

Mission

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Gathering focuses on spirituality, justice, celebration

Paula Misitano, ssj

We say in one Eucharistic acclamation, *We Remember, We Celebrate, We Believe*. On December 3, Sisters and Associates proclaimed these words through our Advent Day of Reflection. The day's theme, "The Spirituality that Inspires Our Work for Justice," called together four interfaith guests who shared their religious beliefs and how their spirituality calls them to work for justice.

The morning carried out the proclamation, *We Believe*. Each panelist shared her/his religion's basic beliefs which led each of them to a personal relationship with their God. Holyoke Community College student Yamara Barrigha, a native of Ecuador, spoke of her B'Hai faith. B'Hai, meaning *Oneness of Mankind*, teaches that everything, everyday is affected by faith. Yamara continued, "Justice is achieved through equality and harmony and this will be achieved through world justice. We ask ourselves how we can be of use to this world." For Yamara, education and working with developing projects for the betterment of people exemplify her faith.

Brother Mujahid Aleem shared the beliefs of his Muslim faith. Brother Mujahid is a member of the Al-Baqi Islamic Center of Springfield. He is the Dawah (Outreach Coordinator) working to promote greater understanding of different faith traditions. Being "God-conscious, recognizing the mercy of God," is a way of life for him. "With this recognition of God in our life, we grow into respect and regard for everyone," he stated. As respect and regard grow, so does the desire to work for justice.

Rev. Kelly Gallagher volunteers in the Elms College Campus Ministry Office. Kelly's belief started early in life when she realized there are many different paths but a common truth within all of us. She, too, stressed always being God-conscious. "Just as Jesus challenged the status quo, so we, too, must do the same," she noted. "We have a responsibility," she continued, "to level things out, to realize God's continual embracing of the poor and oppressed and do the same." Kelly feels this knowledge helps her to strive for a just world.

Rev. Karen Rucks, an ordained Baptist minister, asked, "What is God's plan for me?" How do I define justice in daily life?" Her work for justice includes working with the individual and helping people to speak for themselves is at the core. Karen likens her work to the body with many gifts. Being called by God and empowered by God means listening to God. What keeps her going? "The Word of God being a reality in the most sacred part of my being," she commented, "God's word is food for me."

Each panelist noted that there must be a balance of solitude and action in our lives. We must "be about God." If we live our faith in whatever moment we are in, justice will win out.

We Remember became real as we recalled the women who gave their lives 25 years ago in El Salvador. Interspersing the words of our Chapter commitment with the words of Dorothy Kazel, Ita Ford, Jean Donovan, and Maura Clarke, those assembled prayed for the courage to continue the courageous fight for justice wherever we are called. We prayed for courage to walk with others, the poor and the marginalized, and to learn from them.

We Celebrate. The community joyfully welcomed four new Associates. As each shared her covenant, a common thread could be determined. For Rose Babey, the example of the Sisters with whom she is acquainted brought her to this step and the desire to serve. Ann Cleary prayed to serve God with an open heart, mind and open arms in her ministry of education. Diana Duff cited the 73rd Maxim, "... Be all that God wants us to be..." as her call to walk with the community. Ann Itner spoke of the service of the SSJs, and her hope to work with the community in service for the well-being of others and in response to others' needs.

Mary Quinn, ssj, talked of the contrast of darkness and light, of hope and despair. She thanked the women for giving hope to all of us, for their willingness to walk with the community in the search for justice and to empower the community voice to respond to the words of Isaiah..."To walk with justice... this is what Yahweh asks of you."

(The entire text of Paula's article is printed on line.)

Retired Sisters center their days with prayer

Angela Deady, ssj

What group of people retire and then spend their retirement years doing more of the same thing they have done all their lives?

The answer to that question is simple and should come as no great surprise: the retired Sisters of St. Joseph who live at Mont Marie. Having been women of prayer throughout their lives, they continue that ministry in their retirement years.

Each day of the week finds the Sisters gathered together in St. Joseph's Chapel praying the rosary for benefactors, for peace, and for any intention that they have been asked to remember in prayer.

