-up call" for people of good will. How can we do something practical and helpful in promoting the common good, the vision of the kingdom of God proclaimed by the prophets of Israel and by Jesus of Nazareth?

Considering that each of us is affected by this economic situation, it seems timely to reflect on Mahatma Gandhi's call to "Live simply that others may simply live." Finances might dictate that we live more simply — but only our compassion can translate that necessity into support for the poorest and most vulnerable people.



In support of the Common Good
Pope Benedict XVI issued his latest encyclical, "Caritas in Veritate," that calls for a new economic world order — to serve the common good of all people — just as the G8 heads of state were arriving in Rome for their July summit. To read the encyclical go to www.vatican.org and click on English, then latest updates.

TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR PROMOTING THE COMMON GOOD

1. Pray regularly for those who are poor and vulnerable and for God's guidance as we act for the common good.
2. Gandhi was a vegetarian. Follow his example one day a week and use the savings to donate food to a food pantry.
3. Find a half-dozen items that you don't use or need, and that are in good condition. Donate them to a yard sale for a favorite charity. (Or organize the yard sale yourself and give the profits to the charity!)
4. Join NETWORK, the Catholic social justice organization at www.networklobby.org and/or donate to its educational wing — and read the materials you receive.
5. Pick one economic topic — any topic — and follow it in the media.
6. Write letters. Pointing out problems is good, but try to commend positive actions as well.
7. Identify one "money-free" activity that you can enjoy with family and friends, using resources you already have at hand.
8. Reduce impulse buying (and often regretting) by having a "cooling down" period before buying an item that costs more than a certain amount.
9. Visit the Congregation's website at www.csjoseph.org to learn more about how to work for justice.
10. **Take time to be grateful — on a regular basis — for the gifts of creation that we enjoy. There's always a reason to dance!** ●

A FEW EXAMPLES OF OUR SPONSORED MINISTRIES' RESPONSE TO TODAY'S ECONOMIC REALITIES



Dear Neighbor Ministries' limited food pantry becomes depleted very early in the month.

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH DEAR NEIGHBOR MINISTRIES — WICHITA, KANSAS

Most of the 2,000 people living in the Hilltop area, adjacent to the CSJ property, struggle economically. This ministry provides social services, direct help, and visits to the homes. Currently, many more people are out of work and those who worked for cash are often the first laid off, with no benefits. Bills have mounted up to unbelievable levels. We are working with the food bank to receive bulk salvage food – and are using a community grant to provide essential but unavailable items such as detergent and toilet paper.

*Kit Lambertz,
Executive Director*

ABLE FAMILIES – MINGO COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

We provide resources and support for people (particularly women) caught in the net of poverty, so they can make positive changes in their lives and help their children toward a better future. Living so close to the margin, even the small increases in the cost of food, gasoline and such can generate a crisis. Our donors remain generous – thank God! And the community comes together – little shop owners will cash checks for the poor – despite being burned sometimes – simply because they care for their neighbors.

*Janet M. Peterworth, OSU,
Executive Director*

PEOPLE PROGRAM – METAIRIE AND NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

We bring together senior adults who share their experiences, talents, wisdom and knowledge by serving as volunteer teachers for creative, intellectual and physical activities for other seniors. Most of our constituents were previously (before Katrina) middle-class and are now trying to rebuild homes or are facing skyrocketing rent, so this is a time of great anxiety for them. Since our membership fees only cover 1/3 of our costs, we are currently operating at a deficit. We have cut costs internally including cutting staff and freezing salaries, and are exploring ways to raise revenue without having to raise membership fees, which would be an additional financial hardship for our constituents.

LaVerne Kappel, Executive Director

For more information on these and all our ministries, visit us online at www.csjoseph.org, and click on “how we serve.”

Volunteers who *stand with others*

by Kathleen Durkin, CSJ
with Erin McDonald, Terry Blundell and Leanne Gilgenbach

Remember the Ben E. King oldie but goodie song, “Stand by Me” that made it to #4 on the top ten hits in 1961? Or maybe you remember when it made a big comeback in the 1986 movie of the same name.

The invitation to “stand by” or “stand with” someone is a familiar theme in human experience. In the Gospel we see that Jesus stood with all those whom others might avoid. It was to lepers, people who were poor or lonely and those outside his own religious tradition that Jesus also sent his disciples.

