



HOLY WISDOM

OUR GIFTS AND SOME WE BORROWED

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH
OF CARONDELET AND CONSOCIATES
ST. PAUL PROVINCE
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE
25TH CONSOCIUM ANNIVERSARY
2009

We're delighted to offer you this collection of wisdom from Sisters and Consociates in honor of the 25th Anniversary of Consocium in St. Paul.

This book contains words and images for your use in daily meditation. We wanted to fill in "ordinary time" between the holy seasons of Lent and Advent when CSJs have access to "Springtime of the Soul" and "Winter's Wisdom". Secondly we wanted to capture the wisdom of the CSJ community at this time for generations to come.

We asked for contributions from the community via Rapid Relays and personal requests and there was an immediate positive response.

Please feel free to use this collection in the way that best suits you. You may choose to read a page a day during morning prayer. Whatever your preferences, you are invited to be with each page in a very deep way praying with the scriptures of our lives as told in some of the stories. Perhaps you might relate the meditation to your experience with the person who contributed the piece.

Thanks to everyone who contributed. We regret we were not able to use some of them because the copyright holder did not give us permission.

Blessings and Peace,
The Editors



Ruby Hanson, Consociate



Susan Oeffling, CSJ



Pat Owen, Consociate



Christine Treanor, Consociate

Welcome to this moment—a moment which has emerged from all that has preceded it—a moment that contains all that was initiated in the first flaring flash of Light 15 billion years ago—that invites us to contemplate stars, sea, land, and relationships from which we've come—and inspires us to consciously participate in further emergence of creation. We are here in the lineage of great women and men, who like us, broke forth from stars and illuminated courageous thought and compassionate action. From the Hubble telescope, humanity has learned that there is not one galaxy, but 100 billion galaxies. We have further realized that we are not preeminent, but part of Universe. This consciousness—that all that is interconnected—invites us to transcend the hierarchies and empires that have defined us.

Jill Underdahl, CSJ from a Commencement Address she gave upon receipt of Master of Arts degree in Irenic Studies, peace and conflict transformation, on August 8, 2009.

Holiness means to be fully alive (just as God is fully God). Holiness means wholeness. If you are a fully developed human being (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually) and live a life of compassion within the context of God's love, you are holy! You are a mystic! To be holy, to be a mystic means to respond as fully as possible to God's call to love and compassion.

Eleanor Lincoln, CSJ and Catherine Litecky, CSJ

(from their online retreats at www.goodgroundpress.com)

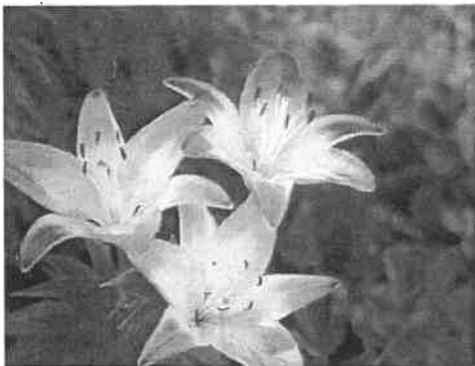


Fox at Dwelling in the Woods
Rita Quigley, Consociate

An Awakening

Look longingly and patiently
And you will see the shining stars of infinity.
Not only in the skies above,
But in the caring creatures that we love.

Mary Margaret Langteau, CSJ



Tim Dickie

A heart, sad, heavy.
Like a rain laden flower
Bursts forth in light.

Helena Sheridan, CSJ

A Blessing for Your Labyrinth Walk

May you meander the labyrinth's path
within the present moment of your life story.

May you step into the labyrinth with
your depth questions, sorrows or grief.

May you bring to the labyrinth
your dreams and joys, hopes or thanksgivings.

May your walk challenge and teach when needed,
and open your heartmind to possibilities.

May you explore in the labyrinth
your wisdom, courage, compassion and sincerity.

May your walk offer creative insights,
calm focus, and a lift for your spirit.

May you relish the experience of the walk.

May you discover your essence of wellness,
as you step-by-step and turn-by-turn
dance this form of body, mind, and spirit prayer.

Barbara Kellet, Consociate

I have many holy cards, all placed erratically in books of prayer. Most are photos of places I have travelled to, including the North Shore. Others are memorial cards of people I love and who love me; still others are note cards from family and friends. And there are a few opinion articles from editorialists and columnists among the batch, too.

Among my favorite holy cards are two reflecting the statue art work of Mary Southard, CSJ. One is a photograph of Sister St. John Fontbonne; the other a card of Joseph on the Journey. Both Sister St. John and Joseph are depicted as walking on the day's journey with blessed purpose. I like to think Sister St. John is on her way down the hill from the motherhouse in Lyons to visit her many friends, some of them quite poor, in the Fourviere neighborhood. The smile on her face is reminiscent of the simplicity, joy, and prayerfulness of John XXIII. And then there is the holy card of Joseph, walking at quite a stride, with purpose, head up, shoulders back, knowing his destination. I imagine him as having grown secure in his life's purpose and always ready as husband, father, neighbor to lend a supporting hand.

Walking, I think, was important to Sister St. John and to Joseph. That gift of mobility, often prayerful, brought them closer, each day, to God and to neighbor.

P.S. Do you have your 10,000 steps in today?

Mary E Kraft, CSJ



Submitted by Mary Ann Brenden, Consociate



Pat Owen, Consociate

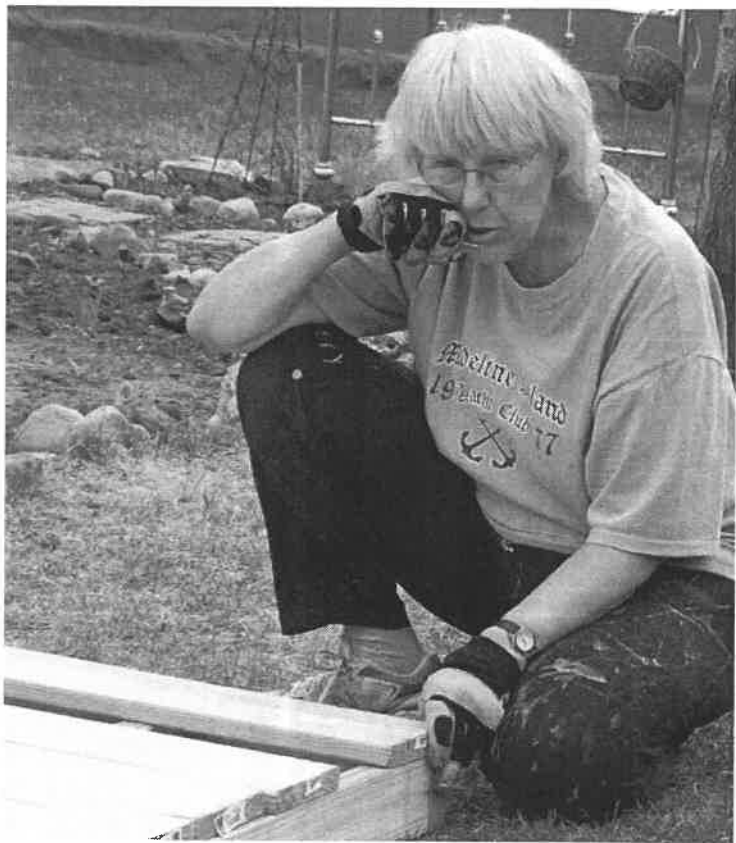
On Leadership

Individuals and nations have the potential to lead by the example of power and the power of example.

A child obtains a desired toy by striking the one who holds it. The US obtains its objectives in Iraq by dropping bombs, “strike and awe.” Both are displays of power that we know all too well.

The power of example is a living witness to the stories of individuals and nations. Stories nurtured by faith and enduring values give identity and meaning to life. Life well lived has the capacity to guide, heal and transform the brokenness in ourselves and our world. It is life giving leadership.

Mary Hasbrouck CSJ



Submitted by Baya Clare, CSJ

Blessed are the peacemakers...

A K-12 charter school on the East Side of St. Paul, Community of Peace Academy, is teaching students negotiation skills. The kids told a *Pioneer Press* reporter that they liked the school because they don't have fights on the playground. Their lives reflect what they are learning. Six principles underlie the peace curriculum, and every day the students recite these six principles. If occasionally a student causes me trouble, a teacher will take the child aside and ask, "Which principle did you forget?" No blaming, no punishing. They talk it out, build the peaceable kingdom bit by bit. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Am I a peacemaker?

What principles underlie my life?

What is my response when I forget one of them?

Betty McKenzie, CSJ



Submitted by Pat Owen, Consociate

New Moon

like the new moon
born in darkness
my faith has been

it is gradually unveiled
illuminated by God's Love
till it is fully aglow

then that part begins to wane
tumbling back
into the darkness of the Mystery

silently, sightlessly
moving into a new awareness
which will be born
with the next new moon

Celia Abbott, Consociate

Meditation

I sit, seeking the stillness.
But it does not come.
Is it nestled in the noise?

Susan Oeffling, CSJ



Jean Dummer, CSJ



Painting by Renee Sonka, Consociate Candidate

*“Your body is an ocean rich with hidden treasures.
Open your inmost chamber and light its lamp.”*
~Mirabai~

I painted this composition on location on the North Shore of Oahu. I am particularly drawn to it in the winter months because both the painting and the memory help satisfy my longing for warm weather. When I take the time, I can hear the ocean, feel the breeze, and even taste the salt in the air as I look at it. The ocean inhales and exhales her water similar to how our lungs inhale and exhale our breath. Her rhythm stems from the pull of the moon, our rhythm rooted in our pulsing hearts. The rocks are stable amidst the movement, like our bones grounding our fluid bodies. I hope you can use this painting and these metaphors to cultivate gratitude for your breath, body and spirit.

Renee Sonka, Consociate Candidate

Creator and Giver of all Life, we Praise You for the glory of Your creation and the gifts which we receive from Your Hand.

We believe it is Your intent for all people to have that which protects human dignity and sustains a healthy life.

Toward this we will focus our energy

We believe we are to live well together as community, seek the common good, resist widening disparities between those who have too little and those with more than enough.

Toward this we will focus our energy

Attend to our Hope, Creator God, as we strive to meet the unmet needs of all who stand at our door.

Amen
May it be so

Gina Webb, CSJ

Spirit Guides

You know when you meet a Muse
who has the power to change your life.

What keeps me from following mine?

Two imposters that steal away our lives - Time and
Fear.

Everyday I visit the door of commitment.

I battle the contenders for my time:

my work, my education,

my husband, my mother-in-law,

my friends, my grandchildren....

Everyday there is one contender I cannot vanquish:

Fear

of failure

of not pleasing

of retribution.

Everyday I get smaller and more uncomfortable.

The invitation came but once: "Come, Follow Me"

Hold onto my hand

Before I disappear.

Marilyn Michael Woolley, Consociate

A Contemporary Version of Psalm 23

The Lord is my pacesetter, I shall not rush.
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals;
He provides me with images of stillness
Which restore my serenity,
He leads me in ways of efficiency
Through calmness of mind,
And His guidance is peace.
Even though I have a great many things
To accomplish each day, I will not fret,
For His presence is here;
His timelessness, his all-importance,
Will keep me in balance.
He prepares me for retirement, refreshment, and
In the midst of my activity
By anointing my mind
With His oils of tranquility
My cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness
Shall be the fruit of my hours,
For I shall walk in the pace of my Lord
To dwell in His house forever.

~Toki Miyashina~

Submitted by Marquita Barnard, CSJ



Ice on Lake Superior
Rita Quigley, Consociate

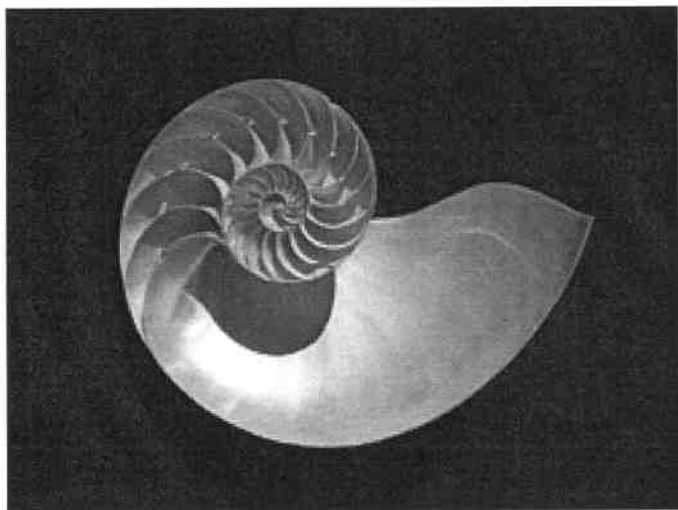
Reflecting on *Caritas en Veritate (Charity in Truth)*: “the environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility toward the poor, toward future generations and toward humanity as a whole.”
Pope Benedict

This section of Benedict’s new encyclical flows from the Gospel that all creation is sacred and can draw us closer to our Creator--- for beauty reflects the goodness and generosity of God.

Am I open to appreciate what my eyes behold? What am I seeing?

This weekend I will take time to be outdoors and give thanks and praise for such awesomeness! Oh, loving and gracious God who knows how to manifest such extravagant love of beauty in color and shape, I thank you.