According to Sr. Patricia Ann, coordinator of the Prayer Ministry, the requests for prayer come from many different sources: the staff at Mont Marie, nurses, residents, family members, the Development Office, Sisters, etc. Calls for prayer come from nearby and as far away as Texas. Prayer requests are recorded in a special book and names are never removed from that book. At present, there are over one

Cope with winter woes through helpful hints

Cathy Coyne, ssj

For safety reasons, it's important for those of us in cold climates to keep our sidewalks clear of ice and snow in winter. How does one do this in ways that are both easy on your back and don't harm the environment? The most common clearing method is rock salt. But salt is corrosive, harmful to wildlife and builds up in soil, affecting plants' ability to take up water. There is a range of options for snow and ice removal, however:

- Nothing beats shoveling for environmental friendliness, not to mention a good workout during the most sedentary time of year. To make the task easier, buy a high-quality shovel with a bent handle that keeps your back at a healthy angle.
- Prevention is always best so consider ways to lessen the amount you have to shovel. Keep your car near the exit of your driveway or put icebreaker mats on your stairs to keep them safe and ice-free. You can buy these mats at www.vermontcountrystore.com.
- Instead of using rock salt for traction and meltage, try sand, fireplace ash or cat

thousand people remembered each day. New requests are always shared with those gathered before the first decade of the rosary begins.

The Sisters gather in chapel at 11:45 a.m. each morning. The time for prayer is both convenient and practical. Distances between living accommodations, the chapel and the dining area are long and challenging for those who have difficulty traveling from one place to another. And so the 11:45 a.m. time is convenient as St. Joseph's Chapel is close to the dining area where the community meets for lunch at 12:15 p.m.

On those days when morning Mass is celebrated at 11 a.m, residents from Mont Marie Health Care Center, visiting family members and some staff are also available to join the group for rosary prayer.

The retired Sisters at Mont Marie are involved in many projects, many ministries. But they believe that this ministry of prayer is the most important work that they do. For that belief and for their commitment to praying for each of us, we are grateful beyond words.

litter. The downside is that you'll need to sweep them up in between storms to avoid a mess.

- If you choose a chemical de-icer, the less toxic ones to buy in your local hardware store are made of magnesium chloride. Or you can order the least toxic variety, Bare Ground Solution, from www.Unique-Idea.com.

This winter, you can be good to your neighbors and the planet by de-icing responsibly.

In Memoriam

Please remember the following in prayer:

Mary Courtois, sister of Betty Sullivan, ssj

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Civil Rights leaders, charism in one accord

Sr. Patricia James Sweeney

As we begin this brand new year, our thoughts turn to a renewal of our Chapter Commitments: to "... journey in hope with the People of God" and "... welcome all to walk with us" in order "... to effect change in those ...civic systems that hinder the journey toward the day when ALL WILL BE ONE."

This could have been scripted by Martin Luther King, Jr. whose life we celebrate in a few days. It seems to me that the Civil Rights leader and the Sisters of St. Joseph are companions on this journey. Who is that tiny woman with the big heart whom we meet along the way but Rosa Parks?

Have you ever noticed that children are color blind? Racism, like other prejudices, is a learned behavior which can be unlearned if enough of us have the courage to cooperate with God's will.

A new understanding of the evil inherent in hatred of persons with different pigmentation bruised my spirit in 2003. Spending Christmas in Tennessee with my nephew and his family included an emotional visit to the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis. Photos of the abuse of law-abiding black persons in our democratic society, solely due to their color, were frightening. To think that these horrors could take place in this land of freedom: adults, faces twisted in unholy anger, hurling epithets and venomous words at little black children on their way to elementary school; policemen (keepers of the peace) clubbing blacks and whites participating in a peaceful march over a bridge. Gratefully, the pictures are in black and white so the blood covered figures are not quite as shocking to the viewer.

Moving to another level we stepped up into a bus to hear the bus driver's threats directed to an unmoving Rosa Parks mannequin. Admiring this little woman who refused to submit to intimidation because as she later said, "All I wanted was to go home." We continued our trek to an upper floor. Here we found ourselves looking into the same room where Martin Luther King, Jr. stayed after his

stirring speech to 2000 people at the Clayborn Temple. This museum has been built around the Lorraine Motel on Mulberry Street. Just beyond his room, we glanced at the balcony where the assassin's bullet ended his crusades. Standing there before he went out to dinner, on that April evening, was he remembering his words, "... And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."



May we be as courageous in following our ministry to the "people who are poor and marginalized" as these two were to theirs. We must never despair of helping to bring about a radical change in society. We each need to believe these words of Morris Dees, founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center, "We are all brothers and sisters. Each face in the rainbow of colors that populates our world is precious and special. Each adds to the rich treasure of humanity." Celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with hope and joy.

Letter -- Letter -- Letter

Dear Sisters and Associates,

On behalf of our brothers, John and Bill, and sister, Mary, we wish to express our deep gratitude to all of you who embraced us with your love, care and support at the sudden death of our dear Mom. We are overwhelmed and touched by the outpouring of love through your kind messages, cards, spiritual remembrances, Mass Cards and donations. All of these are a source of real comfort to us as we deal with our sudden loss.