The statement of core values of the Congregation of St. Joseph echoes the theme as well: “The Sister of St. Joseph moves always toward profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction, from whom she does not separate herself.” (*Consensus Statement*) In short, those who share this mission and charism are called always to move toward and stand with every kind of neighbor.

The three inspiring stories that follow offer rich and varied examples of women whose lives of service give witness to the loving unity that is possible when we choose to stand with all creation. The stories they share are more than accounts of mere voluntarism. They are truly a reflection of how the Gospel is alive for a world in need of change – where systems are faltering, global resources are strained and people desire greater inclusion.



Volunteer Erin McDonald with village children in El Salvador.

Erin McDonald of Wheeling, W.Va., told of her connection with the CSJ mission that has threaded its way throughout her life. “When I was a child,” she said, “my grandmother carried me to work with her at St. Rafael’s Convent in Boston and sat me in the kitchen with her while she cooked for the sisters. The Sisters of St. Joseph influenced some of my earliest memories, foreshadowing a transformative and lifelong connection to an order of deeply passionate and loving women.”



Congregation of St. Joseph Leadership Team member Sister Marguerite O'Brien (left) and volunteer Erin McDonald take a break from post-Katrina clean-up work during a Wheeling Jesuit University service trip in 2007.

Later, when Erin attended Regis College in Boston, she reconnected with the sisters. The Sisters of St. Joseph at Regis College became a much-needed source of guidance as Erin began to discover and live out her calling to serve the *dear neighbor*. While researching summer volunteer opportunities on the internet, she came across the Volunteers in Mission program run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wheeling. She went to West Virginia in the summer of 2000 to volunteer. This decision changed the course of her life forever. She decided to stay in Wheeling and lived with the Wheeling CSJs as she completed her degree in psychology at Wheeling Jesuit University.

“The charism of the CSJ’s provided a framework for understanding my volunteer experiences, which were with ministries such as the pastoral care department at Wheeling Hospital, the local homeless shelter, the juvenile detention center and communities in remote locations such as rural Appalachia,” she recalled.

Shortly after graduation, Erin returned to Wheeling Jesuit University to work in the Service for Social Action Center, which

coordinates, tracks and develops service and social justice initiatives for students, staff and faculty.

“I find it deeply meaningful to be in a position where I can provide similar transformative experiences for my students,” she said. “The students and I have had the opportunity to serve in the post-Katrina Gulf coast; in one of our country’s poorest urban cities, Camden, NJ; among immigrants in Boston; in the mountains of rural Appalachia and in Central America.”

Erin cited Father Pedro Arrupe, SJ, who said that, “Today our prime educational objective must be to form *men and women for others*; men and women who will live not for themselves but for God and his Christ; men and women who cannot even conceive of love of God that does not include love for the least of their neighbors.”

“I know, with all my heart that I am called to live out my faith in service to others,” Erin concluded. “Reflecting over the years, I see how the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph, ‘loving God and neighbor without distinction,’ has been woven into the fabric of my life.”

The next story takes us to Kalamazoo, Mich., and **Teresa Blundell**, whose service to others has always been a way of life. Her reflections reveal a life dedicated to loving service and a profound relationship that flowed from her service.



Teresa Blundell
whose service to others has always been a way of life. Her reflections reveal a life dedicated to loving service and a profound relationship that flowed from her service.

Presently a substitute teacher, Terry said that she has a reputation as the “mean sub.” “If you ask the students why, they will tell you that I make them do their work and follow the rules,” she explained. “I find it interesting that often it is those same students who ask for my help.”

Perhaps Terry got that way by working for 15 years in juvenile court. “I always looked for at least one positive attribute in every young person with whom I worked,” she recalled. “It wasn’t always easy, but it was worth the effort. Often the search reminded me of the humanity and worth in each of us. That didn’t excuse inappropriate — at times, horrific — behavior. It did remind me that we are all God’s children.”

Terry was 26 years old and working for the juvenile court when she met Brenda, 15. Brenda was being removed from her home due to neglect and sent to a long-term facility where she would be matched with an adult volunteer. She told her caseworker that she wanted Terry to be her volunteer.

Terry calls Brenda “the daughter of my soul. She has been my strength and joy over the past 28 years. We have shared good times and bad. We have shared our faith and discuss its importance in our lives frequently.”

Now married and the mother of three, Brenda tells that one of her daughters asked her if, when she was at the youth home, all the kids liked Terry. Brenda thought for a moment and said, “No. They didn’t all like Terry, but they respected her.”

