

Mission

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Advent prayer, reflections focus on charism

Paula Misitano, ssj

The Chapter Implementation committee hosted an Advent Community Day of Reflection, December 1.

The topic for the day was “The Charism as the Heart of the Community of St. Joseph.” The day proved to be an oasis in the midst of the busyness and hurrying around associated with the season. The tone of the day was inaugurated by Natalie Cain, ssj, as she presented the day as one of prayer and reflection, of seeing with the heart.

Mary Kate Birge, ssj, carried this tenet out as she led the group through guided imagery centering on the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. Mary Kate urged the group to consider the call by God to both women and then to recall one’s own call to

the movement of something new within them as Mary and Elizabeth had done. Mary Kate asked those present to consider this call from the Chapter directive “to explore through the Community of St. Joseph new forms of living out this total double union to love, the union of love of God and love of neighbor without distinction.”

Mary Ferguson, ssj, continued the theme as she reflected on two challenges: how do we articulate our charism as Sisters of St. Joseph, and, second, how has our attempt to do this brought us to the concept of the Community of St. Joseph. In her talk, Mary spoke of the word itself as meaning grace or gift and while given to one, it is not meant to be held onto but, she said “to challenge the community members every day to continue to live out its prophetic vision.”

Was it this charism that attracted each of us to the Sisters of Saint Joseph? As Mary said, “It is difficult to live one’s charism alone, especially as charism is given as gift to be re-given to the world.” Thus, like Mary of Scripture, we have brought God to others through our charism. Where and to what is this charism calling us?

Associate Wanita Sioui Laffond followed Mary’s talk with a reflection on the birthing of newness through the Community of Saint Joseph. She asked: “What is the Spirit inspiring us to birth?” What is coming?” As Wanita reflected on giving



Planners and presenters for the Advent day include Associate Susan Lavoie; Sisters Anna Marie Kane, Natalie Cain, Mary Ferguson; Associate Wanita Sioui Laffond and Sister Mary Kate Birge.

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Nature carries message: Live in the present

Mary E. Harvey, ssj

Today I walk again through gently falling snow brushing the blue wool of my coat and gathering on the pine trees. I think of the passing of the seasons and of time. Time can run through our hands like sands on the seashore or like small, smooth stones from a cold mountain stream. Time can also touch us and linger in precious moments. How it does so springs from our ways of seeing and of being.

I remember these lines from the play *Our Town* written by Thornton Wilder. The young Emily, who after her death is given the gift of returning to Earth for a day, says, "Oh Earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realize you."

Of the Stage Manager, an integral mirror in the play, she asks, "Do human beings ever realize life while they live it, every, every minute?"

"No," he answers.

Then after a pause he remarks, "The

In Memoriam

Please remember the following in prayer:

Sr. Catherine Joseph Adams
Sr. Ann McCaffrey
Sr. Miram Francis Donoghue
Sr. Germaine Gendron
Sr. Mathilde Joseph Bessette
Pat H. O'Neill, sister-in-law of Sr. Eileen O'Neill
Russell Hemenway, father of Sr. Mary Ann Hemenway
Irene M. Figoni, sister of our late Sr. Natalie Ingemi
Claire Flanagan, sister-in-law of Sr. Kathryn Flanagan
Mark Burke, nephew of Srs. Ann Francis & Stella Burke
James Kappenman, brother of Sr. Judy Kappenman

saints and poets maybe-they do some."

Sister Nora Scribner (Mother Scholastica - Rutland) lived this realization and modeled her perspective of time as the sacrament of the present moment. This is living fully in the present, one moment, one day at a time. In the words of the song, "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift. That is why we call it the present." Sometimes I lose sight of this simple yet profound wisdom. I ponder its grace anew this quiet winter day.

"Do not look back and grieve over the past, for it is gone, and do not be troubled about the future, for it has yet to come. Live in the present and make it so beautiful that it will be worth remembering."

-Ida Scott Taylor



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Ann Lynch, SSJ, editor

Communications Committee: Sisters Angela Deady, Mary E. Harvey, Mary Lou Lacey, Ann Lynch, Elizabeth Matuszek, Paula Misitano, Patricia James Sweeney and Jeanne O'Shea.