Marie Grossman, CSJ



Lisa Moriarity, Consociate

The Travel Toolkit

"He is, nevertheless, the son of a Carpenter." Mt 13:55

Did the Holy Family take a plane on their flight to Egypt? I suspect they did. My Saint Joseph statue holds a carpenter's plane and saw! With his toolkit, Joseph accomplished his vocation to love and serve Our Lord and Lady. When I write reports and plays, I best accomplish my tasks with familiar instruments, like Joseph did. On my Consociate journey, the entire congregation of the Great Love of God has patiently helped me to recognize and use the tools gifted to me for accomplishing my call to genuine unity with God and neighbor, everywhere: Gentleness, Peace, and Joy.

Mary Reinhardt, Consociate



Breathing Reflection

Many of us are familiar with the four elements: earth, water, air and fire.

There is a form of breathing that includes the elements as part of it.

First earth:

Breathe in deeply through the nose and exhale fully through the nose

Notice the experience of being grounded

Repeat at least 5-10 times

Transition to water breathing:

Inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth

Experience the going with the flow

Repeat 5-10 times

Then air breathing

Inhale through the mouth and exhale through the mouth

Experience being light hearted

Repeat 5-10 times

Finally fire breathing

Inhale through the mouth and exhale through the nose

Experience the heat in the nostrils

Repeat 5-10 times

Try this daily and settle on to your favorite form.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

My spirituality has changed from when I was a teenager. Then, my emphasis was on pious devotions; I thought that was a sign of holiness. It wasn't until I was about 24 years old, working at a hospital that I came in touch with death. No one in our family had died except a 90-year-old uncle, and that was expected. Experiencing death and grief at the hospital brought home to me how important it is to lead a moral life.

About that time I also had the opportunity to hear Mulford Q. Sibley, a political science professor at the University of Minnesota. He turned my head right around. He talked about social justice, the inequities. That's when I realized I was part of the privileged class. He opened my mind up to the system, how unfair it was.

Then, at about the same time, some of our CSJ sisters like Char Madigan and Rita Foster were doing public demonstrations around the same inequities. Honeywell was building indiscriminate weapons just a mile from my house. I started to join these demonstrations weekly. Sometimes there would be one hundred people or more, holding hands in a circle around the whole building.

Part I
Kate McDonald, CSJ

Part 2

I was inspired by Honeywell Project organizer, Marv Davidov, a very radical Jewish man who had a profound, powerful sense of justice. This also awakened in me a sense of our responsibility to bring about peace on every level. More and more of my own sisters, and Marguerite Corcoran, were drawn toward this. We started joining the many public demonstrations going on then. It seemed like when the United States was involved in anything worldwide, our response was a military response. It helped to me to grow stronger against violent response. Violence begets violence; hardly a way to come to peace.

We began to get a reputation for taking a stance against this military response and violence. Mike Hazard asked us to be in a video featuring our “activism” and the next thing we knew we were getting calls from high schools and colleges, asking us to share our experiences and journey of promoting peacemaking.

Kate McDonald, CSJ

Part 3

More and more I've begun to realize my spirituality is centered around my responsibility to promote nonviolence, and to go the route of non-violence myself. It's really a challenge to believe in this to the point where I feel like I could not act violently even if I had to defend myself. I want to continue helping young people realize that this is a way to live a life of honor.

I'm a follower of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, and I pray for the strength to continue this was of life until my dying day. I'm ready to line up with the people who say, "Not in my name will you kill other people—soldiers, men, women, and children."



Kate McDonald, CSJ

I did not come to this place on my own; God lead me here through specific people whom I love and through the lives of Sisters and Consociates who, over many years, made this community the beautiful place it is today. The CSJ community transforms every aspect of my life. While my job of regulating energy utilities is the same, it is transformed into an opportunity to serve people whose names and faces I may never know, but who are now “dear neighbors” to me. When my church asked me several years ago whether I would consider helping out with the St. Paul Area Council of Churches’ Project Home program, I felt strengthened in saying “yes” because of the CSJ community. The CSJ community strengthens me to care for, and receive care from, my family and friends. I am learning from the CSJ community how to do more with less, how to call others forward to serve, how to trust that God will provide whatever is needed, how to enjoy the beauty of this world, and how to see the connections to God and each other that God gives us every day of our lives as we serve God and the dear neighbor. The CSJ community is a joyful inheritance from my family and from those who have gone before us. As always, God will lead us as we serve God and the dear neighbor.

Kate O’Connell, Consociate

BACKYARD MEDITATION

GOOD MORNING SUN
RISING RISING
NEW DAY DAWNING
WATCHFUL WAITING
BLUE SKY CLEAR.

GOOD MORNING WRENS
CHIRPING CHIRPING
BREAKFAST COMING
WATCHFUL WAITING
DO NOT FEAR.

GOOD MORNING LIFE
THANKING THANKING
TOTAL GIFTING
WATCHFUL WAITING
GOD IS NEAR.

Terry Casey, Consociate



Celia Abbott, Consociate

“Where is God? God is everywhere, and in the new creation story, God is intimately within all things, in the stars and in the sun and even in the earth....I find it as easy to pray, ‘Our Mother, who art within the earth,’ as to pray, ‘Our Father, who art in heaven.’”

“I image God as being present within the earth out of which I and all humans have emerged... When I think of death these days, I imagine it as a return to Mother Earth, not the highest thing I can think of but the closest. My sense of salvation is not to depart from this earth... but to enter more deeply into the consciousness of the earth and into the arms of my loving Mother. Heaven is wherever God is.”

~Cletus Wessels, O.P.~

*Submitted by Mary Kaye Medinger
on the day after Cletus' 8/17/09 burial*

Used with permission of the publisher, Orbis Books. Cletus Wessels, The Holy Web: Church and the New Universe Story, 2000.



Live in Awe
Carol Gariano, Consociate

O GREAT SPIRIT,
Whose voice I hear in the winds,
And whose breath gives life to all the world,
Hear me! I am small and weak,
I need your strength and wisdom.

LET ME WALK IN BEAUTY
and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.

MAKE MY HANDS respect the things you have made
and my ears sharp to hear your voice.

MAKE ME WISE so that I may understand
the things you have taught my people.

LET ME LEARN the lessons you have hidden
in every leaf and rock.

I SEEK STRENGTH, not to be greater than
others, but to fight my greatest enemy. . . myself.

MAKE ME ALWAYS READY to come to you
with clean hands and straight eyes.

SO WHEN LIFE FADES, as the fading sunset
my spirit may come to you without shame.

~Traditional Native American Prayer~

Submitted by Connie Gleason, CSJ



*Twin Cities Pride Parade, June 2005
Submitted by Cheryl Maloney, Consociate*

One of my favorite times of the day is meal time. Our table very much reflects the life of this family. We sit around and share fun and laughter, memories, teasing, serious conversation and planning. There is often a mini lecture on life—purpose, lessons learned, etc.

There is always room for more at the table. In fact, there are six chairs at the table but it is rare that only six people eat a meal (even though only four of us live in this house). Around the corner is a stack of plastic stools that we are always pulling out to offer. Priests, friends, family, and visitors from other countries are often dropping in unannounced. They tell me of one meal where they dished up the food with two sandwiches on each plate. As they sat down to the table, the door opened. (The door is never locked and many people are so at home they come in without knocking.) Six new people arrived to eat. Just like that they grabbed a sandwich off of each of the plates to serve. Then more people showed up, so they cut each of the sandwiches in half. They always have a way to find room and food at the table for all.

What a wonderful world it would be if the whole world could learn and live this lesson!

Lillian Long, CSJ

(from her blog about her work in Southern Mexico working at Albergue Jesus el Buen Pastor in Tapachula and Hogar de la Misericordia in Arriaga, at www.llintap.blogspot.com)

Building A Fire

Sparking dead wood may be a difficult task,
A battle against green and damp;
Sometimes it takes a fuel filled source
To energize a reluctant pile.

With a bit of paper and a ready match,
The blaze sputters and catches.

So it is with us,
Green youth full of sap,
Needs a fiery prod or subversive charisma,
To set afire passion,
Whatever its target.

Burnt out charcoal can be inflamed,
Rubbing against such zeal,
Then the sparks ignite
Like a nuclear reactor.

Wind is helpful if moderated,
Air encourages that intense glow,
And fans even a flame or two.
Ember by ember, a movement builds.

Rosita Aranita, CSJ



Baya Clare, CSJ

Haiku

One with all in God.
I cannot grasp the mystery.
Help us live as one.

Susan Streff, CSJ

Holy One, in every moment we live in your expansive love and your tender embrace. All around us we behold your presence. All around us and within us life emerges, fresh and new, vital, sparked with zest. May we continue to expand our lives and our living, accepting the challenge and the responsibility to be co-creators with you.

May we embrace all the gifts you have give and use them well, in love and for love. May we use our gifts with wisdom and with courage celebrating the connectedness and seeing the expressions of your love everywhere.

May our actions and our attitudes generate unity and our love bring us to communion. May we live in such a way that generations to come will look at us in you and say, "Radically amazing!" Amen.

~Judy Cannato~

Submitted by Mary Margaret Deeney, CSJ and by Liz Kerwin, CSJ

Used with permission of the author. Judy Cannato, Radical Amazement: Contemplative Lessons from Black Holes, Supernovas, and Other Wonders of the Universe, Sorin Books 2006.



Tim Dickie

Warm light, Spirit shone
On red winged bird and tulips
Keep hope around me.

Helena Sheridan, CSJ

Prayer for Life

Loving God
who created both life and death
and are greater than either
help us choose life

Where there is pain
move us to heal

Where there is sadness
move us to listen

Where there is abuse
move us to freedom

Where there is poverty
move us to generosity

Where there is misery
move us to comfort

Where there is despair
move us to hope

Where there are lies
move us to truth

Where there is fantasy
move us to humility

Where there is isolation
move us to community

Where there is exploitation
move us to solidarity

Where there is inflexibility
move us to imagination

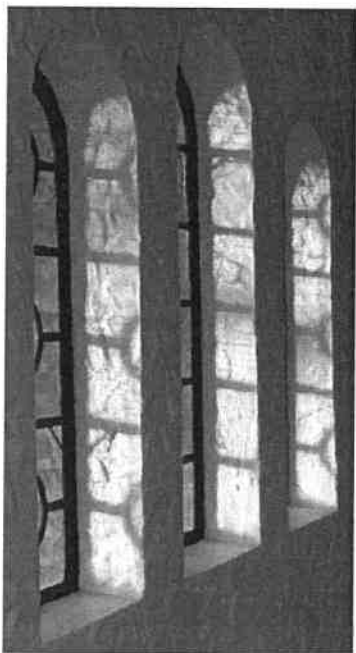
Where there is violence
move us to peace

Where there is separation
move us to reconciliation

Where there is division
move us toward unity

In everything we do
Creator of all
move us toward You

Baya Clare, CSJ



Baya Clare, CSJ

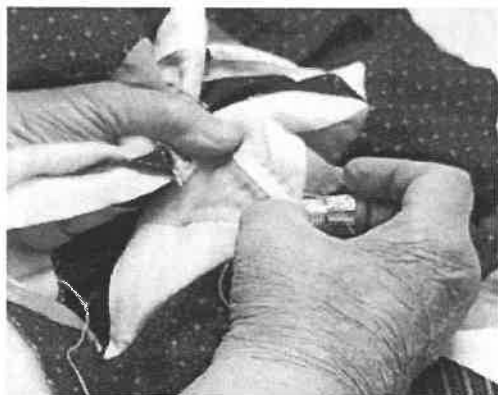
“Lord, Make my life a window for your light to shine through and a mirror to reflect your love to every person I meet.” ~*Robert Shuller*~

Submitted by Dolores Oakes, CSJ

Musing While Quilting

As I sit here quilting, I think about the woman who made these blocks. I bought these antiques several years ago and finally got them together in a quilt. Is the blue chambray fabric from her husband's shirts, just like the ones my Uncle Jim wore on the farm? Are the red prints scraps from shirts, dresses or underwear? I marvel at the tiny pieces she put at the end of a star point to make it perfect? How many hours did she put into making these treasures? What was she like? I muse and think about her. I hold the quilt with reverence!

Mary Lou Murray, CSJ



Submitted by Kathryn Ross

The Empty Tomb

in disbelief – I stare
where I know You were -
uncertain what I feel
mourning or possibility?

the reality of yesterday
is no longer overpowering
yet I can but weep when recalling it
how can Your ending
truly be a beginning

I see You are not here
yet are You truly gone?
I go looking everywhere
suddenly You are before me

not understanding still
how You fill a space
by being gone –
even if I could touch
what I used to know –
now it would no longer
be enough

Celia Abbott, Consociate

Christian discipleship challenges all of us to promote and live in peace. It involves responding to the spiritual gifts of others and to our own gifts. Paul advises us that many spiritual gifts are given to each of us for the benefit of all: not only peace, but also wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, and love (I Cor. 12:4-9). As we read Paul's words today, we can apply them to a much broader scope including how we live within our global environment.

As a Christian disciple how can you respond to this truly “awesome” concept? Which of the spiritual gifts that Paul mentions in I Corinthians (wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, and love) do you live out most strongly for the benefit of the earth community? What more can you do with this gift?