To “stand with” we need mutual respect.

Last year, Terry participated in “Companions in Mission” at Nazareth, Mich., and found it so worthwhile that she assisted Sr. Celeste Cotter and Associate Joyce Kranz with the program this past summer. The program invites women to volunteer for a weeklong experience of prayer and ministry with sisters and local nonprofit agencies. “I have volunteered most of my life, but Companions reawakened and strengthened my faith and has brought me a sense of peace,” she explained.

“I am now in the process of becoming an associate,” Terry revealed. “During this process, as in other service activities or work experiences, I have the same feeling. I am not being of service to others. I am not doing something for them. I am being given the opportunity to grow in the joy and peace of working with others — to ‘stand with’ the *dear neighbor* and experience the blessing of being one in God.”



Leanne Gilgenbach, former librarian at St. Joseph Academy, Cleveland, and project coordinator for the Books of Hope Project, shared a wonderful example of mentoring the next generation for lives of service with a global vision.

Leanne related that “More than 300 St. Joseph Academy students in sixteen classes, worked with eight teachers, a teacher librarian, library academic staff and herself as project coordinator. We joined 50,000 other students in the country to work on the Books of Hope Project, sponsored by Books of Hope, Madison, Wisc.”

Each American school adopted a Ugandan school and created original children’s books to fit the subject areas their Ugandan school requested. While the Books of Hope Project provides Ugandan children with English language books, it also gives American students an opportunity to make a connection with the Ugandan students and to contribute their talents in a very personal, creative way.

Classes worked at the St. Joseph Academy Library Media Center to learn about the people, geography and culture of Uganda before they began work on their books. As one teacher said, “Our young women were startled to learn that many students in Uganda have no



Donna Schultz (green sweater) helped the students make the most of St. Joseph Academy's Library Media Center to research and create their books for children in Uganda.

books, few supplies, and must walk several miles or spend the school nights away from their families. Attending school in a fighting zone was a concept unfamiliar to them." The students also visited the Books of Hope website www.booksofhope.org and reviewed the guidelines for writing children's books and for writing for a multicultural audience.

"Then, the real fun began," Leanne exclaimed.

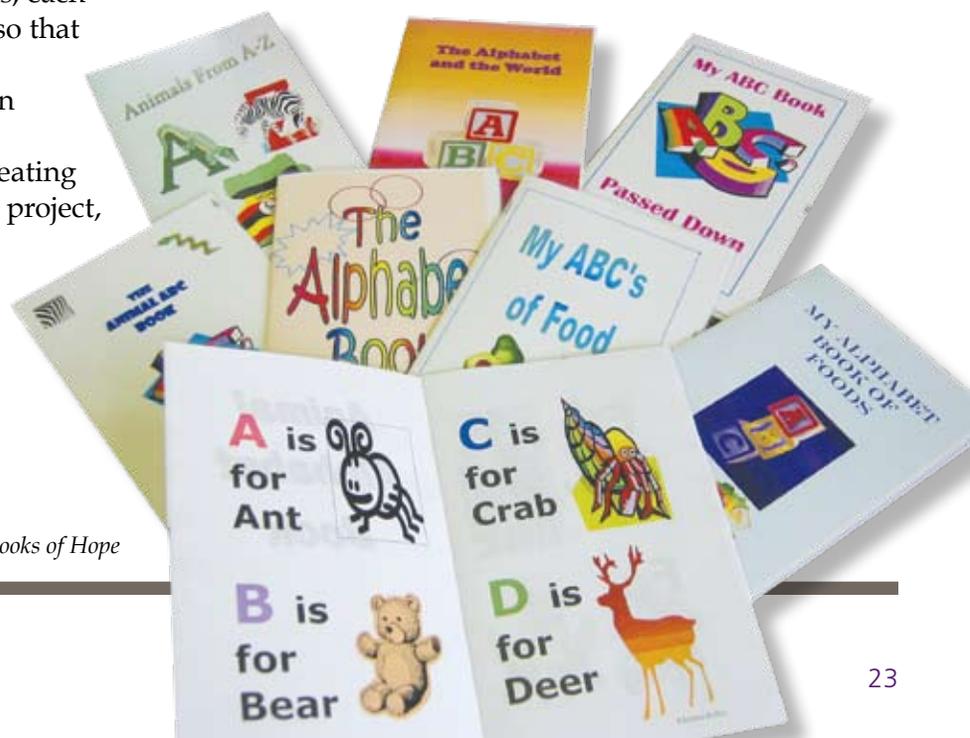
World literature, poetry, folklore, art history, mathematics and alphabet books started to take shape. In addition to the subject text and illustrations, each student included a message from the author so that the Ugandan students would have a little information and a greeting from the American student. Library staff Mary Beth Gorbett and Rebecca Synk, both CSJ Associates, started creating a scrapbook that highlighted the work on the project, the students and teachers who were participating, and information about St. Joseph Academy and its mission. Each class wrote an "autograph" page to be included with a description of the class and the class