We are moved by how many knew and experienced our mother's vibrant love of life and people. We know this vibrant spirit will live on in us her children and grandchildren. Being Sisters of St. Joseph is truly a gift that extends in our whole family; we are deeply grateful for the support you gave us during this sad time.

In gratitude and with love,
Srs. Maureen and Betty Broughan

Associates bring special gifts to ministry

Susan Lavoie, ssj associate

As part of the Community Day, December 3, four women became Associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph. During the afternoon prayer service, a 25th Anniversary Remembrance of the women martyrs of El Salvador, Rose Talbot Babey, Anne Mazzu Cleary, Diana Booth Duff and Ann Ittner made their covenants of Association with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield.

Each of these women brings many gifts to the Community.



Rose Talbot Babey, a life-long member of Holy Name Parish in Springfield, serves as the Director of Religious Education, as well as serving as Lector and Eucharistic minister in her home parish. She is currently enrolled in the Masters in Applied Theol-

ogy at the Elms and hopes to complete her combined Masters in Theology and Education by the fall of 2007.

Anne Mazzu Cleary is a teacher for the Willie Ross School for the Deaf in Longmeadow and teaches students at Birchland Park School in East Longmeadow. She has taught the hearing impaired for about 25 years, including High School CCD classes for Sr. Carol Lareau. Anne has many interests, gardening, read-



ing, sewing and needle-work among them.

Diana Booth Duff also works with the hearing-impaired with Sr. Carol at the Ministry for the Deaf in the Diocese of Springfield.

Ann Ittner, retired,

and the mother of four grown children, is the sister of Associate Connie Curran. Ann's interests include reading, gardening and bowling.



Sister Carol Lareau and Associate Connie Curran

mentored these four women. Sr. Jeanne O'Shea was also very involved in their mentoring.

Each woman expressed a desire to live out the charism of "uniting neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God," using their many diverse gifts.

We welcome these women and look forward to sharing the living out of the charism with them.



New Associates Ann Ittner, Diana Duff, Ann Cleary, pose with Associate Directors Susan Lavoie and Carol Lareau, ssj, Associates Connie Curran, Rose Babey and Mary Quinn, ssj president.



Associate Alma Schilling, mother and grandmother, who has worked at several service agencies, made her Covenant of Association, September 14, in the chapel at St. Charles, Pittsfield.



Team Talk

VP experiences 'conversion' to Mont Marie

Patty Murphy, ssj

In the late sixties, Sr. Cecilia James said to me "Patty, I'm going to help you love being at the Mont. This is your home." I had had a taste of "mission" life and teaching and I loved it. Then, our group was called back to the Mont to finish our studies. I was not excited about this "recall" and reluctantly returned.

Any time a mission sent a request for a substitute, I submitted my name. Never being assigned, I continued taking care of Sr. St. Anthony in her retirement (bribing her to shower with a reward of "hooch"), feeding in the infirmary and teaching CCD in numerous parishes and cleaning, cleaning, cleaning. I was in a sense getting to enjoy the Mont (knowing missioning day was on the horizon). I was being patient!

Finally, I was assigned! Off to Milford I went! For the next 35 years my life was centered in the classroom and beyond.

March 13, 2005 changed my life. I was

Group assesses fundraising, looks to future

Connie Quinlan ssj

In early December approximately 15 members of the congregation came together to evaluate the fundraising endeavors for 2005 and to discuss those for 2006.

As you are aware from previous communications, our decision to go forward with the money raffle and 500 Club for the year was a good one since when all is done, we will be netting about \$112,000 from them.

During the meeting, the fundraising committee decided to continue with the same projects in 2006 since we have done so well, and hope that more sisters and associates and friends will join with us in helping to make the drives even more successful.

During early spring we will be sending notices out to those who participated in the 500 Clubs, inviting them to consider joining again for the year. It is also our hope that more parishes in the various Dioceses where we minister will be willing to have raffle tickets sales during the summer and/or early fall.

called to a different ministry for the next six years. During the following few months, at our days of orientation, I began to feel overwhelmed. It seemed that a lot of responsibilities we talked about fell on me. It came to the point I held up a sign, "I have the Mont." (How ironic.) Better yet, I'll be overnighting quite often!!

June 6 arrived and I found myself running back and forth until school finally ended. I've learned that I do not have a trick desk. The drawers do open, if you open the middle one first, and not to be calling myself when I am looking for someone else. If you want to know about the "Naughty Chair" stop by the office to get the story. Now, six months later, I can honestly say I feel like I've been here forever.