Eleanor Lincoln, CSJ and Catherine Litecky, CSJ

(from their online retreats at www.goodgroundpress.com)

A Gift from God

“I’ve tried every kind of prayer: prayer with scripture, the nature routine, the Eucharist thing, the rosary and all the traditional prayers. Recently, what has been BIG for me is to SIT DOWN & SHUT UP! JUST BE QUIET. Don’t worry about how I’m going to fill the prayer time, what I’m going to say, if I have a scripture passage or a plan. For me it’s TAKING SPACE EVERYDAY, convenient or inconvenient, TO SIT DOWN TO CHOOSE TO BELIEVE I AM IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ONE WHO LOVES ME MOST, AND BE THERE; BE STILL WHERE LOVE MEETS LOVE, BETWEEN GOD AND ME.

What happens in that time is different every day. It’s how God visits the hungers of the soul, or the hurting soul, or bruised soul or a discouraged soul or a happy soul. In that time I said ADSUM – Here I am IF THAT’S PRAYING.”

Written by Father Gregg Tolaas Submitted by Joanne Turgeon, CSJ, who writes: “He’s been such an inspiration to me. He had cystic fibrosis all his life. (He was a diocesan priest.) He wrote of his experience with prayer in an article in Praying, July 15, 1989, and has inspired me ever since. Fr. Greg died about 5 years ago in his 40’s – a real miracle of life with such a disease.”

Dear Consociates,

Blessings abound as we celebrate your 25th anniversary. I am glad we decided in the early days of planning not to start with a lot of structure, and let it develop. The consocium has grown beyond my imagination.

I am blessed and heartened when I listen to your statements of commitment, what your association with us means to you.

You have enriched our community immeasurably by your enthusiasm, energy and commitment to live our values and mission, as we endeavor to love God and the dear neighbor without distinction.

Thank you for journeying with us.

Florence Steichen, CSJ

Is it divine?
This book with over 1100 chapters
Thousands of verses
Written by men
It tells a story
It sings a song
It gives us rules
And yet,
It holds us down
It makes us stop
It makes us listen
Does it tell about women?
Does it favor one group over another?
Is it just a book?
If a woman had written it, what would it look like?
What would the world be like today?
What would the world have been like then?

Jean Strehlow, Consociate

Ginger's Story

I graduated from Pine Island High School in the spring of 1963. My illustrious classmates on the Annual Yearbook Committee decided that the caption beneath my picture should read “restless as a rumor.”

Could there be a more innocuous caption? What did it mean? Well, it didn't seem to matter enough to try and figure out. I simply shrugged it off and forgot all about it until I served on our 25 year reunion committee. The light finally clicked on when I realized most of my classmates were busy living the lives they chose right out of high school and were very happy people doing just that. I also began to recognize more fully that I had been living for more than twenty-six years in a marriage where the covenant had been broken by violence that began years earlier.

Part I
Ginger Hedstrom, Consociate

Part 2

Twenty years ago this summer supported by feminism, new theology, laws protecting battered women, a battered women's advocate and dear friends, I decided that my life was more important than my broken, battered and violated marriage covenant. Divorce was scary and yet not scary at all. If all I could have was one room with a sleeping bag and a hot plate – and live free and safe - I knew I could and would do just that. And I would be happy!

Ginger Hedstrom, Consociate

Part 3

The 2007 Congregational Chapter “Called to Mystery, Called to More” helped me to reframe the language my classmates used in 1963. The Chapter helped me realize that life is really a mystery and being alive means being called to a more than mysterious more.

Ginger Hedstrom, Consociate

Part 4

Looking back to the summer of 1989, I am in awe of the faith and trust with which I stepped out and am utterly amazed at the life I now live as a woman free and safe, as a consociate-- woman “blessed among women,” a mom and grandma, homeowner of a healthy environmentally friendly senior living ready home in a safe neighborhood, a 2003 graduate of the College of St. Catherine with honors in theology and communication studies, and a 12 year employee of the Sisters of St. Joseph, now in the justice office who counts incredible people from Cambodia, Laos, Liberia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and all over the United States as friends and colleagues.

Ginger Hedstrom, Consociate

Part 5

On November 2, 2009, I will not celebrate 20 years as a divorced woman – I did not wish or hope for that outcome. I will celebrate with great joy 20 years of living free and safe, in hope and faith, peace with justice and joy, surrounded by others who know that life is a mystery calling us to more as we “move always toward the profound love of God and neighbor without distinction.” It took me more than forty-four years of living to learn I had been surrounded all those years by people who did not believe in me – I now surround myself with those who DO!

Most of my high school classmates are now retired, some for more than 15 years. After hearing about my life recently one said, “Well Ginger, some of us are just late bloomers.” My response is that some of us blossom and grow forever when we are surrounded by people who believe in us, celebrate the mystery that is life and call us to reach higher, dig deeper and risk our lives into the more of who we are mysteriously becoming.

Ginger Hedstrom, Consociate

Moving slowly, walking softly,
I continue to move always towards
the love of God and neighbor
without counting or keeping score.

Moving slowly, walking softly,
I seek to view things differently
than I have before.

Moving slowly, walking softly,
I place my hands into the earth
touching that which is the soul of my
being also.

Moving slowly, walking softly,
I want to explore more of what is within
and around my very being and to tell others
“you are loved.”

Moving slowly, walking softly, with thee.

Althea Johns, CSJ

Creator, source of love, light and all good,
who dwells within me, help me to know and to
delight in your presence at the very center of
my being.

Lead me on the path that I should go,
and let me feel the joy of absolute
self expression.

Ruby Hanson, Consociate

Examen

So what do I come with tonight, Divine companion of my soul?

The whirling struggles of wants and thoughts and fears that stifle and throw me back ever to the safety of the known, though lifeless and sterile it may feel.

Awaken me. Guide me, vast and timeless lover of my soul.

Let me be grateful. Let me see clearly with wisdom.

Let me risk.

Guide me, guide me, you who direct the stars of the skies and the waves of the seas.

And I shall be held by you.

Linda Crosby, Consociate

Minnesota Reflections

Earth's bounty celebrated
Sun-kissed trees burnished crimson and gold
Morning's first light reveals mist-laden ponds
Winged flight for southern retreat

Children kicking dappled leaves in their path
Blanket wrapped cheers at fall games
Glowing hearth's pungent fragrance tip the nose
Bike riders race home the setting sun

Scents of apple crisp welcome in
Children dillydallying before schoolwork
Adults savoring last warm nights
Energy pulsed dogs chasing one last rabbit

Firelight's glow reflects wistful moments
Cherished times shared
Curled with book
Or laughter over dinner.

Mary Louise Menikheim, Consociate



Dolores Oakes, CSJ

“To be alive is to look at a sunrise or sunset on a lake, mountain or over city roofs and let its glory take hold of you.” ~Source Unknown~

Submitted by Dolores Oakes, CSJ

Dancing in a Nebula

My mind transports me into the velvety, dark space,
Swiftly flying, I encounter a bursting star.

Rippling particles expanding outward,
Cast off wondrous hues of turquoise, purples and gold.

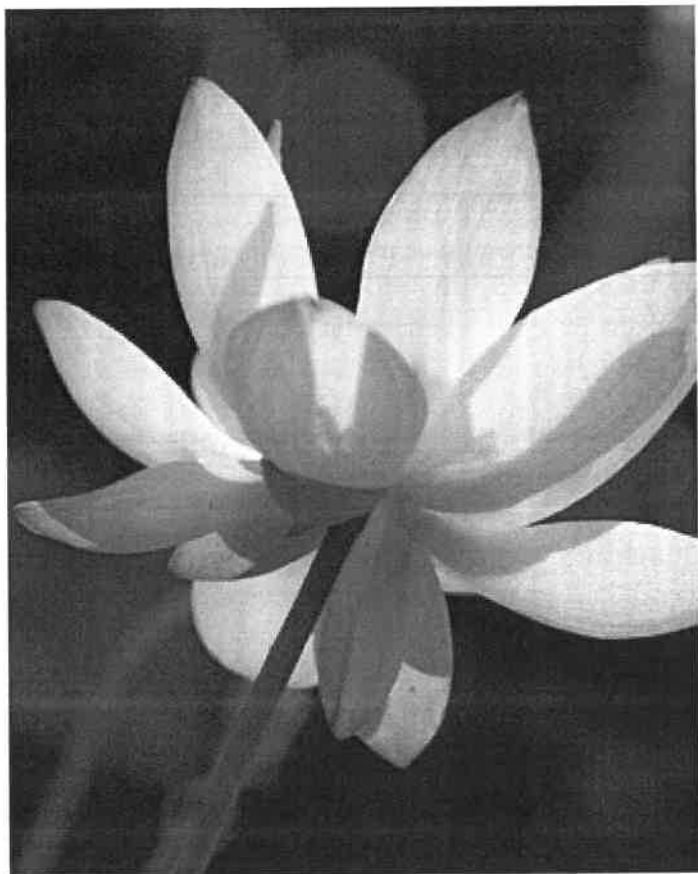
I am caught up in a concentric circle of energy,
Whirling like a dervish, leaping like an antelope.

Every atom of myself rejoicing in new life,
Exhilarated with boundless verve.

I join hands with ancestral spirits in a great circle dance,
Spiraling further into the galaxies beyond, but held
together by unseen threads.

Suddenly, I am alone with the great one,
Who cups me lovingly in her palm.
She whispers endearments then sets me gently on a
field of spring flowers.

Rosita Aranita, CSJ



Submitted by Margaret McRaith, Consociate Candidate

Reflect on the following passage which can show you a way to live fully and thus to give glory to God: *May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith: that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God* (Ephesians 3:17-19).

Eleanor Lincoln, CSJ and Catherine Litecky, CSJ

(from their online retreats at www.goodgroundpress.com)



Jean Dummer, CSJ

Travel as Prayer Meditation

1. Introduction

During the creation of this meditation book for the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Consociates in St. Paul, I had the opportunity to travel to Asia for business. My only previous experience with the continent was a year ago during a trip to Istanbul. The city is partially in Europe and Asia and one day we crossed the Bosphorus River to the Asian side. More on Istanbul and Turkey later.

This trip was to Singapore which is indeed a melting pot with Chinese and Malaysians and many others. Many Malaysians are Muslim and we were there for the beginning of Ramadan. An acquaintance, turned adventure buddy, took a ferry with me over to Indonesia for a day. There was a stunning difference between the relative wealth of Singapore and the apparent poverty of Indonesia.

We pray for the poor peoples of the world.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

2. Depth and Delight

I delighted in the variety of people and contrasts such as:

The TV screen on the ferry to Indonesia, which instead of scrolling sports scores or current news, had quotes about love, character and peace. Included in the selection were Kahlil Gibran, Victor Frankl and many from the Buddha.

The Indonesian taxi driver who passed through the intimidating gates and security of a resort to return my jacket that I'd left in his taxi.

The young and old who would stare into my face as I spoke to them in English which was clearly a second language to them.

We pray for the wisdom of diverse cultures.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

3. Ramadan

I love the holy season of Ramadan. It reminds me of the holy season of Lent. In Indonesia, I didn't hear the call to prayer as I've heard in other Muslim countries, I saw people coming together in mosques that stood next to Hindu temples. Small groups of people broke fast at the end of the day together. The people that I spoke to smiled joyfully when I would ask about their fast and express my reverence for this practice.

The large food court was practically empty during the lunch hour once Ramadan started. Most shops would state if their food met the Muslim requirements (Halal, no pork). One sign said "We serve all cultures and religions. No Pork."

Pray with me for our brothers and sisters of other faiths who desire to follow God's will.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

4. Diversity

Enjoying the beauty of the various shapes, sizes, complexions and features of people from throughout the region was a delight!

Whether in the office, out walking or exploring, the diversity of the peoples of this part of the world and globally is an amazing credit to our Creator's creativity.

Pray with me for those who are alike and those who are different.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

5. Community

We can be completely enriched by travel whether in the city, exploring a new neighborhood, throughout the state and on foreign land. Without leaving our community we can come to know sisters and consociates from Vietnam, Japan and Peru. I'd like this little series to continue but I'll bring it back to my comment about last year's trip to Istanbul that I mentioned in the introduction. My friend and I wandered into a mosque on our first day in Istanbul. We sat quietly in the women's area. As the mosque filled up, I felt joy and trepidation for the uniqueness of the experience. Then a woman greeted us with a handshake and a smile. Though we couldn't understand her words, we understood her welcome. Then the prayer started. I was so moved and had goose bumps from head to toe for being in the presence of all these prayerful people. I feel this way often when I attend community and Wisdom Ways ritual and prayer. Yet in the mosque, I didn't feel the comfort of friends and loved ones. Still, I felt the faith and love of people in a faraway land and it is unforgettable.

Please pray with me for those near, our closest companions and those far, who may appear very different, but are in so many ways, the same.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

Morning Prayer

At 17, in my new black clothes,
I sat with sisters row on rows
in early morn, in candle light...
the convent yard as dark as night.

At 70, I sit outside
in misty grey of early light
watch sun tread through the darkened trees
and gold finch as she sits and feeds
on millet and on flower seeds...

(her cold cereal I bought at Petco
to keep her happy, free and fatco).

New me, old me, still on adventure,
happy, eager, Texan, believer,
relishing our sweet communion
sisters, consociates, creation in union...
embracing all those dead and living
who share our mission of love and giving.