picture in the scrapbook. This one book was sent to Books of Hope in April and was hand-delivered to their sponsored school. In May, the completed student books were sent to Wisconsin to be shipped to Uganda.

"When the fruits of the project began to take shape, it was interesting to see the change in our students," Leanne observed. "One teacher said that the students viewed their creations as 'connections made between their lives and the Ugandan children's lives.'"

"As the project coordinator, it was heartening for me to see that the Books of Hope Project provided many opportunities for our students to use computer skills, research skills, writing skills and their own imaginations to create a true gift for a student in Uganda," Leanne said. "However, from my perspective, as is the case in most gift-giving, the person who bestows the gift receives much more than the receiver of the gift. As one student explained, 'Projects like Books of Hope push us to grow and learn, serving others and becoming women of global perspective.' What more could any teacher hope to instill in students?"

These transformational stories of ordinary women who live remarkably generous lives might spark your own memories. Or maybe, they will encourage your own desires to stand with others in your own spheres of influence in new ways. Allow the call of a world in need resound in your heart. ●



Books of Hope

It's not so rare

FOR VICTIMS' FAMILIES TO FORGIVE by Marianne Race, CSJ

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. (Mt. 5:38)



The picture still haunts me. A fireman, dusty with debris, was holding the lifeless body of a beautiful child he'd carried out of the bombed Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, April 19, 1995. The pain and grief on his face mirrored mine, both of us compassionate strangers to this child's family.

Imagine the devastation of those who knew and loved this child. Such deep grief and loss numb the heart and soul. It is understandable that this senseless taking of innocent life could lead one to anger, outrage and the desire to retaliate in kind. One might even believe that killing the one who killed would bring relief from the pain of personal loss. Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation www.mvfr.org know differently. Murder victims' families have suffered tremendously; their wounds may never heal completely. The steps to healing include the compassionate hospitality of others, recognizing that we live in a violent society, and taking action to reduce the violence, not cause more of it.

Art by Joshua Rex. Based on the original Pulitzer Prize winning photo by Charles H. Porter IV.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus says, "offer no resistance to injury, when a person strikes you on the right cheek, turn and offer the other." (Mt 5:39) I thought Jesus was telling us to be doormats, to let others walk on us. Then a simple example from my own childhood enlightened that passage for me. My brother and I were fighting over something, I know not what; it's what siblings do. Mom intervened. I said, "He started it." My brother had an equally accusatory response, of course. Mom said, "One started, one continued, both guilty." Retaliation continues a cycle of violence. Jesus challenges us to respond on a level higher than our opponent; rather than retaliation, do something unexpected, something that interrupts the cycle of violence.

The example of children fighting is a simple one. Is it possible to put this gospel teaching into practice when the stakes are so much higher? When a family member has been murdered, or there are hundreds or thousands of victims such as in the attack on the Murrah Federal Building or the World Trade Center? Bud Welch, whose daughter died in the Oklahoma bombing, speaks today against the use of capital punishment. He says, "The death penalty is about revenge and hate, and revenge and hate is why my daughter and those 167 other people are dead today." None of us wants to be defined as being about revenge and hate. And so, the Congregation of St. Joseph has chosen to stand with murder victims' families and the perpetrators of these crimes, those on death row.

There are many practical reasons to eliminate capital punishment. It is not necessary to kill a person in order to protect society from him or her; we have a secure prison system. Capital punishment has a negative effect on society, perpetuating a culture of violence. It is expensive, possibly twice as expensive as a sentence of life without parole, though arguments differ on this point. However, the majority of people on death row are poor. That means the state pays for both defense and prosecution, sometimes for decades. Our justice system is flawed; given the number of people who have been exonerated from death row, there is the definite possibility that innocent people have been executed.