Construction progresses on Mont Marie Senior Residence



Photos by
Jim
Willemain

*Renovation in its early stages.
Work began on the project in late
August.*



*As much of the materials as
possible are being recycled, i.e
metal, tiles, slate roof.*



*One of the large gathering
rooms on the first floor.*



*The beginning of the parking
lot for the Senior Residence.*



*Since the project is now about
one-third completed it is in the
construction stages from top to
bottom.*



*Men working on the
roof replacing the
slate.*



*The foundation for the
pillars which will hold up
the overhang at the front
door.*



*Just before the snow the parking lot
was paved.*

*New windows are
being placed throughout
the building.*



Irish family saga enriches SSJ community

Mary E. Harvey, ssj

Sister M. Brigid Moroney (baptized Bridget) entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in Rutland 71 years ago on July 2, 1936 from County Tipperary, Ireland,



joining her four sisters now deceased, twins Sister M. Benignus (Hannah) and Sister M. Malachy (Mary), Sister M. Brendan (Elena) and Sister St. Michael (Nora – Nano) as well as her cousin Sister M. Margaret Finanne.

At Brigid's 50th Jubilee Celebration on October 12, 1986 Sister M. Christine Balargeon said in a Tribute, "Tell me, if you will, when you hear that well-known song, "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling," that you don't think of our own Sister Brigid with her ready smile, easy laughter, and Irish dancing? Or maybe that other song, *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* for that is where Sister was born into a family of five girls and one boy. (Jeremiah – Jerry) That the Moroney family was truly remarkable, I think we could agree, when you consider that all five girls sailed across the Atlantic to enter the Sisters of St. Joseph. Her four sisters must have encouraged her to see for herself what the country on the other side of the ocean was like as she too, found her way to the Rutland Congregation."

When we ponder this, there is thought of the parents who allowed all their daughters to follow vocations as consecrated religious and so far from their homeland. Michael Moroney was a baker and Ellen Casey Moroney a seamstress. Sister M. Brigid said, "I am grateful to God for having been blessed with exemplary parents, hard-working, of strong faith,

trusting in God. We were not rich, but we were comfortable and secure in the knowledge that we were loved. Their children were everything to them. We were brought up in a religious atmosphere with God an integral part of our life. We prayed the Angelus three times a day and the Rosary each evening after supper.

"My dad was wonderful, but my mother was the most loving, prayerful, unselfish person I've ever known. She never thought of herself, making sure we learned our prayers and was a perfect example never speaking unkindly about anybody, and when we did, she corrected us. My mother was my heroine and my wisdom figure."

She spoke of her Aunt Bridget Moroney who became a Sister of St. Joseph named Sister Mary Margaret before she was born. Sister Mary Margaret came to Rutland from Tipperary to enter with her friends, the O'Connors, (Sister Genevieve and Sister Teresa) at the request of the pastor of St. Peter's in Rutland who asked their brother, Father O'Connor, to interest Irish girls in coming to Vermont to teach in St. Peter's School.

Their aunt in correspondence sent religious pictures and stories to Sister M. Brigid's older sisters and some of her students became pen pals with them.

"After my sisters entered, when asked what I wanted to be when grown up, I always answered, 'I'm going to be a nun' at that time not knowing much about religious life. I think my desire to be a Sister increased gradually in Grade School. The Sisters of Mercy were my teachers, and I loved them all.... However, I didn't know how I could ever leave my parents, and I kept asking God to show me the way.

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SEED Committee talks about trees, offers plan

Ann Lynch, ssj

During the past ten years we have planted memorial trees and bushes at the Mont thanks to the generosity of our Sisters, Associates and friends. In spite of tender loving care some have grown well, others have fallen victim to disease and drought. The intentions for which they were donated are still part of our prayer.

Memorial plaques were placed by each tree listing the name of the one for whom the tree was donated. The plaques have been an on-going problem. They have come in contact with lawn mowers and weed-whackers. Replacing them has become very expensive.

The SEED Committee is looking at a possible memorial plaque that would list the names of all those for whom trees were donated. This would be placed in a prominent place at the Mont. Anyone with suggestions or who would like to donate to the creation on the plaque is asked to contact the SEED Committee at the address below.

We do have a map of all the donated trees at the Mont. Anyone looking for the location of "your tree" can contact the Ecology office or email at ecology@ssjspringfield.com

We will be happy to give you detailed directions to locate your tree.

Irish family saga ... Continued from page 4

"When I was 17, I got up the courage to tell my parents and asked if they would prefer I be a Sister of Mercy in Ireland or go to Rutland. They would like me to be with my sisters." It was a sad parting, but Sister M. Brigid was grateful her parents always received care.

Sister M. Brigid has a BA in English from Regis College, a MA in Education from Boston College, and did graduate work at other schools. For 48 years she taught in Christ the King School in Rutland and in St. Michael's School in Brattleboro where she was Superior at the convent and for some years school principal. Sister M. Christine said, "Co-workers, parents, and students have always been enthusiastic in their praise of Sister... She loved the children and was able to create a happy, positive learning environment. Sister Brigid was always ready to give extra help whether before, during, or after school. Her math students gave their own unique evaluation when they named her

"The Dancing Decimal."