Linda Jo Taylor, CSJ



Jean Dummer, CSJ

Haiku

Gliding eagle,
Help me to soar up to God
And be one with all.

Susan Streff, CSJ

Act III, Scene ii

Someone has altered the script.
My lines have been changed.
The other actors are shifting roles.
They don't come on when they're expected to,
and they don't say the lines I've written
and I'm being upstaged.
I thought I was writing this play
with a rather nice role for myself,
small, but juicy
and some excellent lines.
But nobody gives me my cues
and the scenery has been replaced.
I don't recognize the new sets.
This isn't the script I was writing.
I don't understand this plot at all.

To grow up
is to find
the small part you are playing
in this extraordinary drama
written by somebody else.

~Madeleine L'Engle~

Submitted by Jean Kolles, Consociate

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The words of Isaiah 43: 1 became so alive at our friend's mother's funeral. A wonderful banner had his mother's name on it, followed by: "I have called you by name, you are mine." What a wonderful image! It is God who calls us into the world. How fitting that the banner should name us as we go to our eternal life with God! He is with us at all our beginnings, in-betweens, and endings. How appropriate to name us when we are called to come home to Him. Death is actually the greatest beginning—of our time throughout eternity with Him. What a blessing to be called by name, by the Creator of the universe! Truly we are precious in His sight.

Joyce Dahlberg, Consociate



Tim Dickie

So calm, so quiet
Emerald trees praising God
In a dew bright dawn.

Helena Sheridan, CSJ

Crocus-Minded

It takes courage to be crocus-minded.

God, I'd rather wait until June,

Like wild roses,

When the hazards of winter are safely behind, and I'm expected, and everything's ready for roses.

But crocuses? Highly irregular.

Knifing through hard-frozen ground and snow, sticking their necks out, because they believe in spring and have something personal and emphatic to say about it.

God, I am by nature rose-minded.

Even when I have studied the situation here and know there are wrongs that need righting, affirmations that need stating, and know also that my speaking out may offend...for it rocks the boat...

Well I'd rather wait until June.

Maybe later things will work themselves out, and we won't have to make an issue of it. God, forgive.

Wrongs don't work themselves out.

Injustices and inequalities and hurts don't just dissolve.

Somebody has to stick her neck out.

Somebody who cares enough to think through and work through hard ground, because she believes and has something personal and emphatic to say about it.

Me, God?

Crocus-minded?

Could it be that there are things that need to be said and you want me to say them?

I pray for courage.

~Jo Sorely~

Submitted by Gina Webb, CSJ

Open yourself to all that is around and within you. Sit quietly and feel the energy surrounding you. Be conscious of your breathing and feel energy coming with each inhalation. Be aware of tension leaving you with each exhalation. Let yourself be rooted in Mother Earth and at the same time feel lifted upward to the Creator of all. Breathe with the world round you, with God.

Eleanor Lincoln, CSJ and Catherine Litecky, CSJ

(from their online retreats at www.goodgroundpress.com)

“Human love is the only proof we have of the love of God. It is also the only arms God has with which to love us here and now.”

~Joan Chittister~

Submitted by Dolores Oakes, CSJ

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benetvision.org.

Unity Pledge

I may not fully understand your culture,
Your background, your beliefs, or your way of life.
Or any other differences we may have.
But we cannot let our differences
divide us in our work.

I can't promise you I'll always hold my tongue
Or say the perfect thing that should be said.
And I know you may not either.
But we will keep talking to one another despite this.

We may not agree on what should be done
To help our world.
Especially now.
But we agree that the world can be helped
And we have both shown up here to do it.

I hereby pledge to share this work with you
In dignity, compassion, integrity and service.
Because by working together we proudly bring
Healing to our world.

~Source Unknown~

Submitted by Beryl McHale, Consociate

Let us walk hand in hand with Jesus,
as we make our way through the
gentle confusion of our present day,
and the promise of the future.

Patricia DeBlieck, CSJ
Mission, Texas



Celia Abbott, Consociate

A Song of Tikkun Olam

In the depths of our souls
we hear you always.

We are bold to sing of you.
We hear your song in all around us.

With joy we call you forth
from those silent and afraid,

And heap fresh embers
upon fires gone cold.

Baya Clare, CSJ

I like to use the expression about the mountain, that if you have faith strong enough or pray hard enough, you could move mountains. That concept served me well for a time. Then my faith changed once I met the mountain, the rock. I felt moved, and saw the connection between the Creator and the Created. Communion. What we do to the earth, we do to each other. In aging, on the journey, we have to come to grips with the challenge of staying connected, moving away from species arrogance. We are not the center of the universe, but an extension of it.

We are getting in touch with our original blessing and innocence, and there's a responsibility that comes with that. There is a burden of knowing these truths. The Constitution says "...we know these truths to be self-evident..." but truths are not self-evident until you know yourself deeply. And then there are profound ramifications for action.

The young people call us forward. They were the ones, during the Vietnam War, for example, to say, "hell no, we won't go."

I will continue to pray with and for "the mountain." I hope to continue to affirm people, however they choose a name or face for God/Goddess/Creator.

Jane McDonald, CSJ

You Whose day it is
Make it beautiful
Get out your rainbow colors
So it will be beautiful.

~Traditional Nootka Song~

Submitted by Connie Gleason, CSJ

What is remarkable about Paul's beautiful and optimistic messages to his communities is that he wrote them from prison. He was in prison when he wrote his long letter to the Romans, a treatise on Christian life. In this well-known passage from Letter to the Romans, he refers to "glory" (without using the word): *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways!* (Romans 11:33)

Eleanor Lincoln, CSJ and Catherine Litecky, CSJ

(from their online retreats at www.goodgroundpress.com)

Time of great peril and of great promise
Minds envisioning harmony and balance:
The Earth Charter in action and in blessing.
Indeed 25 years of the St. Paul Consocium:
Great blessing and great promise
Commitment to spirituality and justice
Another 25 years into the CSJ future...

Joänne Tromiczak-Neid, CSJ Partner in Ministry

Prayer Chain Prayer

Lord, Jesus, healer of our souls and bodies, during your life on earth, you went about doing good, healing every manner of sickness and disease, strengthening, curing, comforting, and consoling.

Walk beside these people on our prayer chain, Lord, carrying them, helping them through their pain and suffering, giving them hope for tomorrow. When their burdens chafe their shoulders and weigh them down and the road seems dreary and endless, the skies gray and threatening; when their lives hold no music, and their hearts are lonely, and their souls have lost their courage, flood the path with light, turn their eyes to where the skies are full of promise.

Lay your healing hands upon those on our prayer chain, Lord, so that they may live in your praise forever.

P.S. This prayer was composed by the CCW Catholic Christian Women of Holy Family and Our Lady of Fatima which I am a member of. We place all prayer requests on a memo and offer it to the parish as the prayer requests come to our attention.

Gayleen Touhey, Consociate

The 10th Station

I too feel like people stop
and jeer at me – exposed
What further shame
could nakedness bring?
What further ridicule
to what I hold dear?

How can the truest part of me
that should sing with joy
be filled with light –
be the target of such hate?

There is no reasoning of why
no logic or emotion to explain
all connections are lost
I can only wait till it is finished

praying to endure –
surrendering to the hope of death
and on the other side
resurrection

Celia Abbott, Consociate



Pat Owen, Consociate

May life's simple pleasures always bring
great joy to your life.

Vicki Musech, Consociate

Prayer

The birds sang my prayer today
As I sat in my chair, chasing random thoughts,
Seeking silence so as to know myself in You.

They sang, vesting my thoughts with harmonic
resonance,
Echoing out
And edging into my consciousness,
Pulling me in
Until our praise was one.

Angela Schreiber, CSJ



Rita Quigley, Consociate

Baptism

On the day you were born anew,
Grace, a gift from God, was given to you
To help you live each day for Him.
Then, someday you will receive another gift, heaven.
Wasn't God good, to let us be born again?

Mary Margaret Langteau, CSJ

Quiet time. When I said, “I love You, Jesus,” He was there on my left and hugged me. It was so good to see Him! We walked through an open area and entered a forest. Gradually, it got darker, but it wasn’t frightening with God’s Son at my side. Then we left the woods and sat down on a very large rock by the edge of the stream. We watched the water flow for awhile. It was quite rapid in the center, but it had tranquil tidepools near the bank. Christ pointed out that I can get a lot done when I’m in the center. However, I need to stop and replenish myself in tranquil tidepools. I thanked Him and agreed.

Joyce Dahlberg, Consociate

My Home-The Earth

It has been a lifelong challenge for me to be at home within myself.

At home, focused, still in my internal world. Be still and see that I am God.

I have come to know that for me that means finding my Center. The beauty of the earth is what leads me there on a daily basis. The external world of nature is my grounding point.

I know I am at peace when I can stand at the kitchen sink and see the blood red of the cardinal against the stark blackness of the bare tree branches and the freshly, fallen snow;

When I have stopped hanging cold, wet sheets on the clothesline in the Fall to listen to the honking of geese and to search for their majestic formation as they follow the ancient laws of migration.

Part 1

Kate Weyrens, Consociate

My Home-The Earth, Part 2

I have had moments of ecstasy at the ocean, on mountain tops,
And in the stillness of the northern forests.
But now, today, this moment
In the ordinariness of my life
The simplicity of my soul is strengthened, enhanced and focused
By the most minute beauties of the world around me.

During a game of charades, my granddaughter cupped her small
hands, rotated them slowly, in opposite directions and stood
expectantly...

“The earth?” I queried.

Morgan jumped up and down with delight at my answer.
Will the ordinary miracles of the earth be there for her when she
needs to focus her soul?

Kate Weyrens, Consociate

A prayer when starting the labyrinth:

Earth-shaker

All-provider

Foot-guider

Lead my way.

Pat Owen, Consociate



Grandmother Tree
Lisa Moriarity, Consociate

The gospels and our Constitution asks us to BE for others, to imitate Jesus and reach out to others in need. The dear neighbor is present to me as Gift.

As Jesus walked among the people, he saw who needed a word of encouragement, a healing touch, or a glance of love.

Now as I rise this morning, am I awake enough to express thanks for the good night's sleep. After slowly praying a psalm, and the day's gospel I think of what is on my "possible" agenda:

- Who will need an encouraging word?
- Does Mary need someone to take her to PT?
- Does Marie need someone to push her outdoors?
- Who would enjoy quiet time to listen to music?

Please Lord be with me to SEE those you want to serve through me. May I do it all lovingly with you.

Marie Grossman, CSJ

Prayer as Presence

Don't just do something, stand there –

It seems some people do so much. They know how to start places and programs – they start day care centers, they start clinics, homes for women and children, gardens, massage centers, peace house, habitat for humanity. They not only think of it, they start it. They do something about their ideas and dreams.

If I can't think up what to do, I can stand by them and with them.

90% of good living is showing up at good things.

Praying and doing are like scrambled eggs in the omelet of life, both equal and necessary.

As the Irish say, “Get down on your knees and thank God you're on your feet.”

Brigid McDonald, CSJ

Chicken Dance

I had never heard of the “Chicken Dance” before I moved to Minnesota. But at my husband’s family reunion, everyone formed a circle, turned, flapped their arms like chicken wings and clapped their hands! Since being introduced to it, I’ve heard the “Chicken Dance” music both at home and abroad. An accordionist played it on a boat on the Vlatava River, outside Prague. On our first night in Greece, at a neighborhood taverna, the band played it and we watched in amusement (and horror) as some Americans actually got up and flapped their arms. We heard it played by a street musician in Heraklion, Crete. What does this mean? Is the Chicken Dance a means of international communication? My imagination runs wild....Sunnis and Shias, North and South Koreans, Israel and Syria...all doing the chicken dance together! It beats guns.

Diane Gardner, Consociate



Jean Dummer, CSJ

Do you remember the Irving Berlin song with the line “When I’m worried and I can’t sleep, I count my blessings instead of sheep and I fall asleep counting my blessings”?

As I fall asleep at night I reflect back over the day. In chronological order I reflect over the day and the person/s who were a part of my day. I bless every person who touched my life in the day. It may be someone I met with, spoke with, saw, heard of or even thought of. All the persons in my life are a blessing to me, and I bless them at the end of the day.

Everyone and everything is blessing. Who are the people who touched your life today? Bless them now and tonight as you go to sleep.

Sweet dreams!

Carol Gariano, Consociate

One of the most remarkable concepts that Hildegard [of Bingen] introduced is the “greening power” (*viriditas*) that enlivens the earth. She said that all of creation, humanity in particular, is showered with “greening” vitality to bear fruit. She took to heart these words in John’s gospel: “*By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples*” (John 15:8) These words continue with the sentence: “*It was not you who chose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain*” (John 15:16).

Part I
Eleanor Lincoln, CSJ and Catherine Litecky, CSJ

Part 2

Hildegard recognizes fire also as a cosmic symbol of the Spirit. Its ever-changing form is mysterious. “[T]he light and heat that emanate from fire are indispensable to human well-being. It points to the greater fires in the universe, the glowing sun and stars, and the fierce lightening storms. All are powerful biblical symbols of the presence of God,” as Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ, notes in Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit (Paulist Press, 1993).