In her recent book, *Quest for the Living God*, Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, speaks eloquently about the dignity of all life. "God lives as the mystery of love. Human beings

are created in the image of this God. Therefore, a life of integrity is impossible unless we also enter into the dynamic of love and communion with others." It is this dynamic of love and communion with others that calls us to stand with people who are poor or marginalized, victims and yes, criminals. We know from Scripture and Church teaching that we are made in the image of God. This source of our being gives each of us a profound dignity of life. We find it easier to recognize this dignity of life in others when considering children, especially the unborn, those born into poverty or abused, or those trafficked into some kind of slavery. Children are innocent; they have not chosen this terrible path. It takes a deeper faith to see the image of God in those who have done great harm to others.

Our Church leaders stand with these offenders. Cardinal Joseph Bernardin articulated a consistent ethic of life, which included opposition to both abortion and the death penalty, in 1985. Ten years later, in his encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, Pope John Paul II taught that opposing capital punishment should be part of a pro-life witness for a culture of life that promotes human dignity and solidarity. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops as well as individual bishops across the country have repeated the teaching. Pope John Paul II, during a visit to the United States in 1999, said, "The dignity of human life must never be taken away even in the case of someone who has done great evil. Modern society has the means of protecting itself, without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform."

In 2005 the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops issued a statement calling for an end to the use of the death penalty. ("A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death," available at www.usccb.org/deathpenalty). After the execution of Saddam Hussein, Pope Benedict XVI issued this statement through the Vatican's top justice prelate, Cardinal Martino: "Killing the guilty one is not the way to rebuild justice and reconcile society. On the contrary, there is the risk that the spirit of revenge is fueled and that the seeds of new violence are sown."

There can be no mistaking the Church's clear stand on this issue.

In addition to these practical and faith reasons to stand with our brothers and sisters on death row, the timing of our support is critical. There are many pressing



Pennsylvania Amish mourn the loss of five of their children ages 6–13 who were killed in their schoolhouse on October 2, 2006 by a gunman. On the very day of the shooting, a grandfather of one of the murdered Amish girls was heard warning some young relatives not to hate the killer, saying, “We must not think evil of this man.” Another Amish father noted, “He had a mother and a wife and a soul and now he’s standing before a just God.”

issues that demand our attention and action. Some would say it is immigration reform, others the rescue of our dying planet, violence, poverty, racism, drug abuse, the use and abuse of water resources or the single life issue, abortion. How we would love to make progress in solving any one of these problems. So why is it important to consider standing with the criminal at this time? Consider this, states with the most Catholics have the fewest executions; the states with the fewest Catholics have the most executions. (Dale Recinella, *America*, April, 2008) We, as a Catholic community, can make a difference in moving our state legislatures toward eliminating the death penalty in our country. New Jersey and New Mexico are the most recent states to do so. Colorado came within one vote. Connecticut’s close decision to eliminate the death penalty was recently vetoed by Governor Jodie

Rell. When New Jersey ended use of capital punishment Celeste Fitzgerald, Director of New Jerseyans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, stated, “All, from the Bishops to clergy to religious communities to Catholic Charities to the Knights of Columbus — played a critical role in ending the death penalty in New Jersey.”

The Congregation of St. Joseph is working for systemic change toward a complete moratorium on the death penalty and prison reform. We will continue to offer support to the families of murder victims, as well as to prisoners on Death Row. We hope our doing so will raise awareness among others in the Catholic community and beyond. In addition, we hope others will take advantage of opportunities to become more educated about both Catholic teaching on the death penalty and the situation of

our justice system. See www.catholicsmobilizing.com for excellent materials and www.deathpenaltyinfo.org for up-to-date information. Visit the site Murder Victims Families for Human Rights (www.willsworld.com/mvfhr) to see how victims of serious crime have responded to their personal tragedies.

Most importantly, reflect on your own position. For most of us, this issue is not front and center. Prisoners are out of sight and consequently, out of mind. Yet, what a marvelous victory it would be if our living faith, our dynamic of love and communion with others brought about an end to state killing in our name.

“I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live.” (Deut 30:19) ●

Reflection

On being compassion

by Christine Parks, CSJ

Our mission — That all may be one — impels us to the daily practice of compassion, to be compassion. What does it mean — to be compassion in our troubled world? To be a compassionate presence in the midst of both the ordinary and disturbing situations that confront us daily?