She has traveled, including to her native Ireland, France, Paris, Le Puy, Lyon and Rome. First a Councilor, from 1985-1988 Sister M. Brigid served as President of the Rutland Congregation and as Vice-President from 1988-1994. From 1995-2000 she was facilitator at the Rutland Motherhouse, now St. Joseph/Kervick Residence, where she resides. She does many acts of kindness for the residents, helps as Sacristan, is a Eucharistic Minister and lector.

Sister M. Brigid rejoices in the Rutland Congregation's Reunification with the Springfield Congregation in 2001. "I extend my deepest gratitude to our beloved Springfield Sisters for that wonderful day of the reunification ceremony when they opened their hearts and home to us. Now every time I go to Holyoke, it's like going home to be welcomed by so many happy and familiar faces."

Associate accepts chance to visit South Africa --

Ann Lynch, ssj

“Something inside me called me,” began Associate Karen Hurd, as she shared her journey to South Africa.

Just about a year ago, Karen went to her mailbox at school and found information about a tour to South Africa and her reaction was, “Yes, I want to do this.” She began to share why she wanted to go. Karen recalled her childhood in Brooklyn and the stories of the students who came from Selma, Alabama, who attended her church. Listening to them she began to realize how sheltered her childhood had been even though parents had been to the March on Washington. Growing up in this multi-cultural environment, Karen thought that the way she lived was the way it was.

Her initial reaction to the information was, “Okay God, Why now?” Then she thought, “This would be an opportunity to bring back to my students, faculty and the Sisters of St. Joseph what is going on in South Africa after apartheid.”

Karen was among 10 other teachers from her district who applied. She read her letter of application to her second grade students. On the eve of Martin Luther King’s birthday she received an e-mail from her principal saying she had an interview the next day. She felt that no matter what happened she was honored to be considered.

When the Superintendent of Schools in Northampton notified her that she had been selected for the Fulbright Scholarship to travel to South Africa, her reaction was, “Oh God; I don’t know why you opened the door for me to go this time... Reconciliation kept coming to me. That’s what the end of apartheid is all about, reconciliation.”

Karen was among 14 teachers. Noting that she was excited and frightened as well as at peace knowing that she was in God’s hands, she kept praying, “Oh God, what do you want me to do, learn and see?”

Her Associate-Sisters prayer group and her church gave her prayer send-offs as she prepared for the 20-hour flight to South Africa.

“Once we got there we had to be very careful. South Africa is a country that is very poor. There is also a lot of violence. My New York City instinct kicked in. We have to take care of each other,” Karen observed.

When asked if she stood out as a woman of color, Karen noted that there were four African-American women among 10 white women. Yes, they did stand out and they had to be careful when they traveled in certain areas of Johannesburg because they knew they were tourists.

Karen had the experience of people in stores asking her where she was from. When she answered from the United States of America they responded, “We thought you were one of us. You look like us.” The Zulus gave her an African name “Zanella” which means “Enough Woman.”

In Johannesburg they went to the School of Education University of Wiatersrand, the Dutch university; Fort Hare, the African university which Nelson Mandela attended and the University of Pretoria. They are all now integrated and are concerned about how they will educate the Africans who before this were not able to obtain an education because they could not afford it. They listened to their concerns.

Visitors encounter poverty, deprivation, pride --

They visited the Museum of Origins and the New Constitutional Court and the Old Courthouse where they had the opportunity to see what life had been like for the Africans, Afrikaners, and Indians. They saw the cell where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned and the cell where Mahatma Gandhi was imprisoned for fighting for the rights of the Indian people.

They visited the Apartheid Museum which told the history of South Africa where they saved the records so they can tell their history in the hope that it does not happen again. One woman who traveled with them was from Kenya. She noted that Kenya destroyed all the records and thus their history.

They visited an Indian school in Durban. What was true here was true of most of the schools. The accommodations were very poor. The students had no desks or books, very little equipment and in many cases they sat on the floor. It was very hard to see. "Although they have very little there was an aspect of pride among the Africans. "That is something that African-Americans in the United States do not have," Karen observed, "as a result of slavery, we were never allowed to know our history."



She told of staying in Bulungulu Lodge in a rural area. It took eight hours in a van through very rugged terrain to get there. Karen kept saying "O, my God, we are in your hands!" They lived in round houses with thatched roofs. She joked saying "who would ever think of Karen Hurd living among the chickens!" Through all this I always knew that God was with

me and my prayer community here was with us," Karen said.