The warmth and hospitality of our senior Sisters has blessed my life. May I grow old as graciously. All of our Mont employees are welcoming and very easy to work with. We as a team are learning, laughing, praying, working together, and did I forget - laughing. Yes, I've learned to love the Mont. I've come home!!!

Again, we will need your help to make this happen. During 2005 about 30 parishes participated, earning over \$20,000.

You, our Sisters and Associates, make these success stories a reality and we thank you sincerely. Please consider how you can help once again for the coming year.

Several members of the committee also discussed hosting some event or events centered on gathering people together e.g. a dinner or some similar social. Obviously, this element is what is missing in our present drives. We all recall the beauty of our annual Festival when literally thousands came together for a cause they believed in and at the same time could relax, reminisce and enjoy one another's company in true SSJ hospitality.

Whatever decisions are made, we ask your support and cooperation on these congregational projects, knowing that one day we will all benefit from the results of these endeavors.

SSJs see hallowed sites, meet survivors,

Ann Lynch, ssj

As the community gathered for December Advent Day of Reflection, Sisters Jane Morrissey and Kathleen Keating were part of a SHARE delegation in El Salvador commemorating the 25th anniversary of the martyrdom of the four church women there.

In a concrete way they were able to pray and unite neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God as they visited the sites of the martyrdom and witnessed to the deaths of the 75,000 killed during the nation's civil war as US and Salvadoran neighbors together prayed for truth, reconciliation and peace.

They heard the voices of those still engaged in the country's ongoing struggle for justice and liberation. They visited a cattlemen's cooperative and met the poor in Chalchuppa, where countless families have been displaced by hurricane Stan's torrential rains that coupled in the first week of October with both volcanic eruption and earthquake to wreak unaccountable destruction. What the hurricane did not do to their homes the sulfur from the volcano did. The area is water rich but ecologically devastated with contaminants from coffee plantations and hospital waste.

The delegation listened as these families told of devastating health problems caused by water contamination, and their organizing efforts to confront responsible corporations and work toward ecological health. They met with sisters, priests and lay leaders working with the poor to address immediate and long-term problems and, thanks to the generosity of the Congregation, many Sisters, Associates, and friends, were able to contribute financially to SHARE, to assist in their work.

The delegation also met with US Ambassador Barclay and his staff, Salvadoran Archbishop Gregorio Rosa y Chaves, that country's Procurator of Human Rights Beatrice de Carrillo, US Representative Jim McGovern of Central Massachusetts, and former Senator George McGovern.

"We grew in our own awareness of what

is being done systemically and how much more needs to be done to address root problems of poverty and violence that continue beyond the Peace Accords," they observed.

Jane and Kathleen traveled under the auspices of SHARE, an organization that enables people to take control of their lives. The women in the Cattlemen's Cooperative, most of whom are heads of households because the men have been killed in the civil wars, have learned the technical expertise in caring for the cattle. These people will never be rich but they can feed their children.

They also visited Santa Ana and observed a project in its beginning stages where women are learning their rights and speaking up to government officials. The delegates visited Bishop Oscar Romeo's home and the site of his martyrdom. They were shown the bullet-ridden vestments he was wearing. They also visited the University of Central America where the Jesuits and their housekeeper and her daughter were killed.

There were 130 in Jane and Kathleen's delegation; many were Sisters of St. Joseph, Associates and those who work with them.

Jane and Kathleen spoke of driving down the same road from the airport that Ita, Maura, Dorothy and Jeanne did, knowing that when they were stopped what was going to happen to them. "Emotions are still very strong at the site where the women were martyred," Kathleen noted. "The people who spoke were those with whom the women worked and they told stories of them," Jane added. Some speakers were the campesinos. Another speaker was Christine Rody, a Sister of Charity who was with the four women, who stayed behind and called their congregations and family with the news of their deaths as others went to identify their bodies. They also attended a reception at which Maura's nephew and Ita's niece spoke on how their aunts' lives and deaths affected them.

The Memorial Wall (pictured on page 7) contains the names of 25,000 men, women and children killed or disappeared. There are

reflect on significance of modern martyrs

probably at least 50,000 more names that should be there but families are reluctant to include the names for fear of recrimination and in hope they are not dead and they will be reunited. Someone has posted on the wall the words, "All that bloodshed; nothing has changed." Before they left the delegates selected the name of one of the people for whom they will pray.

Despite the sadness Kathleen and Jane observed that there were pockets of hope, including changing condition of the women and the solidarity between the El Salvador and the United States that sponsors delegations like they were part of and Sisters Frances White and Catherine Leary participated in during the past few years.