In an office, desperately carrying on with her work, most of her bruises aren't visible on the surface. Voices whisper: *you should have known better ... why didn't you fight back ... I'm sure he loves you ... if you were a better wife ...* I look at her over my desk, know something is wrong, but there are projects to finish and deadlines looming. What can I do?

Our God is compassionate and gracious ... abounding in love. (Ps.103)

In the unemployment line, he is behind on house and utility payments, trying desperately to scrape together enough cash to buy groceries for his growing family. Voices clamor: *what did you think would happen when you overextended your debt? ... you knew that house was too expensive ... you should have chosen a more stable career ...* I look at him over my counter, know something is wrong, but there's a long line behind him, forms to file and it's almost 5 pm — what can I do?

Our God is gracious and compassionate ... rich in love. (Ps. 145)



He sits on death row ... she stands on a street corner ... they roam the streets with nothing to do ... his sign reads "will work for food" ... she speaks broken English ... Voices shout: *you deserve it ... she's a sinner ... they belong in jail ... keep him off my street ... send her back where she came from ...* We see them every day, know something is wrong. What can we do?

But you, Beloved, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. (Ps. 86)

A thousand people beg our attention daily — from the 'ordinary' neighbor next door wanting only a listening

ear in her loneliness, to the 'neighbor' whose more extreme need I'm tempted to avoid because it is troubling, uncomfortable, and just maybe he brought it on himself. We can look at others through the lens of judgment and unworthiness, or, through the compassionate lens of the Gospel.

When Jesus saw those in need he was filled with compassion for them — he reached out and touched them. (Mt. 20:34)

The choice is ours. Our God is compassionate beyond human understanding. Descriptions of divine compassion permeate scripture, illuminating the heart of God's love-relationship with us. God's compassion is ever present and limitless. And we — we are invited, called, admonished, commanded even, as beloved sons and daughters, to ... *be compassionate as your God — the giver of life — is compassionate ... (Mt. 5:48)* Not exactly the words as they appear in most of our scripture translations, but they could be. Where am I being invited to be compassion today, in my 'ordinary' life? ●



Sister Mary Ann Rosenbaum, CSJ, was in the right place at the right time to see this fawn being born. She made this delicate portrait when the fawn was barely an hour old. Note its still-wet coat.

“God so loved the world...” by Ginny Jones, CSJ

As followers of Jesus, who loved the world, we are called to live in harmony with each other and with God’s creation. We know that the web of life is one and, as the U.S. Bishops’ 1992 pastoral, “Renewing the Earth,” reminds us, “Our tradition calls us to protect the life and dignity of the human person, and it is increasingly clear that this task cannot be separated from the care and defense of all creation.”

Our efforts to care for creation are grounded in scripture and based on the wisdom of the Church as conveyed to us throughout our tradition and through documents written by our church leaders. Our Christian responsibility for care of Earth begins with the appreciation of the goodness of all God’s creation. Genesis 1:31 tells us that “God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good.” Genesis 2:15 gives us our very first vocation: “to cultivate and care for creation,” since we are made in the image and likeness of God.

In addition, the very first covenant (sacred promise) we find in scripture is the covenant that God made with Noah and all of his descendents (i.e., all of us) and with every creature that was on the ark (i.e., all of creation). In a sense, God made Noah the first conservationist and the ark, the first “endangered species act.”

As Catholics, we recognize with other Christians, the fulfillment of God’s covenants in Jesus Christ. During his earthly ministry Jesus spoke of God’s care for the lilies of the field and even for every tiny sparrow.

Through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus, God's irrevocable 'yes' to life has been made known to us (Col. 1:19-20). Therefore, when we fail in our responsibility to care for creation by polluting the air and the water, destroying the productivity of the soil, destroying habitats and eliminating species because of our greed or carelessness, we are, in the words of Pope John Paul II's 1990 World Day of Peace message, "turning our back on the creator's plan and provoking a disorder that has irrevocable repercussions on the rest of the created order." The Pope went on to say that "Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends to the rest of creation" and that "Christians, in particular, (should) realize that their responsibilities within creation and their duty toward nature and the creator are an *essential part of their faith*."

In the same World Day of Peace message, the Holy Father spoke of the relationship between plundering natural resources and the progressive decline in the quality of life as a threat to world peace – as great as the threat of the arms race and regional conflicts. This connection to world peace came to our attention in 2004 when Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan woman educated in Catholic schools, received the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to establish the Green Belt Movement in Africa that was responsible for planting thousands of trees. As recently as July 2007, Pope Benedict XVI reminded clergy that "The human race must listen to the voice of the Earth or risk destroying its very existence."