One unforgettable experience occurred when they stayed in Xhosa Village where a young couple was working with the people with a concern about the land. They made a big stew for the visitors and there was a lot left. There were many children standing around watching them. When they asked what he was going to do with the stew he said they would feed it to the animals. They asked about feeding it to the children. He said, "No, the children have eaten at home." It was heartbreaking. Even though change is coming about there is still racism there as it is in the United States even though it is camouflaged," Karen said.

They also visited primary schools and the University of West Capetown. They went to Robben Island where Nelson Mandela had been in prison and saw the passes people had to carry around and how the jails were segregated with the white people getting the best food, etc.

They balanced the difficult with some fun time as they went to Table Top Mountain in a cable car and visited a game park. Karen noted this balance was necessary. As they went into one inner city school she said, "I can't see children sitting on the floor with no books and no food. I can't see it again. They had nothing but their pride that they were being educated."

They visited Oprah Winfrey's school. Karen noted that she takes the girls away from their environment because she is trying to change their attitude from "I can't do it," to "I can."

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Associate Karen Hurd on Table Talk Mountain

Changed woman returns, sees world differently

They visited the Journey of Remembrance in Capetown where three African men gave them a tour of the sites, stories and memories of Capetown.

The trip was a rollercoaster of emotions. They saw people living in tin shacks. These are the houses that many of the students lived in. One of the men sharing the story of remembrance pointed out a tree with a red ribbon in it. He said this is where his best friend died and he gives the tours in his memory and so this will never happen again..

In Pretoria they visited Crystal's House which was founded by a German woman. It is similar to Oprah's school except she has businesses donating money for the school, uniforms, etc. They have vans going into the community to bring the children to and from school. This is an opportunity for children to have meals.

Nearing the end they really wanted to go home. They had seen so much they were beginning to find it hard to handle.



They traveled along the coast and inland so they saw that Africa was very beautiful, but it was hard to see

hatred face-to-face.

Karen came home saying, "What can I do to help the children?" Tina's Pre Nursery School in Port Elizabeth touched her heart. She is in the process of having a fundraiser in her school, and another teacher from her district who

was part of the group is dhaving a fundraiser in her middle school. Karen is saying, "Okay God, it's in your hands. Something else will come out of this. I have to do one thing at a time."

"I prayed a lot because it was so hard to see the poverty, the results of racism. I have experienced racism in my life but it was hard to see it on such a large scale. I had to look at both sides. Both need to be prayed for. I need to educate my students," she said.

Recently Karen read a book, *Oasis of Peace*, to her second grade students. It is the story of a Hebrew and an Arabic boy attending a school promoting peace in Jerusalem. Her students were sitting there listening. They had a discussion. "When you don't want to know someone who is different from you, that's racism. That's what I saw in South Africa. That's what we have in the United States." As the discussion wen on Karen realized, "That's why I went to South Africa. This is what I'm called to do."

Karen said she came home a resurrected woman to do something, a changed woman looking at things differently. "I feel like the phoenix. I have found myself thinking that, how I thought of myself as a Christian has resurrected to a whole different level. I don't know what it is yet. Along with everything I saw in South Africa, as painful as it was, there is hope. That's what we have to hold onto— hope. Hatred is the worst sin of all and I saw it. I have to come back and not let it happen again."

Karen, left, poses with two of the teachers from Tina's Pre Nursery in Port Elizabeth.

Award recognizes Ann Keefe's passion for justice

Ann Lynch, ssj

Ann Keefe, ssj, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Rhode Island Public Health Association for her work in nonviolence, this fall. This award is one among the many awards presented to her for her ministry to "the dear neighbor" in the Providence area.

Ann, who would much rather work in the background than gain recognition for her dedication, said, "There is not a day that goes by that I don't think of our charism 'that all may be one.'" Many people ask me why or how I am so involved in different projects and agencies. The answer is simply that there is only one project and that is to make the charism alive as I work to unite neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God. It is a privilege, honor and blessing to work that 'all may be one.'"

During the past several years, she has collaborated in founding or is a member of Providence Neighborhood Housing Corporation, AIDS Care Ocean State, Providence City Arts for Youth Inc., Oasis Community Development Federal Credit Union, Community Boating Center, Southside Broad Street, Taming Asthma, Inc, Nonviolence Works, Inc. The Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence, Annual Good Friday Walk for Hunger, Police Chief Selection Committee, Diocesan Office of Black Catholic Ministries.