Johnson calls this act of creation “a Pentecost, a first and permanent outpouring of the fiery Spirit of life” (p. 48). She connects this with the contemporary scientific theory about the origin of the universe in a primeval explosion, called the Big Bang.

Eleanor Lincoln, CSJ and Catherine Litecky, CSJ

(from their online retreats at www.goodgroundpress.com)



Quote from Lucia Serena, persecuted only witness to the murders of 6 Jesuits and 2 others by US-trained military in El Salvador, 1989.

Submitted by Pat Owen, Consociate

Cat Faith

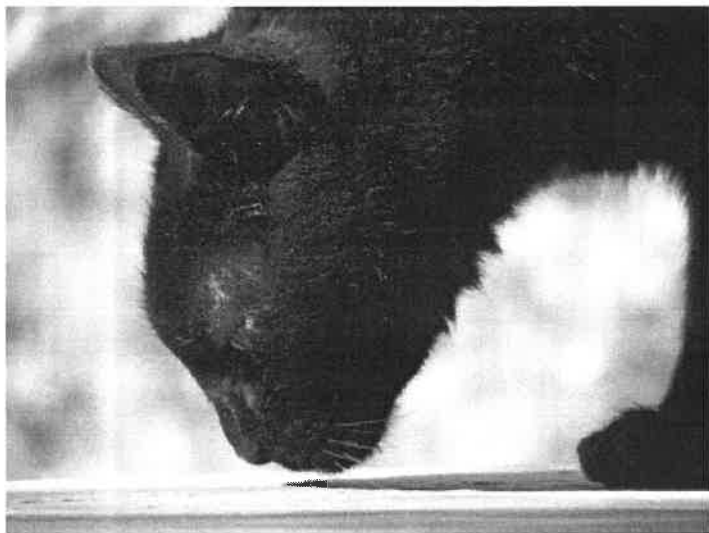
Energy clenched.

Bunched in haunches and shoulders
straining to know more deeply the bird in the bush....
on the other side of the glass.

Quivering desire to see, to touch,
fills your body with strain and intensity.

Would that I yearn so deeply, so completely
for you O my God.

Linda Crosby, Consociate



Baya Clare, CSJ



Submitted by Cheryl Maloney, Consociate

As the co-founder and executive director (1998-2005) of Hers Breast Cancer Foundation, Fremont, CA, I was profoundly moved when breast cancer survivors held and released white doves as a symbol of hope, empowerment, renewal and support at our annual fund raising even in Coyote Hills Regional Park.

Cheryl Maloney, Consociate

My son gave me a pretty gilded angel with round prisms in each wing, and a third teardrop-shaped prism forms part of its dress. Our kitchen faces east, so my window angel receives the morning sun. It creates rainbows all over the kitchen—different places and sizes, according to the time of day and angle of the sun.

In addition to God's covenantal promise, the rainbow has become, for many, a symbol of God's love. I have seen people stop their cars and stare at double rainbows overlooking a valley. Clearly, the rainbows are a quick reminder of God. You can imagine my joy, then, when I woke up Easter morning and discovered **twenty** tiny rainbows on my kitchen ceiling, and several more on walls and tables! What a gift.

Joyce Dahlberg, Consociate

**“God Ever Faithful, God Ever Merciful,
God of your people, Hear our Prayer”**

I heard this refrain during the prayers of the faithful at a little Franciscan parish in downtown Sacramento. The congregation served the poor in their community with love and respect. Now, I use it in my prayers and when I pray with my grandchildren.

We pray for the family, near and far.

**“God Ever Faithful, God Ever Merciful,
God of your people, Hear our Prayer”**

We pray for our friends, neighbors and loved ones.

**“God Ever Faithful, God Ever Merciful,
God of your people, Hear our Prayer”**

We pray with gratitude for what we liked about our day and for help in doing better if we made mistakes that day.

**“God Ever Faithful, God Ever Merciful,
God of your people, Hear our Prayer”**

We sing this prayer as needed and the kids love to sing it as they drift off to sleep.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

Some Simple Rules

- * Paddle or drift.
- * Lean too far, you tip over.
- * Tip over once in awhile so you remember
- * Scout rapids before running them.
- * In rough water, paddle on your knees.
- * Maps do not always reflect reality.

Sandy Dodson, Consociate

“Let the beauty we love be what we do
There are a thousand ways to kneel and kiss the ground”
~Rumi~

I love this poem!
It is so permission-giving, and honoring of
each individual, each path with its unique challenges
and opportunities.
It honors the myriad ways we find
our way back home – to our heart, to spirit, to our gifts.
Expression of these gifts then flows naturally,
beautifully.

Margaret McRaith, Consociate Candidate

Haiku

God, inclusive love.
In God connected to all.
Be, live, spread that love.

Susan Streff, CSJ



Sunrise at Timberlee
Catherine Mary Rosengren, CSJ

“God’s love is everlasting, yet comes to us new each morning.” Lamentations 3:23

Catherine Mary Rosengren, CSJ

It is Wednesday morning, Alliant Tech Vigiling Against Weapons Day.

The alarm yanks me out of bed. I stumble over to turn it off. I check the weather. It is damp and chilly. My bed beckons me back, but I glance at a picture on my dresser that gives me the push I need. The background in the picture shows the devastation and horrors of war. In the foreground is a tiny Iraqi girl, alone and with fear and terror written all over her face. I see in her every child of war.

And she is sacred. He is holy.

I think of David Korten's words, "By what name will our children's children call our time? Will they speak in anger of the time of great unraveling? Or will they look back in joyful celebration of the noble time of the Great Turning . . . when we learned to live in creative partnership with one another and the living earth, and brought forth a new era of human possibility?"

And a little child shall lead us.

Marguerite Corcoran, CSJ



Submitted by Pat Owen, Consociate

Go forth in peace.
Be still within yourself,
And know that the trail is beautiful.

May the winds be gentle upon
your face
And your direction be straight
and true as the flight of the
Eagle.

Walk in beauty and harmony
with God and all.

~Traditional Navajo blessing~

Connie Gleason, CSJ



Baya Clare, CSJ

Loving Kindness Blessing

(adapted by Joan Borysenko, Ph.D. in “The Power of the Mind to Heal”)

This expansive blessing begins with me or in your case, you. It’s meant to be said in first person and then expanded to community, county and planet. Start with deep breathing then say.....

May I be at peace.

May my heart be open.

May I awaken to the beauty of my own true nature.

May I be healed.

May I be a source of healing for others.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

Bring the thought of your family into mind and wish for them:

May you be at peace.

May your heart be open.

May you awaken to the beauty of your own true nature.

May you be healed.

May you be a source of healing for others.

Bring an image of our community into mind.

Wish for each person and their loved ones:

May you be at peace.

May your heart be open.

May you awaken to the beauty of your own true nature.

May you be healed.

May you be a source of healing for others.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

Then for our partners, friends and ministries:

May each of them be at peace.

May their hearts be open.

May they awaken to the beauty of their own true nature.

May they be healed.

May they be a source of healing for others.

For the Twin Cities community:

May we be at peace

May our hearts be open

May we awaken to the beauty of our own true nature

May we be healed

May we be a source of healing for others.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

For our country:

May we be at peace

May our hearts be open

May we awaken to the beauty of our own true nature

May we be healed

May we be a source of healing for others.

Finally for our earth, hanging like a blue green jewel in
the starry vastness of space:

May there be peace on earth

May the hearts of all beings be open

May we all awaken to the beauty of our own true nature

May we be healed

May we be sources of healing for each other.

Christine Treanor, Consociate



Tim Dickie

Hear wave upon wave
Whipped by restless, whistling winds.
Majestic presence.

Helena Sheridan, CSJ

“. . . in each of us and among all of us, there lives a midwife . . . we come to see that being together on the journey touches the core identity of who we are today and who we will be tomorrow. . . midwives of a future that unfolds in us even as we climb together.”

*Mary Whited, CPPS – Presidential Address,
LCWR 2008*

As today’s midwives – sisters, ACOF and other partners in ministry – we hold the mission of Jesus as well as our CSJ charism in common. Our call now involves both new responsibilities and letting go of familiar patterns. As midwives we are assisting in giving birth to something new. With firm faith and joyful hope let us move together beyond today into a bright tomorrow!

Catherine McNamee, CSJ

Stuck...

it happens

...no direction

...no inspiration

Walking in circles

...sky flat to arid ground

...parched breath

...no openings

Go inside

...close down

...listen more

Waiting in discomfort

Nothing to show

Present to the moment

Yearning

Silence

...whispers

...discovers

Dance of being

Swing across

...chasing dark shadows

Hesitation

...what was I thinking?

Imagination shivers

...but why not?

Shredding certainty

Answers evaporate

...trembling

...doubting

Stepping out

Where gravity evaporates

Floating in stillness

Somersault...into being

Freedom

What's to lose?

...only my soul

*Mary Louise Menikheim,
Consociate*

Haiku

Dew shines like diamonds
Glittering on green grass
God, so full of splendor.

Susan Streff, CSJ

Reflective Moments

I remember well the forty day silent Retreat that offered me many opportunities for solitude and silence. In those contemplative moments, I saw for the first time in scripture the word “amazed”. The disciples were amazed at what they saw of Jesus’ ministry.

Today I am amazed at how beautifully our community of Sisters and Consociates carries on the ministry of Jesus.

Judy Cannato, a CSJ Associate from Ohio, in her recent book Radical Amazement, describes her sense of wonder and awe at the ongoing expansion of the universe. She speaks of this phenomenon in terms of communion with God, with one another and with all of creation. Isn’t this what we are all about?

Loving God, thank you for all the wonderful things that are happening in us and around us. Continue to grace us with our most amazing presence.

Mary Margaret Deeney, CSJ



Jean Dummer, CSJ

Each morning as I awake I ask God to use me to increase Love in the world today. In this way I strive to intentionally align my day's work with God.

When I begin the day with this prayer, I find that I reflect back upon it more often during the day. It reminds me why I am here.

What will your morning prayer be? What is your intention for this day?

May God bless you in all things this day.

Carol Gariano, Consociate



Celia Abbott, Consociate

Sometimes referring to the cosmic sense expressed in the writing of John the evangelist and Paul the apostle, Teilhard de Chardin had a passionate sense of the world being full and vibrant with the presence of God. It became apparent to him that the presence of God reaches all the elements of the world through and in the body of Christ.

The more Teilhard came to know and experience the natural world, the closer he came to God. He recognized that those who seek God encounter God by turning toward the things of earth in love and reverence. For Teilhard the natural delight he took in life and all that exists was the goal of mysticism. It is said that “aliveness” radiated from him.

Eleanor Lincoln, CSJ and Catherine Litecky, CSJ

(from their online retreats at www.goodgroundpress.com)

“The day will come,
after harnessing space, the winds,
the tides and gravitation,
we shall harness
for God the energies of love.
And on that day, for the second
time in the history of the world,
we shall have discovered fire.”

~Pierre Teilhard de Chardin~

Submitted by Mary Louise Menikheim, Consociate

Awareness of God's People

Heavenly Father,
our hearts are heavy as we see people, made in your image, who are exposed to the elements and wonder if they will ever eat again.

Help us not to avert our eyes from the poor. We ask that you keep us focused on what your Son, Jesus, told us was the second greatest commandment:

To "...love your neighbor as yourself."

Lord, your Son also shared with us:

"...for whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister..." and
"... whatsoever you do for the least of my people, that you do unto me."

Father God, we seek to feed and house your lambs.

Please guide us, give us awareness, wisdom, strength and devotion to the cause of eliminating homelessness and hunger.

We offer this humble prayer in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

~David Wentzlaff~

Submitted by Florence Stephens

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Meditation

Who were you before you knew
you had to be
something?

You were breathing in,
breathing out.

Where were you before expectation, striving,
judgment and worry?

You are that still,
just sitting.

Just sitting in the middle of the cosmos,
knowing you belong
like the trees of the moon;
the clouds that gather, break apart
and reappear,
the wind that whispers or cries.

Just sitting,
each season rising and falling
within you.

~Carma Graber~

Submitted by Beryl McHale, Consociate

Used with permission of the author.

MEDITATION

THE KINGDOM OF GOD is not a place; but rather, a dimension of living where TRUTH, LOVE, JUSTICE, PEACE, EQUALITY, COMPASSION and HONESTY, are more important than anything else!

Jim Seaton, Consociate

The Litany of Harrowing

For uncovering of pain
For courage to walk towards ghosts
For dreams that answer questions
We give thanks to the Light of the World.

For companions who hear the healing
For tears which wash the soul
For scars which prompt compassion
We give thanks to the Light of the World.

For friends who speak the truth
For laughter which brings back balance
For words which bear no shame
We give thanks to the Light of the World.

For love which does not bind
For grace to desire wholeness
For covenant always kept
We give thanks to the Light of the World.

In Thanksgiving for CSJ Consociates

Hearts filled with gratitude and
hope, we give thanks for:

Those first committed visionaries

Miriam Cummings
Carmen Shaughnessy Johnson
Margaret Conant
Lisa Swanson
Chris Curran
Mary Agnes Chase

Their faithful loyal companions

Their steadfast, prophetic CSJ
guides

For the marvelous contributions
of those faith-filled
women and men
who have pledged to one another
and to the Dear Neighbor
their loving beings
and immense gifts

devotion
prophetic spirit
courage and allegiance
warmth and loyalty

and their dedicated lives as
publishers, spiritual director,
teachers,
volunteers, pastors,
childcare givers,
chaplains, coaches
doulas, Eucharistic ministers,
attorneys,
healers, musicians, nurses
educators, mediators,
consultants,
counselors and social workers
therapists, homemakers,
board members

each a prayerful witness
carrying together into the
future the mission of Jesus
as expressed in St. Joseph,
LePuy-Carondelet.