In their 1992 pastoral letter "Renewing the Earth," the U.S. Catholic Bishops identified some themes of Catholic social teaching as related to our responsibility to care for creation. The environmental challenges of our day are fundamentally moral and ethical challenges that cannot be ignored as we seek to love the world as Jesus taught us to do. Some of the themes they identified point to the need to:

- Recognize the sacramental nature of the universe – that the world discloses the Creator's presence by visible and tangible signs;
- Recognize the world's growing interdependence. Pope John XXIII, in his letter *Pacem in Terris*, extended the traditional concept of the "common good" to the entire world community. Since many environmental problems such as climate change are clearly global issues, this is a very important perspective to remember;
- Recognizing that many ecological problems have the greatest impact on poor people, who have the least access to relief from their suffering, our actions must include a concern and option for them;
- Recognizing that our consumption of resources has a major negative impact not only on the poor of our day but also on other species and the quality of life for everyone now and in the future, we are called to a deep conversion of heart in the way that we use all resources.

The U.S. bishops conclude their pastoral letter by reminding us, "Today humanity is at a crossroads. Having read the signs of the times, we can either ignore the harm we see and witness further damage, or we can take up our responsibilities to the Creator and creation with renewed courage and commitment."



Assault on nature Sister Joellen Sbrissa, CSJ, photographed this for her peace and justice work in West Virginia. The natural mountain forest in the foreground contrasts the bald devastation from a type of mining called mountaintop removal mining (center). It destroys natural habitat, pollutes the air with explosives and coal dust and pours tons of debris into the valleys and rivers, along with toxic sludge and slurry from the mining process.

It is not surprising that the second Generous Promise the Congregation of St. Joseph adopted at its first chapter assembly, deals with this important issue. It calls all of us “to take steps now to strengthen, heal, and renew the face of Earth.” Our mission is rooted in the mission of Christ, “That all may be one.” This mission challenges us to be prophetic, listening in faith to the signs of the times, and creatively undertaking whatever will draw all into union with God and with one another.

We therefore encourage all of our sisters, associates and friends to act and live in ways that preserve the natural life processes of Earth, to respect all species and their habitats and to promote more equitable access to Earth’s resources for all people. ●

Adapted from “The Saint Francis Pledge for Care of Creation and the Poor”

PRAY - Be mindful of all who are impacted by environmental concerns and ask for the grace to recognize your own contributions to the problems.

LEARN - Review the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and how they relate to environmental concerns (www.usccb.orgsdwp/projects/socialteaching/excerpt.shtml)

ASSESS - Conduct an energy audit of your home to discover where you can save energy and/or examine your ecological footprint to assess how your choices and behaviors contribute to environmental issues. (www.myfootprint.org)

ACT - Reduce your consumption of ALL resources. Re-use whatever can be re-used, recycle everything that is recyclable and purchase items that are recyclable and come with minimal or no packaging.

ADVOCATE - Write or call members of Congress or other legislators and urge that the needs of people in poverty be a central priority in policies relating to environmental stewardship. Check the websites of national/regional/local environmental organizations for “alerts” regarding environmental concerns and then respond.



Father Thomas Berry

LEADING ECOLOGICAL THINKER, FATHER THOMAS BERRY, WAS MENTOR TO MANY

Countless members of our congregation and people across the world were saddened to learn that Father Thomas Berry, a Passionist Catholic priest, one of the great minds of the 20th Century, died June 2 in Greensboro, N.C.

Berry articulated a vision of an approaching “Ecozoic Era” in which human societies would live in a sustainable and mutually beneficial manner with the natural world. Throughout his life, he conducted an ongoing study of the ecological nature of Earth and how everything affects everything else.

“The catastrophe of our time is the loss of any real human connection to the natural world,” he told a reporter in 2005. “That’s why ecology alone is not the answer, because it’s a ‘use’ relationship to the natural world. The Earth is saying, ‘You used me.’”

Trees, birds — all living things — have rights, he wrote. They require that people treat the natural world not as an object, but as a living being. “If nothing has rights but humans, then everything else becomes the victim,” Berry said.

Berry’s vision has special relevance today. Concerns about climate change, species loss and depletion of natural resources have propelled the nearly 30-year-old sustainability movement into mainstream consciousness.

His work helped lead to our mainstream consciousness, and we and Earth and all creation owe him a great debt of gratitude.