Among Ann's awards are the Sister Carol McGovern RSM Award; Martin Luther King Jr. Award for community service from the Martin Luther King Jr. State Commission, International Community Service Award, National Community Development in Excellence Award, and the Woman of the Year as a Woman Shaping Society from L'eggs and CVS.

In presenting the award from the Rhode Island Public Health Association Carol Shelton from RIPHA said, "Sister Ann Keefe, as a member of St. Michael's Parish in Providence, has been a tireless advocate for the community. She is a Sister of St. Joseph and has advanced degrees in social work and public administration.

"I can't begin to list the number of organizations Ann has been associated with over the years. These include Aids Care Ocean State, Providence City Arts, Providence Neighborhood Housing, and most recently, Ann has been one of the driving forces, along with Fr. Ray Nalon, in creating the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence. Reducing health disparities has been an important of her work."

Ann has been honored by many community organizations including the Fund for Community Progress.

Senator Jack Reed, a friend of Sister Ann, called her a visionary, saying: "She proves that one person can make a difference. Her leadership and altruism inspires us all to make significant contributions with our lives toward the betterment of our community and we applaud her shining example of humanitarianism and good will."

Senator Lincoln Chaffe said, "Her optimism, faith and gumption, guide her work as she helps people find a path that does not involve hurting others. Hers is an example we would all do well to emulate."

"... Sister Ann's work will last for at least another lifetime. Ann is a woman filled with joy, whose love of life and love of humanity is the compelling force that propels her forward as she continues to bring her passion for social justice to her community."

Team Talk

Deepening our global heart through the Federation

**Mary Ferguson, ssj
and Kathleen Imbruno, ssj**

The visit of the Chambery Leadership Team on October 30 proved an excellent send off for our trip to the Federation Leadership Assembly in Orange, CA the next day. The Leadership Team shared prayer and conversation with Sisters. Lorraine Delaney, (India), Luiza Rodrigues, (Brazil), Marianne Broda, (Denmark), and Susan Cunningham, (US), who compose the Chambery Team.

Following warm greetings and refreshments, the group gathered for prayer and reflection. Coincidentally, the prayer prepared for the Team meeting that day was based on our CSSJ charism. It is always amazing to see women from so many diverse cultures and backgrounds immediately find common ground from which to speak and act.

The Teams reflected on various trends in the world and in religious life, and on how we, as CSSJ's, can work together to confront the many challenges. The range of ideas, options, possibilities, is great.

The Chambery Team is especially grateful for the presence of our own Dorothy Pilkington as one of the founding members of their mission in Songea, Tanzania. Dorothy has worked with Chambery sisters from India and Brazil as they minister in areas of health care, education, poverty, and especially, for Dorothy, children orphaned by AIDS, many of whom are HIV positive themselves. Dorothy has expressed appreciation for the opportunity and challenge to live and work with CSSJs of other communities, languages, and cultural backgrounds, providing opportunities for growth not only for those to whom they minister, but for themselves as well.

The visit and camaraderie was truly a blessing which continued during our meeting in California.

The day after our meeting with the Chambery Team we were on our way to California to the Federation Leadership Assembly where we would again be in the company of Sr. Lorraine Delaney. Although the theme of the Assembly was "Seized by Self-Emptying Love," the focus was on developing our global heart. We were fortunate to have present the general superiors of both the Lyon (Sr. Janet Gagnon) and the Chambery (Sr. Lorraine Delaney) Congregations who could give us an international perspective.

Sisters Janet and Lorraine described the global face of the Sisters of St. Joseph in their talks during the morning session on Sunday. According to Sister Janet, there are 850 sisters from the Lyon Congregation in seventeen countries with considerable expansion in India. Their focus is on partnering and collaboration within their own group and with the other congregations. They are attempting to strengthen their groups in West Africa with the possibility of the Africans choosing to be a separate group. The internationality of Lyon is seen in its general council which consists of two Indian sisters and a Mexican sister along with Sr. Janet, who is from the U.S. Lyon, which is celebrating its 200th Anniversary in 2008, is already planning a big event in Lyon, to which they want to invite two sisters from every congregation that originated from our second founding.

The Chambery Congregation, founded in 1812 and currently headed by Sister Lorraine, has 2000 members on five continents. Their greatest expansion is also in India where they have 600 Indian sisters and are in the process of restructuring

CSSJs choose to act together for the universe

into four provinces. Their ministries are varied, with the majority being in education and health care. They are collaborating with LAC (Lyon, Annecy, Chambéry) on various programs. For example, Sister Carol Zinn did a program for the three groups, and in January of 2008, there will be a “Bearers of the Tradition” program in India for them. Together the three groups are launching a second mission in the Czech Republic.