Lucy Knoll, CSJ

Haiku

Greet all with awe,
Hospitality, welcome,
Acceptance, wonder.

Susan Streff, CSJ

Homeless/ Holy Thursday

tonight
just as on the cross
Jesus
You have no home

the supper is over
all have left
You alone remain

there is no tabernacle
shrouding Your glory –
it stands open
empty as the tomb

You are on a side altar
flanked by candlelight
so even darkness
can't hide your nakedness

You wait
as all homeless do
to be seen
to have Your need recognized

in Your silence –
is the plea for compassion
for an open heart
a place to stay

Celia Abbott, Consociate



Suzanne Herder, CSJ

May the sun
bring you new energy by day,
May the moon
softly restore you by night.
May the rain
wash away your worries
May the breeze
blow new strength into your being.
May you walk gently
through the world and know
Its beauty all the days of your life.

~Apache Blessing~

Submitted by Suzanne Herder, CSJ



Jean Dummer, CSJ



Tim Dickie

Beauty reflected
Glory is response to God
Peaceful, joyful, love.

Helena Sheridan, CSJ

Signs of God's Love Today

God's love notes,
Unending and unconditional
Gentle rain on parched land,
 Birdcalls
 Flowers that appear, as by magic,
 Where you least expect to see them.
Sunshine after a violent storm.
 Neighbors helping each other
 To restore devastated homes.
Children laughing,
 Running, innocent, free.
 Friendships that encourage
 Families that hug.
Animals that snuggle, wet noses and all.
 Waterfalls, rivers, oceans and seas.
God's love notes,
 Compassion, justice, integrity
 Treating each person with dignity.
God's signs of love are everywhere
 Subtle
 Blatant
Always, always, true

Mary Anne Seaton, Consociate



Jean Dummer, CSJ

“There are no limits to your being.
Only those you ascribe to yourself.
There are no limits to your understanding,
Only those that are due to trying to understand
with the mind.
There is no limit to your light,
Except the dark shadows of the ego cast upon
the sky which we call self.
Shake your soul. Awaken it from slumber!
The time has come to awaken to your divine
being.”

*~Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan~
A Sufi Wisdom Elder*

Submitted by Carol Gariano, Consociate

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North America. www.SufiOrder.org

While doing devotions, I was quiet with my eyes closed. I imagined myself by a pool of water, surrounded by trees and plants. I was waiting for God. Then the Wind (God) blew across the water. Suddenly arms reached up from the water and pulled me in joyfully—great laughter and splashing—enjoying God's love and the waters of eternal life? Neat feeling. Love this image.

Joyce Dahlberg, Consociate

A Connection of Spirit

*A way where there is no way
A door where there is no door
Creator Spirit breaks through
Emanates in ways newly realized*

*Breaking through the dark,
Storms of fear and doubt
Ribbons tinted pink with sacrifice and love
Connecting thirsty hearts for meaning, for life*

*Ribbons of grace
Ribbons of hope
Hope for you, for me
Transcending*

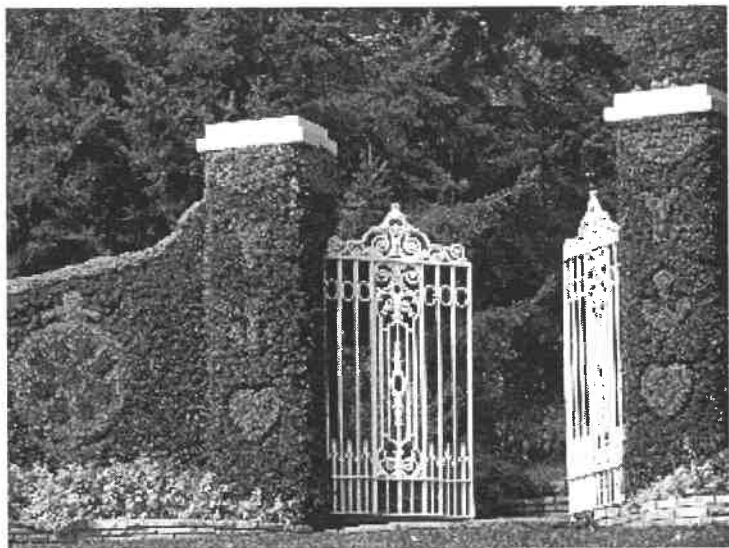
*Together in hope
Manifest in thought, bred into action
Spirit of Creation
Infinite love never denied*

*Her scope and reach
To unity and reconciliation
With dear neighbor
... She extends through us
In her we depend*

Mary Louise Menikheim, Consociate



Baya Clare, CSJ



Rita Quigley, Consociate

TODAY

The branch
left over from that fallen oak
lay there the longest time, there
on the walk, in everybody's way.

Until today. Today
it leans against my bookcase
thick with flowering lichen
no doubt reminding me

Mary Virginia Micka, CSJ



Submitted by Baya Clare, CSJ

Mary believed,

And riding on a donkey she went with Joseph.

Mary believed,

I too believe in the silence of the night with Joseph.

Mary believed,

Do we believe in sharing our talents and gifts?

Mary believed,

Does my Faith believe in the gifts to let go and
move on?

Mary believed,

Do I believe in going into the night with Faith?
And Mary believed and a baby was born. May
the birth of Jesus be with us, in the new year that
comes.

Mary Believed, and I Believe.

Althea Johns, CSJ



Tim Dickie

Light penetrate dark
Shining thru wind blown spaces
Let God's life come thru.

Helena Sheridan, CSJ

A still cold April
Two a.m. at White Ash Lake
Sky teeming with stars
Suddenly a meteor flashing
Downward on either side
Of the Big Dipper; the whole
A glimpse into eternity.

Elizabeth Delmore, CSJ

Paul's Eulogy – Patient Paul

Paul's struggle is over and now he is with God for all eternity.

Paul's parents rejoice with him as they show him his heavenly home.

Paul suffered from cancer as his parents did,

but always patiently and cheerfully.

May you be a help to all of us as we struggle to attain our reward in heaven.

Mary Margaret Langteau, CSJ

Three Reasons I am Grateful for the CSJs

Generosity.

I became acquainted with the CSJs when I was doing Restorative Justice with Washington County. We were working with a young woman who had made some bad choices and was trying to get her life back on track. She had a family emergency in Colorado and needed money for a bus ticket and the CSJs came up with the \$200, no strings attached. I have never forgotten that act of generosity—it led me to investigate the consociate program.

Part 1

Kay Welsch, Consociate

Three Reasons I am Grateful for the CSJs

Part 2

Hospitality.

During the candidating process and again as a consociate, I have been grateful for the hospitality and welcoming spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph and Consociates. Even though I am not a Catholic, I have been struck by the openness to me and the gifts I offer. Welcoming the stranger and providing hospitality are truly gifts of the spirit and ones I try to cultivate in the churches I serve.

Kay Welsch, Consociate

Three Reasons I am Grateful for the CSJs

Part 3

The CSJ mission statement.

In many churches I have served, we have worked on long-range planning and mission statements, trying to write a statement that is short enough to remember and yet one that embodies the essence of the church. My model is the one for the CSJs which I have paraphrased to:

Profound love of God and love of the dear neighbor (or neighbor without distinction). This is not only memorable but also challenging—and reminds me again and again what it means to be associated with the Sisters of St. Joseph.

*With deep gratitude,
Kay Welsch, Consociate*

Miracles

When we can walk on water
Waves will lap our toes
As a wash of healing grace.

Susan Oeffling, CSJ



Suzanne Herder, CSJ

I want to share with you what happened here in El Paso on February 5, 2008 that scares the heck out of me.

A group from San Antonio Padua church was recognized. Every Tuesday a group of parishioners gathers to distribute food baskets to the poor, struggling to feed their families. They call themselves Ministerio Asistencia Social Y Espiritual. On any given Tuesday they respond to the needs of 40 to 60 families. On Tuesday, February 5th, while distributing the food baskets, a woman in her early forties walked in and asked for help. She was a Salvadoran woman and she told them that she had just crossed the border at 2am that morning. She knew no one in El Paso and had no place to stay. Her clothes were still damp and she had eaten nothing since the previous afternoon. The church parishioners welcomed her, gave her a change of dry clothing, and invited her to share a meal with them. They also called Annunciation House and were told that we would be happy to provide her with hospitality.

Part I

Lillian Long, CSJ

Part 2

At about 1pm, two of the parishioners offered to give the woman a ride to Annunciation House. As the driver turned onto the street for Annunciation House, she realized that she was being followed, and as they approached Annunciation House, the parishioner's car was blocked off both in front and in back by two unmarked pick-up trucks. Men exited the trucks, approached the parishioner's car, and identified themselves as immigration agents. They then asked the two parishioners for their drivers' licenses and demanded that the woman from El Salvador get out, saying "we know you are illegal, get out of the car!" She was handcuffed, taken into custody, and placed in detention. She is now applying for political asylum.

Lillian Long, CSJ

Part 3

One agent went back to the truck to run a background check on the parishioners, and as he returned their licenses to them, warned them that what they were doing was illegal. When the obviously nervous parishioners asked if they were in trouble, the agent responded that he had spoken to his supervisor, who said that although he understood that the parishioners were trying to help someone, they needed to understand that their actions were illegal. The agents then allowed them to leave with a warning not to do what they had done again.

Lillian Long, CSJ

Part 4

The Ministerio was recognized for their witness to what it means to be a person of faith. On accepting the recognition Emma Molina said “No vamos a parar!” (“We’re not going to stop!”) She got a standing ovation for that one!!!

It seems so clear that we can’t just sit back and let someone tell us that we can’t carry out the mandates of the gospel. Of course I wouldn’t obey a law that goes against the gospel.

Lillian Long, CSJ

Part 5

Then in the program we were given scenarios that make me realize that every one of us DOES have to choose to follow the gospel or bow to unjust immigration policies. Here are a few examples that were read:

--I am a social worker and I am committed to working to improve the lives of disadvantaged groups in my community. However, a new state law is asking me to deny services to any individual who does not have a social security number, and the undocumented are among the most marginalized of the groups with whom I work.

--“I am a member of a church that provides sandwiches to the hungry in my community. Recently a discussion has come up about who we should serve. In particular, dropping off food in certain areas of town inhabited mostly by immigrants is raising suspicion. Many of my fellow parishioners are concerned about the potential legal consequences of aiding immigrants in any way.”

Lillian Long, CSJ

Part 6

-- “I used to hire a woman to clean my house and care for my three small children. I never asked her if she had papers, but I knew that she badly needed a job. I was happy to help her out. I recently found out that she is undocumented, and I think I will have to let her go. The penalties for employing people without documentation are stiff enough that I can’t run the risk of being caught employing her.”

Wow, this hits close to home. We have discussions about our legal liability as a board of directors for Annunciation House where we provide food and shelter for homeless undocumented immigrants. After the Voice of the Voiceless Solidarity dinner, I am making a conscious choice to follow the gospel, regardless of what our laws say. I pray that I can hold that conviction very clearly if or when I am ever in a position that challenges me and calls me to make a choice.

Lillian Long, CSJ

(from her blog about her work in Southern Mexico working at Albergue Jesus el Buen Pastor in Tapachula and Hogar de la Misericordia in Arriaga, at www.lintap.blogspot.com)

Leading Lights

There's a star that lights our way,
Leading us to paths unknown.
Sometimes we follow, other times we turn back –
And other times we fail to try.
Whatever we choose, “growth” goes on in the path
we have chosen.

Mary Margaret Langteau, CSJ



Tim Dickie

A million diamonds
Sparkling on each lapping wave
Reflecting God's love.

Helena Sheridan, CSJ

Mindful Eating

I've been trying to eat more mindfully and thankfully. Today: a breakfast bowl of lo-fat yogurt (vanilla flavor), granola and a peach. Thank you cows. Where do vanilla beans come from? Granola made from harvests of oat and sunflower fields, growing from Mother Earth. I spent a summer working on a migrant farm labor camp in Washington. Did migrants pick this peach? Were their young children helping? Who drove the truck that brought this peach to Cub Foods in Bloomington? Does s/he believe in God? Does s/he like his job? Beauty and bounty from the creatures, trees and land – the cosmos in my breakfast bowl!

Diane Gardner, Consociate



Rita Quigley, Consociate

The Gift of Presence

Being present
is to be empty
ready to respond
to those in need.

It is not in the doing
rather in the being.
Listen, Listen, Listen.

Walking with God
side by side, comfort
and peace
given to me.
Before I speak
God knows the words.
Presence is my Gift.

Gayleen Touhey, Consociate

Mount Hood

Have you ever seen Mount Hood?
Today I saw it from the air
On an August day
It was quite bare.

Yet the slopes facing north
Cradled snow like a cup
It reminded me of God
This is the view from “up”.

Christine Treanor, Consociate

Come, Holy Spirit Come

And from your lasting home
Give us your light divine.