Let Your Light...

Kindness abounds in our world, and we are blessed to receive it when we least expect it. Each time one of us reaches beyond ourselves to be present to another, Christ's light shines through. We witness this powerful light every day as we go about our lives. It is a gift when we take a minute to be aware that God is in our presence.

Employee, Virginia Click in Tipton points out a good deed at St. Joseph Center . . .

Just the other day I received a hand-written note from Jeanne Anderson, one of the nurse aides in Camilla Hall. She was thanking me for the smallest of favors that I had done a couple of weeks before, which I had completely forgotten. That note just brightened my whole day. I guess it reminded me that no matter how small the deed, the rewards you get are even greater.

Sister Cynthia Sabathier discovers how both giver and receiver benefit from the gift of life . . .

Marianne Philips, who has suffered with cystic fibrosis all her life, recently received a double lung transplant. She is a devoted Catholic, always willing to be there for others, so others were there for her during her recovery. Because another family willingly gave healthy lungs as a result of a tragedy in their lives, Marianne will be able to do many of the things we take for granted. Her friends rejoice with her and give thanks to the dear family who gave her life back to her. A light continues to shine in the world.

Associate, Pat McCormack is touched by her neighbor's outreach to others . . .

Eleanor Wallace is 78 years old and takes care of her husband, who is in very poor health. Even as she does this, she still takes time to help several other people. She gets groceries for a lady she has known for years and helps her write her checks. She is always sharing food with us, and while the home health nurse visits her husband, Eleanor volunteers at the hospital. She is a shining example of God's light.

Employee, Jan Martino bears witness to faithful kindness of a volunteer . . .

Jerry Talbot is a shining example of what People Program in New Orleans is all about. Grace abounds when Jerry teaches stitchery classes to eager students. She has paid full tuition for a friend, planted two beautiful gardens in our courtyard and lovingly sewed and embroidered a Christening gown for our Silent Auction. Jerry Talbot sows the seed of love and kindness wherever she goes.

Sister Clara Pfeifer shares her observation of a shining light . . .

Sister Mary Louis Herman lives in our Wichita Center. She is recently retired from our hospital, and is actively helping by driving sisters to appointments wherever they want to go. Sister Mary Louis has a kind word to say to everyone, and she helped me see what I could do to help another sister: "Just love her to death...that will really help her." She lives this love. No matter who comes to our house, she welcomes them with open arms. She truly spreads Jesus' light in our lives.

Associate, Catherine O'Shea offers gratitude for simple, yet profound, acts of kindness . . .

Sister Agnes Wassmer, OP, accompanied a very frightened 91-year-old Sister Grace by ambulance to the hospital where she 'translated' the diagnosis as well as the even more difficult prognosis. For more than a year now, Sister Agnes visits this sister daily to eat lunch, write letters, push her wheelchair to chapel for Mass and community services and charm the aides to answer the call bell. Because of the loving kindness of Sister Agnes, Sister Grace has peacefully and gracefully made the transition from an active parish and community member to her new ministry as PeaceMaker, PrayerBroker and AdvisorCouncilor.

When all else — our possessions, our health, our egos — is swept aside, we can see the Light clearly shining in the hearts of our neighbors.

If you would like to share a brief account of witnessing someone letting Christ's light shine through an act of God's love in the world, please send your story to bbrewster@csjoseph.org.

It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.



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WE CARE ABOUT ALL CREATION

In awareness of our mission, the Congregation of St. Joseph is proud to present this issue of *imagineONE*, which has been produced in an environmentally sustainable way, in an effort to reduce our carbon footprint and rethink our use of water, energy, and paper.

This magazine is printed on paper that has been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, made with 30 percent post-consumer recycled paper (which is processed chlorine free), and manufactured with windpower.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international nonprofit organization that promotes responsible management of the world's forests by recognizing products and processes that meet their rigorous environmental and social standards. The FSC label represents a promise of a commitment to responsible environmental behavior and sound business decisions that benefit the environment and future generations.

By purchasing FSC certified paper and partnering with an eco-friendly vendor who is certified by the FSC, the Congregation of St. Joseph is supporting environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.

In addition, this magazine has been printed using soy- and vegetable-based inks exclusively, which are less harmful to the environment than their petroleum-based counterparts. Soy- and vegetable-based inks are naturally low in VOC's (Volatile Organic Compounds) and are widely recognized as the environmentally friendly choice.