The members of the Assembly were so inspired by the wonderful work that these international congregations are doing that one of the actions of the Assembly was to en flesh our desire to act from a global heart. To this end we made the following commitment:

We commit ourselves to deepening the reality of our global hearts as Sisters of St. Joseph. Rooting ourselves ever more deeply in our common charism, and desiring to act out of self-emptying love, we will strive to create and deepen mutual relationships among ourselves and dear neighbors around the world. We will network and collaborate in mission with Sisters of St. Joseph globally and act together for the life of the universe.

In order to realize this vision we affirm two significant actions central for all of us:

- The creation of a Global Coordinating Body and
- The development of a volunteer global immersion program.

One of the other actions that we took affirming our desire that the global heart be the lens through which the Federation makes its decisions and the leadership

teams make their decisions with their congregations was to endorse and support the direction of the transition plan for our UN/NGO representative to come from the global south. Sister Carol Zinn, our current representative, introduced the rationale for this decision, stating that the time had come for the voices of the south to be heard.

During the course of the Assembly, we received an update on the International Center in Le Puy. Although it is an expensive undertaking, it seems to be well worth the expense as the Center has become the place where not only Sisters of St. Joseph from all over the world connect with each other, but it is also the gathering place of our associates and partners in mission. It is well situated geographically since, when you look out of the windows, you are greeted with the familiar sights of the imposing statue of Our Lady of France and the towering church of St. Michel, landmarks of Le Puy. The Center sponsors meaningful programs each year.

Just before our pilgrimage to France, our lay partners in ministry from all over gathered around the theme of our charism. In 2008, young people from many cultures who are connected to Sisters of St. Joseph will share the CSSJ spirit and spirituality. The following year, a program based on an immersion experience in the History, Spirituality, and Mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph is planned for leaders in the Associate movement. Wonderful things are happening here at the cradle of our birth.

The concept of thinking and acting with a global heart continues to challenge us, to broaden us, to stretch us beyond ourselves, as we move forward into the future.

SSJ helps women in recovery process

Sr. Patricia James Sweeney

Hearing this statement from another community of Religious: "The Sisters of St. Joseph have their hand in everything. " aroused my initial pride, interest and gnawing curiosity. My decision to examine the truth of the statement alerted me to the work of so many of our Sisters. When I entered the SSJs in 1942, all the Sisters I met were teaching. I still remember the shock waves of disappointment (even indignation) that met Sr. James Margaret's decision, 30 years later, to leave the classroom to direct the Office of Religious Education in Worcester. True, in Springfield our earliest Sisters in the diocese had spent long hours visiting the prisoners at York Street jail, but that was extra-curricular service, not their primary work. How our ministries and priorities have multiplied since then.

We have (consciously or not) followed the example of our founding Sisters to seek out what the needs are in any given area and then do something to fulfill them. In Le Puy it was teaching lace-making to help the women living in poverty, in Lyon silk-making filled the empty coffers of the widows and/or young families. Today, Sisters like Sr. Carol Allan are working night and day to restore homeless women to sobriety and freedom from drug dependency through the establishment of houses of recovery.

For over three years now, Sr. Carol has served as Program Director of both Rutledge House and Tranquillity House. These are under the auspices of the Open Pantry Community Services, Inc. Both houses are in Springfield - one in the South End and the other in the Forest Park area. Each residence is to house homeless women who are attempting to live clean and sober lives, free from drugs and alcohol. In addition to being responsible for the budgets for each house. Sister has to arrange interviews with other agen-

cies for the women, monitor their attendance at AA/NA meetings and counseling sessions, arrange in-service training for the women, and conduct urine testing while serving as Case Manager for each woman in the program.

In addition to these demanding duties, Sr. Carol is available 24/7 to be sure that the buildings are maintained. This includes lawn cutting, snow shoveling, cleaning apartments, collecting the rent and holding weekly house meetings. Attending Sheriff Department activities related to the women as well as the meetings of the Western Massachusetts Substance Abuse Providers Association make a busy day into a formidable task.

However, difficult as the position is, Sr. Carol has the satisfaction of seeing her clients move on to their own apartments while maintaining a clean sober recovery. Is it frustrating at times? Must she sometimes feel like giving up? Is she tired enough to sleep at night? Does she have time to sleep? Yes and No to the last question. Why does she keep at it day after day, week after week? She realizes how difficult it is for each woman to change her attitude and behavior towards her addictions. She also recognizes how little help our society and culture are in the recovery process. There is scant funding for counseling and health care and dealing with governmental organizations is frustrating.