Come Father, Mother, of us the
poor. Come Source of all our
goods. Come make your home in
our lives

Of all psychologists you are the
best. You know our hearts and are
a delightful guest. You gift us with
people here on earth. In our labor
you are refreshing rest, Pleasant
coolness in the heat and comfort in
the midst of turmoil.

O most blessed light divine,
Shine within our lives (our only
gift to you). And fill us more with
your total love.

Without you, Holy Spirit, we are
nothing. We can do nothing good
in deed or thought. Without you,
Holy Spirit, there is no real living.

Heal our wounds, renew our
strengths. And on our dryness
pour your grace.

Wash our stains of sin away.
Bend our stubborn hearts and
wills.

Melt the frozen, warm the chills.
Redirect our steps that go astray.

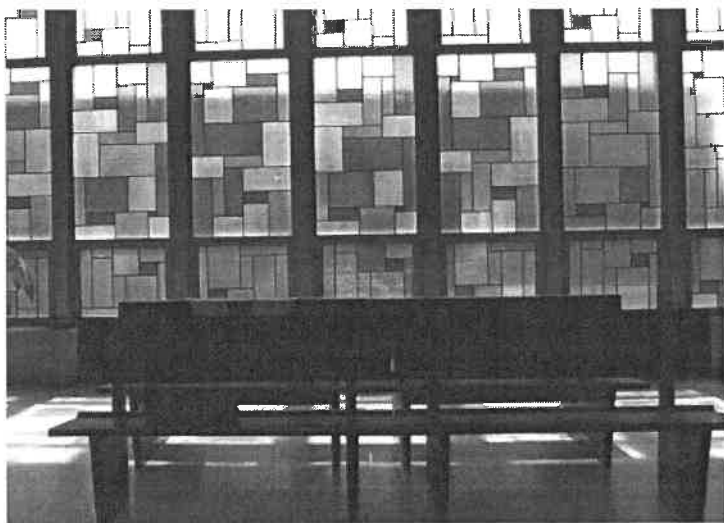
And Holy Spirit, remember and
inspire the times when faithful we
are; when we stop to worship you
give us to the fullest your
sevenfold gifts of grace.

Give us your ever fresh-breath of
love. The Love you radiate of our
Father, Jesus our brother.

Free us that your triple loves
united in One may be our
salvation and joy.

Both now and forever. Amen!

*Based on an ancient Pentecost Hymn
Submitted by Manette Durand, CSJ*



Baya Clare, CSJ

Reflection on Grandparenthood

I had the privilege of being present at the births of both of my Granddaughters, Hannah (7) and Lauren (4 1/2). My relationship with them is like no other, and is a deeply spiritual one. They call me Gaia (at Hannah's initiation), yet know the relationship is that of Grandma.

The role of grandparent is serious, fun, sometimes exhausting, always joyful, and a blessing. Grandparents are called to love unconditionally; to be safe confidants; to soothe hurts; to give counsel; to allow messes and experiments; and to pray always for their grandchildren's safety, health, and well-being.

Part 1

Lou Cooney Erickson, Consociate

Reflection on Grandparenthood, *Part 2*

Grandparents show faith by lived example. They once again hop-scotch, jump rope, draw with sidewalk chalk, and applaud all efforts and accomplishments of their grandchildren. They give small surprises just because. Kisses and hugs are freely offered. Holding hands in parking lots and while crossing the street is mandatory. Allowing a cookie before breakfast is just fine. Planting flowers and watching them grow, admiring earth worms and cicadas, providing reassurance that spiders and ants are not to be feared, teaching water conservation, and reinforcing recycling, are part of the day. Modeling health, respect, and caring, is a must. I know the CSJ charism and values I've integrated are ingrained in what I share. Likewise, accepting what our grandchildren offer and teach us means we show up and are present to them. Being a grandparent, an elder, is a gift of honor. Our universe, our future, depend upon such mutuality in relationships.

Lou Cooney Erickson, Consociate



Carol Gariano, Consociate

Position of Trust

Open in my smallness
one room – undivided
no closet – no doors
silent

holding no one –
holding no thing –
 hands open
 palms up

In dark water –
on the wind –
in crystal light –
or nothing –
 God holds me

All is gift –
and gift returned
All is abandonment –
and acceptance

I was not created to be alone
I was created for You
 My Beloved

No sense will tell
yet all senses know
 Communion

Haiku

I am one with God
In the hammock of God's womb
Being born to new life

Susan Streff, CSJ

The devout Christ

In response to The Crucifix of Perpignan, shown in "Bread in the Wilderness" by Thomas Merton

When the careful robes of our respectability are worn to shreds,
And we have known our leprous agony of soul;
When sorrow has built itself into the marrow of our bones,
And our aching eyes are starved from lack of weeping,
When we have bartered bread too long for worthless stones,
And we are come spent to fling ourselves upon a saving God;
We want no pallid Christ poised upon a polished cross—
But this Christ Isaias knew of Calvary and Perpignan;
A Christ that wore our clay and knew its breaking;
Who bore our sins in leprous wounds upon His tightened skin,
Under which bone and sinew stretched for easy count;
But this Christ whose eyes are sunk in sockets of compassion
In a skull that bows beneath a savage crown.

Majesty is there---and hint of more than human power,
And each is found restored in this apocalyptic hour.

Catherine Jenkins, CSJ



Sketch of the Crucifix of Perpignan by Catherine Jenkins, CSJ

Table Prayer

Our God dances in fields and orchards beckoning
luscious fruit to deck our tables.

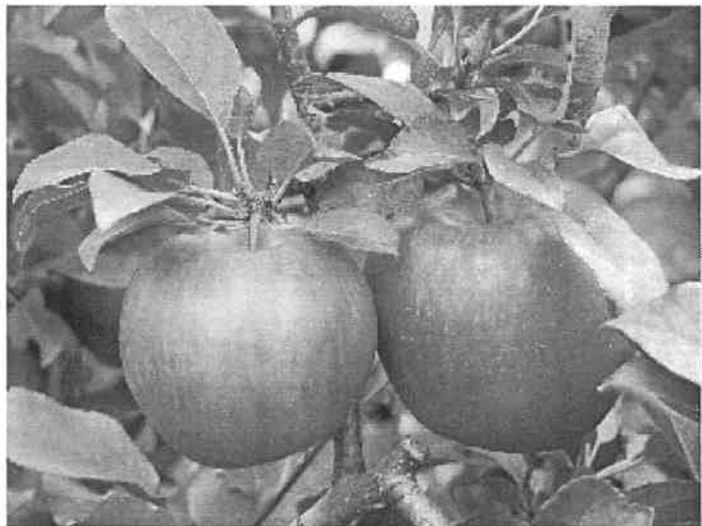
All we imbibe and feast upon is transformed like
Eucharist,

So energized we bless every being we touch.

So flows the circle of life and death,
Streaming from these tables of family and friendship.

Amen.

Rosita Aranita, CSJ



Rita Quigley, Consociate

COSMIC RELATION WITH MYSTERY

Who I am is very important
to the Holy One,
the God of Majesty
and Mystery.

I become fulfilled
by my relationship to Holy Mystery.

Prayer is our relationship,
listening in quiet times,
being attentive to small invitations
to be here, do this, go there,
assist someone with something.

I become what I do...
I become engrossed in Holy Mystery,
evolving simultaneously
with all who live
with me and around me.

But, being authentically who I am,
doing what I am meant to do
in all the daily little things,

is essential to the one I am becoming,

and to what the Holy Mystery is doing
in and around me,
in our evolving planet,
and ever-expanding universe.

Imagine that!

Mary Lamski, CSJ

Star Inside of Me

There's a star inside of me;
She shines there in my heart
And waits to be recognized.

Darkness tries to scare her off,
ego attempts to ignore her,
busyness pushes her around.
but this wonderful shining Star
keeps twinkling, all aglow.

She waits to lead me
to an unknown meadow
where the truth of who I am
will be revealed to me.

Shining Star, faithful Star,
when will I follow you?
When will I come to the meadow
where the truth will set me free?

~~Joyce Rupp~~

Submitted Pat Owen, Consociate

Excerpted from *The Star in My Heart* by Joyce Rupp, ©2004. Used with permission of the publisher, Sorin Books®, an imprint of Ave Maria Press®, Inc., P.O. Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556, www.sorinbooks.com.

BE at Peace

I'm trying to slow down my thoughts, down-shift my energy from fast to slow, maybe even stop, just for the moment, but it's difficult. I'm a list maker and doer. Sure I live in the moment, but in each moment I ask myself, what is it I should be doing now?

What I really need to be asking myself is, "What is it I should be being now?" There's a world of difference between doing and being. It shifts me from the world outside to the world within.

The mode of operation in the world outside is anticipating, the operative mode within is intent.

I'm going to challenge myself to live in the world of intent and be the hope that our world needs right now. If everyone joins in, it will be enough and the world will BE at peace.

Possumus

Irene O'Neill, CSJ

(from her blog at www.csjministriesfoundation.org/bloggingnun)

THE DEER or WHO'S ROAD ANYWAY?

Frozen still in Woodbine
Tail out, ears up
Eyes staring and speaking:
“Why are you on MY ground?
My tree is here. Can't you see
The bare rings, where bark used to be?”

And the Cavalier stops.
Margie and I look at each
Other, then the deer.
“Why are YOU here? Our
House, our yard, our trees and flowers
And road. Why are you here?”

Who's right?

Before condos, shopping centers,
Medical buildings and roads the
Deer was here—Great Great
Grandfather deer, grandmother and
Father, baby faun.

All here before condos, shopping centers, medical buildings
And roads.

Eyes staring and speaking
“Why are you on THIS road, my road? This, my tree, my food, is here.
Can't you see?”

Meg Gillespie, CSJ



Baya Clare, CSJ

My mother died recently.

The morning before she died, lying in bed with nose-tube oxygen, struggling to breathe, with eyes almost closed, suddenly her eyes opened wide, she pointed to the ceiling with an excited look, then closed her eyes again....

Sometime later, a beautiful smile spread across her face....then she was back to labored breathing....

A little later, eyes almost closed, she suddenly giggled. She was seeing and hearing people or things.

The next morning, she stopped breathing while we were there.

We knew she was where she wanted to be.

Mary Lamski, CSJ



Baya Clare, CSJ

Irony of a Winter Walk

I went for a long walk today
Down a “dead end” road
But found only life not death

The brilliant sun was warm when facing South
But wheezing lungs alerted me to cold brisk air
No human creatures did I meet
But signs of life were everywhere

Cawing crows
And hammering woodpeckers
Soaring eagles
Heading to their high, sturdy, messy lake home
Peered down at me, an intruder in their space

Clean sheets of newly fallen snow
Blanketed the open fields
But tracks of deer, rabbits and pheasants belie
The solitude of this wintry nighttime playground

The footprints were going in circles-
Where were they going?
What were they thinking?
Perhaps - “the snow is too deep”!

Along the way there was a bridge
Over the Apple River
The water swirling too fast to freeze
Ice chunks swiftly moved uncontrollably along,
Sending promises of Spring ahead

I found neither “dead” nor “end”
To this road
Perhaps there is no such thing!



Baya Clare, CSJ

From my fridge door, a reflection on prayer:

Spaces

“...la seule zone

on la priere est realle

est celle de la mission personnelle

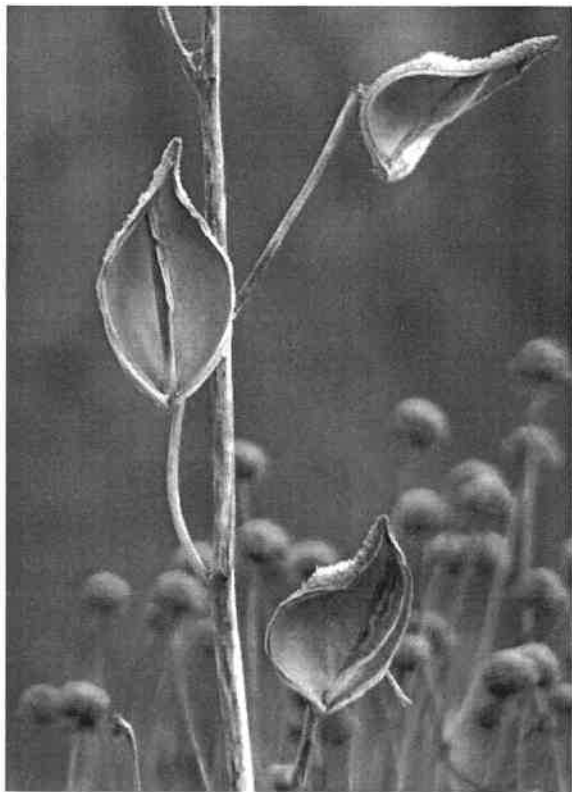
que chacun est appelé à remplir.”

“ ‘la zone de sa mission’ est co-créateur

de lui-même.” -*Legaut*

Because the language is simple, I offer no translation. For me, this is the essence of Rahnerian theology and one with our desire to be love in our unique, varied and communal worlds.

Ann Clare Smith, CSJ



Baya Clare, CSJ

I have recently discovered the spiritual discipline of birding. It is a Zen like practice which requires pure receptivity and rewards with flashes of incredible beauty. Here is a moment condensed into a poem.