Jane noted there were real expressions of solidarity including the statement from the delegation, "We want to break your hearts. We want to give you the hope of the people."



In a lovely park in the city of El Salvador, solidarity groups in cooperation with the mayor have built a wall of remembrance of those who died and disappeared in El Salvador's civil war in the 1980s and early 90s. Sr. Jane Morrissey admires the mural section of the wall that calls to mind the history and struggles of the people of El Salvador.

Jane and Kathleen visit the simple chapel at the University of Central America (UCA), which commemorates the murders by the military of the six Jesuits and the two women in 1989 on the grounds of the Jesuit residence at the University.



Kathleen said that the deaths of the women touched her personally in such a way that nine years later she went to Nicaragua as a Maryknoll associate. Jane, who was living at the Gray House at that time, observed that she probably would not be starting Homework House today if it had not been for their sacrifice. "They went the limit of the gospel and paid for it," she said.

Jane and Kathleen brought a suitcase filled with clothes for the people. They left behind towels and clothes that they worn for them as well.

Some statistics:

- *The average age of the people in El Salvador is 19.*
- *In 20 years there will be more Salvadorans in the United States than in El Salvador.*
- *Without income from the United States the country could crash.*
- *The average educational level is grade six.*
- *Approximately 700 people leave El Salvador on a slow day. About 100 are caught and repatriated.*



At the other section of the wall Sister Kathleen points to the name of Maura Clarke. The names of 25,000 dead and disappeared appear on the wall. Altogether it is estimated that there are another 50,000 victims, most of them civilians.

Jane and Kathleen are willing to meet with groups in areas to talk about their experience.

In plain sight, but still invisible

Roberta Mulcahy, ssj

“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled.” The season of Christmas brings to our reflection and prayer the circumstances that led to Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, a city where Joseph, who was from the lineage of David, had to register his name. A recent report from the United Nations connected this narrative from scripture with a concern for children everywhere who go unregistered at birth.

The United Nations children’s agency UNICEF estimates that 55 percent of all births in the developing world, excluding China, are not formally registered. These unregistered births result in depriving children of basic services like health care and education, and making them more vulnerable to exploitation later in life. Lack of access is among the most common reasons for parents not to register their child.

SRI Advances Anti-Racism in Rebuilding New Orleans

Roberta Mulcahy, ssj

Investors concerned with social issues have an opportunity for advocacy by naming root problems as New Orleans rebuilds after Katrina. Systemic racism played a decisive role in the human impact of Hurricane Katrina, particularly in racially segregated New Orleans. As the city is rebuilt, it remains to be seen the degree to which anti-racism activism can restructure the social architecture of the region to create an equitable social ecology.

A recent forum in Boston entitled “*Putting Communities First: Rebuilding New Orleans and the Role of Social Investment and Progressive Philanthropy*” met to address the racism that exists in New Orleans and American society. Representatives at this forum were from social justice groups and from social investment firms well known for community development investing. One such firm is Boston Common Asset Management, managers of an international fund that we have in our portfolio.

At the forum several facts were revealed that supported the racism that was exposed as

Registration at birth needs to be simple, inexpensive and close to home. Often families have to travel long distances to reach government offices that handle birth registrations. Registration is often considered a legal formality and not related to child development, health education or protection. Children are frequently excluded from attending school, denied social services and kept from enjoying the rights of citizenship and protection from the state when they have no legal proof of their birth.

Executive Director Ann M. Veneman of UNICE recently said, “Meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s) depends on reaching vulnerable children throughout the developing world.” As we continue to reflect and pray during this season of remembering Jesus’ birth on Earth, let us also remember the children of our world who are the poorest and most vulnerable, the exploited and the abused.

we watched television during the devastation of the hurricane. Even before the hurricane New Orleans had the second highest rate of child poverty in the nation; almost a third of the city lived below the poverty line, and two-thirds of New Orleans residents were black.

The people of New Orleans are grateful for the generosity exhibited by many in the wake of the flood. At the same time there is a need to re-think the way we give with a larger strategy that addresses structural problems exposed by the hurricane. Socially Responsible Investors can be vigilant in monitoring the rebuilding process to pressure decision-makers about the need to rebuild in a non-racist way and they can continue to name systemic problems as a good beginning to building a better New Orleans.

Dawn Wolfe, who conducts social research and shareholder advocacy for Boston Common Asset Management reminds us that, “***Poverty and racism is a vicious, perpetuating cycle. Rebuilding from scratch can be considered an opportunity to undo that cycle.***”