Perhaps the saddest part of this story is the realization that people who could assist these women to a successful life do not treat them with respect when they learn of their sad history of addiction and/or arrests. On the other hand, again due to their past experiences, the women do not trust the systems that have failed them in the past and because they lack language skills they do not understand what is told them. Yet Sr. Carol makes the SSJ presence felt every hour of the day as she takes courage, patience and tough love into Springfield to these needy, deserving women.

SSJ recognized for dedication to Jericho

Mary Lou Lacey, ssj

For over 17 years, Patricia Johnson, ssj, has been part of the Ministry With Persons With Disabilities at Jericho in Holyoke. This fall, the Bureau for Exceptional Children and Adults and the Diocese of Springfield recognized Pat's presence and her accomplishments by giving her its Humanitarian Award for the year 2007. Jericho Director Joan Magnani, SSJ and Deacon Rod Szymczyk, associate director, presented the award.

Acknowledging Pat's many contributions, the award citation pointed out, "Often the work you do goes unnoticed. Your organized and efficient nature has helped all of us at Jericho keep on schedule. Without your gentle coaxing, we would never meet our deadlines."

Over the years Pat has been involved in just about every aspect of Jericho. An accomplished secretary, she applied her skills to organizing fund-raising events entailing work with volunteers, preparing mail for the printer, and ordering supplies needed for the projects. Jericho's golf tournament, an annual event, has especially claimed Pat's organizational skills and attention to detail as she prepares mail, keeps records of donations and fees; and attends to miscellaneous tasks such as painting and laminating signs. For 17 years Pat attended Board Meetings and prepared the minutes, agenda, and handouts.



One of Pat's favorite tasks has been preparing prayer services for daily Communion at Jericho. After the death of Rev. Robert Wagner, director of Jericho, daily Mass was no longer possible, so the staff and members of Jericho's spiritual community turned to communion services. Since then, Pat has created services for every liturgical season of the Church year.

"This has allowed me to use my artistic gifts," Pat reflects, "and I love doing it. Keeping well ahead of coming feasts, Pat continually updates the material and includes new ideas as they present themselves.

But at the center of it all are the disabled. "I've had the opportunity to meet them and their families and have been so impressed by how they interact. They are an example of Christ-likeness as they show such patience and love in caring for them."

Pat has served disabled people in their homes as a companion, training them in household chores and in preparing meals. This service is extended as she takes them shopping, banking, and eating out. "Whatever may happen, they always end up loving you and they demonstrate that love," she believes.

During her 53 years of dedicated service, Pat taught for many years. Later she served as diocesan secretary in Ecumenism in the Worcester Diocese, and she was secretary to Kathleen Keating, ssj, as congregational president.

Those attending the honors ceremony included Pat's brother Donnie and his wife Rosemary; her nephew Matthew and his wife Nicole; and her niece Jenny, as well as several Sisters of St. Joseph.

Roots, roles of faith community in Northern Berkshires

Natalie Cain, ssj

Natalie Cain was happy to have Sisters Kathleen Keating and Kathleen Kirley as part of her Community Conversation on the Roots and Roles of Faith Communities in Northern Berkshire at the recent Neighborhood EXPO.

This annual event of Northern Berkshire Neighbors, a program of the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition in North Adams, brings the community together to learn about one another and celebrate the life of the community. Storytelling sessions involve residents of all ages and backgrounds in conversation around a variety of topics, giving people an opportunity to learn about different cul-

Women's Spirituality Day

Women's Spirituality Day is scheduled for April 5. "Women, Water and the Flow of Life" will be presented by Suzanne Golas, csjp, Director of WATERSPIRIT, an ecology and spirituality ministry at Stella Maris Retreat Center in Elberon, New Jersey.

Suzanne is the NGO representative for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace at the United Nations where she concentrates on sustainable development and specifically water.

Areas to be covered include the fact that women are intimately connected with the flow of life. Water is intimately connected with the flow of life. What would a spirituality in which these three – women, water and the flow of life – converged look like?

"As the availability of clean, fresh water increasingly becomes a crisis, globally, regionally and locally, such a spirituality grows more meaningful, more relevant and more important. Let us explore this spirituality together," according to Suzanne.

tures of newer residents and appreciate experiences of the past that have shaped the area.

Recognizing the shift in the Catholic Community as Churches close and merge and keenly aware of the role St. Joseph's School played in the life of North Adams, Natalie seized the opportunity to invite two of her former teachers to share their experiences and the wonderful contributions the Sisters of St. Joseph have made since 1886. Prior to the event, she interviewed Kathleen Keating and wrote up a story for the EXPO booklet, which was given to over 300 people.

