COMMUNITY WISDOM

Reflections, Prayers, Poems & Art by the CSJ Community 2024

Many thanks to all in the CSJ Community who contributed their time and talent to make this collection possible. All writings and art are original works.

The Community Wisdom Editing Team:

Melissa Andrie-Her, Consociate & St Joseph Worker Marsha Berry, Consociate & Friend of St Joseph Linda Crosby, Consociate Kimi Denny, CSJ Staff Taylor Harwood, St Joseph Worker Bridgette Kelly, Consociate & St Joseph Worker Margaret McRaith, Consociate Linda Taylor, CSJ

Themes

CSJ Community values & action | pages I-II Aging, loss & grief | pages I2-I9 Seasons & nature | pages 20-55 Prayers & reflections on God | pages 56-69

Front Cover Artwork by Cathy Steffens, CSJ

Communion Reflection

given at the Feast of St Joseph 150th Anniversary Mass

From our beginnings we Sisters of St. Joseph called ourselves the Community of the Great Love of God and promised to love our dear neighbors without distinction.

The Mississippi River carried the first Sisters to St. Paul, and the rivers of each of our lives carry us here to this celebration. Today we name this moment a threshold to the future. River invites all of us to be with her as she moves into places that reek of impossibility into systems and structures that destroy life and inhibit growth. River asks us to be her power to bring life, renewal, and healing to our world.

SING – EVERY PART OF THIS EARTH IS TO MY PEOPLE HOLY.

River converges with rivers and from the rapids of disturbance justice emerges. Justice challenges us to take responsibility for right relationship among all people, and all Earth's species and resources. We commit ourselves to be strong voices for systemic change in our local and global communities. We speak and act to eliminate racism, sexism, and greed, which spawn poverty and violence.

SING – EVERY PART OF THIS EARTH IS TO MY PEOPLE HOLY.

The waters of river and ocean are one. These are the passages that connect all land and all peoples with each other. We commit to peace to recreate this world of oneness of all. We speak and act to create a world without war, a world in which each person has voice - a world with enough for all - livable wage, affordable housing, health care, and appropriate education.

SING – EVERY PART OF THIS EARTH IS TO MY PEOPLE HOLY.

Rivers of fire overflow from Earth's molten core. This fire creates new land and transforms what is into what will be. In prayer and contemplation, we touch the fire burning within us. The fire burns with all that was, is, and will be. Tonight we hold this mystery in gratitude and awe.

SING – EVERY PART OF THIS EARTH IS TO MY PEOPLE HOLY.

Roseann Giguere, CSJ and Jill Underdahl, CSJ

The Lace begun in 1650 is still unfinished. May we continue to weave it through our lives and the world with integrity and compassion.

Black Madonna of Le Puy you continue to grace the city the Sisters of St. Joseph call home. May we find a wisdom and peace in your abiding presence.

Loving God, Spirit of future and of purpose, We call upon you to lift up the pattern of our days.

Where inspiration and guidance are needed, May we open our minds and hearts to your designs.

May vision and clarity be your gifts to us along our way.

May openness to possibilities and thoughtful reflections on our histories Blend in our efforts to give shape to what is to come.

May we reveal to one another goodness and truth And may your Love lead us forth with courage and justice. Amen.

Adapted from Jane DeLisle, CSJ



Ansgar Holmberg, CSJ (1934-2024)



Carmen Shaughnessy Johnson, Consociate

The goal and purpose of our association is that in God, for God, and before God, we lead a life...indicated by these virtues:

Embraced by Love, we

• Move toward Wholeness/Inclusive Love (perfection)

- Move toward our Authentic Selves (self-emptying love)
- Move toward All-Permeating Love (pure and perfect love)
- Move toward Wholeheartedness (zeal)
- Respond with a Contemplative Heart (fidelity to grace)
- Move toward Right Relationship ('cordial' charity)