White Egret

Monday's muscle
will not erase
this Sunday moment
of shocking grace
when God undressed herself
exposing primal white intent.
She stood in silent Being
both in and out the sun-glazed lake.
Inaccessible ascent,
bent down, not up,
a welding of mud and sky
in one incendiary shaft
of feathered light.

Judith Oberhauser, Consociate

Annunciation

Beauty longs to be admired.
Unconsciously it strives for songs of praise.
It thrives on admiration.

But there was One so beautiful
she only had to be herself.
A wealth had she of admiration.

For in her triumphant hour
no arrogance was found,
just humility profound, and contemplation.

“Behold, the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it done to me according to your word.”
Then bowed the fairest head in all creation.

Ann Grady, CSJ

Prayer for Reverence of Life

Almighty God, giver of all that is good,
we thank you for the precious gift of human life.

For life in the womb,

coming from your creative power;

For the live of children,

making us glad with their freshness and promise;

For the life of young people,

hoping for a better world;

For the life of the handicapped and disabled,

teaching us humility;

For the life of the elderly,

witnessing the ageless values of patience and wisdom.

Like Blessed Mary,

may we always say yes to your gift.

May we defend it and promote it
from conception to its natural end.

Amen.

~Source Unknown~

Submitted by Ann William Leach, CSJ



A group of us that went to an orientation at the United Nations a few years ago. It was a profound experience for me as I reflected on the poverty and inhumane treatment of so many in our global community. This was the spark that prompted me to become involved in the work of advocacy regarding human trafficking.

Beryl McHale, Consociate

Morning, my favorite time of day!

My ritual is to sit at the kitchen table in my pajamas with a cup of coffee and the morning paper. If I don't have to go somewhere I do the Sudoku puzzle of the day.

But what is most special about this summer ritual is that from our kitchen table I can look directly out into our back yard that is exploding with color from the flower gardens and birds who are claiming their rights at the bird feeders and bird bath. God's gift of creation at it's best and a great way to start the day.

Joan Spence Wittman, Consociate



Rita Quigley, Consociate

Reflection on Dying and Death

As a hospital Chaplain on the oncology, advanced care, and intensive care units, I have many opportunities to be present to patients who are dying, and to their loved ones. It probably is one of the most sacred of times to have the privilege of accompanying patients and families during this transition.

Understanding the patient and family's theology, and not imposing mine, is critical. Life review, sharing of memories, witnessing laughter and tears in the same sentence, are important to the process. Making room for everyone to tell each other, either again or for the first time, all that longs to be stated in terms of love shared, forgiveness asked, and gratitude expressed, is necessary and powerful. Trust in the transition from life to death to new life eases the way. Having had prior conversations about patient wishes helps the family to make decisions, thus honoring their loved one.

Part 1

Lou Cooney Erickson, Consociate

Reflection on Dying and Death, Part 2

For sure, not everyone has the advantage of time, nor necessarily the inclination, to participate in the process as described above. Some deaths are sudden, some hurts cannot be healed, reconciliation is not always possible, unhealthy relationships can exacerbate under the stress, and grief is thus complicated. The lack of faith and support increases the suffering. For some, however, a death-bed conversion is experienced.

Death is usually not feared by those I'm with, but the timing of it begs negotiation. For others, the suffering is no longer bearable, and death is welcomed. My prayer in each and every situation is that all will trust that they will be taken safely and gently home by our gracious Creator God, and that those remaining will grieve well and begin to know a new relationship with their departed loved one.

Lou Cooney Erickson, Consociate

myself

Once I thought I knew myself
because someone showed me a picture

But then my lines were smudged
You erased all my edges with Your finger

At first, I thought I'd lost myself
because I wasn't in the mirror

But You just broke my shell
and let me bleed into life

Sometimes I still see the edges that aren't really there
but now I only know myself in You

Celia Abbott, Consociate



Baya Clare, CSJ

beep beep

When I'm with teenagers I make a point to tell them that I work everyday to shrink my eco-footprint because I care about them, their children, and their children's children. The teens' guarded surprise turns to gratitude when they realize I'm serious. To a person, each one has thanked me. This alone compels me to do more.

You and I make a difference, either in our own pursuit or by helping others in their pursuit to reduce, reuse, and recycle. In all cases, we are on the same road and our behavior makes a difference to everyone on our planet. Now that's global community!

Possumus

Irene O'Neill, CSJ

(from her blog at www.csjministriesfoundation.org/blogginnun)

A Meditation

As a young student at St. Catherine's I was meditating on the Scriptures with a dear friend on this passage from 2nd Corinthians: "The power of God is made perfect in weakness . . . If I am to boast, let me boast of my own feebleness." Having just read Therese of Liseaux's *Story of a Soul*, these words really hit me. I understood its meaning from Therese's "little way." So I said to God, "I want to be a fool for you." Right then and there I felt this tremendous Love of God inside of me – like nothing I had ever experienced before. I could hardly contain it. My life changed from that moment on.

Rosemary Hayes, Consociate Candidate



Submitted by Baya Clare, CSJ

African Children Provide Inspiration

During a research trip in the 1970's, I visited a market in a poor village in arid northern Ghana. Several beautiful black children, amazed by the color of my skin, followed me, smiling and giggling. I bought a penny's worth of peanuts in the shell, which filled my hands to overflowing so that some of them fell to the ground.

The children, who looked undernourished, scrambled to pick them up. Instead of eating them, they gave me back every peanut, welcoming a chance to help me out. Then I gave them the peanuts, which they gratefully devoured on the spot. The old saying might be revised to read: "From the actions of babes we can learn valuable lessons."

Mary Ann Hanley, CSJ

Matching Sheets

when there is no home
there is no bed that is mine
relying on other's generosity
we sleep on folding beds –
but any place is better
than the street

I lie with a blanket
and a pillow
in mismatched sheets
that each could tell many stories –
now they will also hold mine

I listen to all the different noises of this place
and long to dream of my own bed
with a blanket and a spread
where snuggled between
matching sheets
bright futures wait
when I awake

Celia Abbott, Consociate

Reflection

The deep interior knowledge that I am experiencing in concert with my unfolding life leading me to a new phase of my life journey is profoundly moving me in new and positive direction. I do not fully understand the depth and breadth of what I am learning as I am in process. I know this, it is exactly what I need at this time in my life journey. I am empowered as I experience this movement toward a higher consciousness. I trust that I will be transformed in new ways that will allow me to more fully embrace the universal truths that is each person's divine inheritance to embrace. It is a time of great awakening for me. Sometimes so painful I can hardly bare it yet at the same time I am acutely aware that all I am experiencing is part of a process to bring me uniquely to a new place of being. For the past seventeen years, I have been richly blessed to walk with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet as companions on the journey. I am grateful.

Cheryl Maloney, Consociate

You might not expect an ordinary fourth floor window to add such richness to one's life but mine is like a living book of pictures, a seasonal page turner.

Season after season the trees framed by my east window testify to the truth that there is more to life than standing rooted in one spot.

“My” trees do more than stand still. They are full of life, change, and new growth. They are busy providing shelter, shade and rest, even serving food for a number of creatures.

True, each tree is planted in one spot but the roots reach deep and the trunk raises the trees' branches up and out as if straining toward full potential.

Michele Murphy, CSJ



Jean Dummer, CSJ

Spiritual Practice

“After years of questioning and searching I finally decided what my spiritual practice is.

It’s called life.

It’s an all inclusive denomination. The theology is dynamic, fluid, and always changing. The pulpit is everywhere. The central doctrine is conscious love, compassion, and awareness. All contributions are mainstream random acts of kindness. And new members are always welcome.” ~Joel Carter~

Submitted by Carol Gariano, Consociate

Used with permission of the author. Joel Carter, Rockpeople: The Chester Creek Inushuk Anthology, 2006. www.rockpeople.org.

I had an image of Christ when I was praying the Christian mantra from Marcus Borg, which begins, "Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Light of the World." Suddenly, I saw Christ walking around the globe, as if seen from outer space. He was wearing a white robe that ended in a trailing robe of light. I saw Him mostly from behind, but His face was looking back, as if telling me to understand what He was doing. Christ began at the equator and circled the globe from there to the northernmost point. Then He began again at the equator and circled the southern hemisphere in the same way. This was wonderful, because the globe changed from the blue, green and brown colors we associate with it to the color and texture, the reality of light. Christ was literally spreading light as He walked.

Joyce Dahlberg, Consociate

BE at Peace

I'm trying to slow down my thoughts, down-shift my energy from fast to slow, maybe even stop, just for the moment, but it's difficult. I'm a list maker and doer. Sure I live in the moment, but in each moment I ask myself, what is it I should be doing now?

What I really need to be asking myself is, "What is it I should be being now?" There's a world of difference between doing and being. It shifts me from the world outside to the world within.

The mode of operation in the world outside is anticipating, the operative mode within is intent.

I'm going to challenge myself to live in the world of intent and be the hope that our world needs right now. If everyone joins in, it will be enough and the world will BE at peace.

Possumus

Irene O'Neill, CSJ

(from her blog at www.csjministriesfoundation.org/bloggimgun)

Meditation on Healing

Healing is a universal process. It is sharing of one's life force. It is a transmission of love. While it may be applied in the medical realm, it goes beyond. It is a process of recreation toward wholeness. It is dynamic. It integrates, harmonizes, unifies, directs the living being toward goodness - not in a human judgment, but in the universal purpose of creation. Healing is not comprehensible; beware of defining the process too narrowly. Don't allow the guides to become the source for you. It isn't a matter of adding to your self. It is a matter of emptying. All of life can heal. It is a reflection of the power of love.

Judith Paone, Consociate

God Says Yes to Me

I asked God if it was okay to be melodramatic
and she said yes

I asked her if it was okay to be short
and she said it sure is

I asked her if I could wear nail polish
or not wear nail polish

and she said honey
she calls me that sometimes

she said you can do just exactly
what you want to

Thanks God I said

And is it even okay if I don't paragraph
my letters

Sweetcakes God said
who knows where she picked that up
what I'm telling you is

Yes Yes Yes

~Kaylin Haught~

*Submitted by Marilaurice Hemlock, Associate Director,
St. Joseph Workers*

Used by permission of the author, Kaylin Haught, from her
book, From The Palm of Your Hand, Tilbury House Publishers,
1995.

The *life* of Jesus came about because Joseph trusted the inspiration of God in his dreams not only once, but (according to Scripture) three times. To protect the newborn Jesus, a dream directed the family to Egypt, and another dream brought them safely back to their home.

The *life* of Jesus came about because he grew up under the influence of a man who loved courageously. The teaching and ministry of Jesus came about because he grew up under the influence of a man who listened to his dreams and not the traditions of his society.

Jill Underdahl, CSJ, from a homily she gave on 4th Sunday of Advent, 2004 based on Mt. 1. 18-24

“The very least you can do in your life is to figure out what you hope for. And the most you can do is live inside that hope.”

~Barbara Kingsolver~

Submitted by Cheryl Maloney, Consociate

Used by permission of the publisher, HarperCollins Publishers. Barbara Kingsolver, Animal Dreams, 1991.

Joseph of Dreams

Joseph of dreams, guard well the poor.
Be a strong bar upon the door.
Be a broad window all day long
To let in sun and wild bird song.
Set a new loaf upon the board
To fill the poor man's scanty hoard.
With strength and patience bless the lives
Of all poor men and poor men's wives.
Listen to poor men's children call
when they are cold and tired and small.
Stir up the fire and keep it bright
On poor men's hearths at fall of night.
Build a dry roof above the heads
of poor men dreaming in their beds.
Bring peace to all poor souls who lie
Afraid and lonely when they die.
Joseph of dreams, in that last hour
Be a great light. Be a strong tower.

By Sister Alice Gustava Smith, CSJ; submitted by *Linda Napier, CSJ* who writes: This Joseph is close to people who dream and people who are empty enough to need a new loaf of bread.

A Blessing

May you know the fullness of your gifts, may
God's Spirit lead you and speak to you –
hear her words, her thoughts, her promptings
May you not lose your being to false gods but be a
voice for those who are confused and wandering
And when you are lost, confused,
alone, listen deep within
There
you find yourself, and
The Creator

Mary Louise Menikheim, Consociate



Suzanne Herder, CSJ

“Do not look forward to what might happen tomorrow, the same everlasting God who cares for you today, will take care of you tomorrow and every day.

Either God will shield you from suffering, or you will be given unfailing strength to bear it.

Be at peace then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations.”

I have this prayer by St. Francis De Sales on my bulletin board at work, and I pray it many mornings as part of my meditation. It reminds me to live in the present and trust the gradual unfolding of my life.

May it also offer you grounding and strength for the day.

Marian Louwagie, CSJ

*“To move forward
we must recognize that in the midst
of a magnificent diversity of culture and life forms
we are one human family and one Earth Community
with a common destiny.”*
(from Preamble to the Earth Charter)

It is quite amazing, and providential, that the Earth Charter challenges all of us, living 21 centuries after the first promulgation of the Christian gospel of Jesus Christ, to live in peace, justice, and harmony with the whole world. . . . This Charter challenges each of us living today: *“Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.”*

Eleanor Lincoln, CSJ and Catherine Litecky, CSJ

(from their online retreats at www.goodgroundpress.com)

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