Close to 30 people attended the session from various faith communities in the area. Sr. Kathleen Keating began sharing her thoughts by saying: "We have such happy memories of North Adams. Every time we think of it we just smile. Those were magic years in our lives." Sr. Kathleen Kirley highlighted the role that Catholic Schools played in an immigrant Church, helping various ethnic groups integrate into and shape the country.

While everyone enjoyed stories, memories and musings of the roots, they also shared present shifts and possible roles of faith communities together will play in our culture.



Sister Natalie Cain talks with Sisters Kathleen Kirley and Kathleen Keating,

Photo by Wendy Hammerle

What's new in the Justice and Peace Office?

Roberta Mulcahy, ssj

In late August the J&P office was moved to a room beside the chapel and across from the Peace Garden. (Is someone trying to tell me something about more time for prayer?) The move was necessary due to work in the Senior Housing Building. Our new space is large and very comfortable. The SEED office is also located in this space and is convenient for Ann and me to coordinate our Ecology work. Please stop by and visit.

The Justice and Peace Committee has had some changes also. As you know, membership is always open to associates and sisters. Committee members take responsibility for reflective/shared prayer at each meeting, information about local and global issues, UN, Death Penalty and SRI updates, happenings received through the office and actions needed to fulfill our Chapter Commitments. Numbers may be small at monthly meetings yet the commitment of our community to Justice and Peace issues continues through the "extended membership" of our sisters and associates felt through prayer, ministry wherever we are, and actions taken through our e-mail requests. We are deeply grateful for your prayers and support and invite you to please continue!

Our goals for the year include re-looking at past SSJ Public Statements such as War, Human Trafficking, Immigration and Non-violence. These issues and others challenge us to the "more" and to work in collaboration with LCWR, USCCB, the Federation and others. And, speaking of challenges, the political scene for 2008 will keep us reflecting, reading and acting so that our commit-

ment to the poor is not forgotten. We will also be sending you information from the Center of Concern called "Election 2008: Voting the Common Good." www.coc.org/election2008. Please check this out.

Another part of our work, the concept of *Socially Responsibility Investing*, has grown dramatically over these many years. More and more corporations are engaging in dialog with shareholders rather than waiting for resolutions to be filed. This is encouraging for all of us, especially when we understand our part in an economic system that seems overwhelmingly to be favoring the rich and depriving the poor. Our membership in Inter-Faith Center for Corporate Responsibility, our attempts to dialog and file resolutions with corporations, and our choices of stocks to hold for advocacy give us hope that we are working for economic justice and systemic change.



Work continues on the new entrance and elevator for Mont Marie Health Care Center. This is in the courtyard between the chapel and the Health Care Center.

Photo by Jim Willemain

Advent prayer day -- continued from page one

birth with its attendant pain and joy, she challenged us to this same pain and joy as we go through the birthing process of bringing about something new, something that will bring new life. As Wanita asked: "What is coming?, What is it we are bearing within our Community of Saint Joseph?"

The story of the Visitation was the basis of Mary Kate Birge's reflection. As Elizabeth in the Visitation story was sensitive to the movement of God in her and recognized the bearer of God, Mary Kate called each person present to recognize, as was done at the last Chapter, "a new incarnation of our charism in the women



Exterior and interior views of the beautiful doll house created by Sisters Jean, Joan and Maxyne Schneider. Opportunities for using the dollhouse to raise funds for the community are being considered.



who were asking for a new form of membership" - a new form of membership which is born from the call of the Spirit. She likened entering into this new form of membership as entering a new season, a time similar to Advent. For we are like Mary and Elizabeth, recognizing the charism and waiting for the birth of what God has begun in us.

At the end of the day, Anna Marie Kane, ssj, recalled the day's commonalities - prayer, reflection and sharing.

We were reminded that we, and others, were called by the Spirit. As stated in all the reflections, God continues to be born in each of us. The birthing movement was recognized at the last Chapter. The time of birth is near at hand. What is this mysterious new life that is seeking a life-giving community? Are we open to the new movements of God in our lives?

Within each reflection, we were presented with the movements of the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Incarnation in this new life called the Community of Saint Joseph. Yet, questions remain and more discussion needed.

But like the story of Elizabeth who lived in hope, "nothing is impossible to God."

Questions were posed to us after each reflection concerning charism, incarnation, and birthing something new.

Like Mary and Elizabeth, we listened to one another and the God in us recognized the God-bearer of the other.

As Mary Ferguson noted, perhaps it is time for us to recall what attracted us to the Sisters of Saint Joseph, "to fall in love again; to go deep inside and remember why we are here."