Cathy Steffens, CSJ and Jill Underdahl, CSJ

Adapted from The Réglments, Lyon, France, 1646

Brigid McDonald, CSJ, at the Rally Against Gun Violence July 28, 2022



Connie Bowen, Consociate

Darkness is My Mother

Darkness is my mother. She comforts me. Darkness is the mother of all things. She hovered over the void at the dawn of creation and within her all things were formed. She has never been dispelled; never overcome by light. She accompanies light and welcomes light into her domain. All lidded creatures find her in the shuttering of an eye; those who burrow create their home within her; and she is life-companion to swimmers in the deep. In light she leaves us sign and symbol of her presence. Shadow shapes and deepens every being. Cloud softens and shelters the scorching heat of day. Creatures carry darkness within them. Egg and womb encase her liquid being – source of life. Newly birthed, we grope to find her once again blanket, pouch and breast bury us in her comfort. In sleep she enfolds us and we come to know her as the matrix of our dreams Divinity delights in her; mystery calls her "mater". Angels seek her so we mortal folk can know their presence, for without her there can be no celestial light. All color forms within her; budding flower mixes its palette from her pigment. Eye that sees the flower thanks darkness for the sight. Darkness loves her sister light. Easily they share created time. Each endless night will find its balance in the longest day. Reverently in the dawn, light embraces her night guardian. To welcome morning is to say good-bye to moon and evening star. Darkness asks of me the trust I knew when life began: to let her quietly contain me, blanket me within her boundaries. and waste not one dark moment waiting for the light Darkness is my mother. In her own time she will birth me. Today she holds me in love.

> Roseann Giguere, CSJ (1934-2013)



Ink wash

Joseph was a just man. But he was just a man. He was just a person, like you or me, a neighbor and a father and a carpenter before he was ever a saint. Like me, he had good days and bad, fears, frustrations, and flaws. I bet he had a favorite food. We know he listened to his dreams. I look to the way he tended to his chosen family, the holy family, as inspiration for a queering of cultural expectations, as a model for building my own family.

Mary Magdalene, Apostle to the Apostles, was a leader as well as a follower. Misunderstood and maligned for well over a thousand years, conflated with other women of the Bible (because there are so many of them to begin with...). When I feel the unfairness of her mischaracterization and the centuries of undermining her position of leadership roil under my skin, I imagine her telling me to spring into action and do the good work, as she did.

Francis and Clare of Assisi dedicated their lives to helping others and are known for their friendship as much as their gentleness and good works. As for them, friendships are one of the most enduring, important aspects of my life.

Catherine of Alexandria's demonstrated wisdom and eloquence infuriated authorities. I have been doubted, and I have doubted myself, but her story reminds me to trust my own knowing and to speak up regardless of consequences.

I see pieces of myself in the stories of saints, our companions for the journey. Their humanness reminds me that I'm whole and beloved, just as I am. Their lives of dedication challenge me to live bravely, with a fierceness that doesn't back down from helping the vulnerable. Seeing them as people, not perfections, prompts me to imagine a more radical life for myself and others. The everyday saints who have entered my life spur me on even more.

Understand: You are one of them.

Taylor Harwood, St Joseph Worker

Small Kindnesses

It makes a difference that you let me go ahead in line, with only a few items at Aldi's, where there is no express line, no self-service area. You, a Somali woman, new American with a full cart, no doubt full of daily trials, yet still neighborly in the moment.

The next time I shopped there a clueless clerk exchanged words with another Somali woman, explaining a monetary discrepancy, -- confusion different languages playing tag, running in circles, going nowhere. I paid it forward in your honor, happy to remind the young man his job was to serve, that service meant working hard to understand. You are the reason I like Aldi's, and the chance

to stand up for people who offer kindness when they can.

No time to hate

Dedicated to Christopher Celeste with thanks to Joanne Peterson



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Eric Celeste, Friend of St Joseph

Dear Neighbor

Stumbling along, mumbling to himself communing with ghosts of voices past, maybe present. His hoodie up on this hot and humid day. The streets offer no safety. Other walkers swiftly skirt by, cellphones in hand, earbuds in place, avoiding contact with the stumbling mumbler.

Chuck Kausalik-Boe, Consociate



Pat Owen, Consociate

An "Older Woman" Reflects

And do I step gingerly from my home cave and limp looking around for a tree to hold onto or an arm or a cane?

OR do I follow the gentle, laughing call of the light that LURES me forth beyond bunions and hammer toes into new ADVENTURES!!!???

Hold your foot just so...or DANCE if walking throws you off balance... PIROETTE when you seem wobbly or take a few running steps and say "I'm chasing a butterfly!"

Get shoes that fit better or trim your toenails, sand your callouses but

Keep in motion...DANCE...and if nothing else

SING and SWAY to the music!

Linda Taylor, CSJ

Middle Aged Daughter Observing Elder Father

Old Age Isms

You are old,

And you don't—say it louder—do NOT LIKE it, truth be told. You barely hear And often feel distant from much you hold dear. Your feet are cold, your legs sometimes fold. Even the hands do not write. Where is God now in this, your plight? Could it be, could it be He's waiting here, there—for you to see: In all that is—joy 'Though your spirit's not that of a boy. In all that cannot be—peace, Life's puzzle wants—needs—this one last piece.

Middle Aged Daughter Observing Elder Father

Old Age: Learning Our Way Again

Some say old age is like a second childhood But you never thought they mean Feeling helpless Losing independence Not understanding You never thought it could be like Struggling to walk Needing support of bigger people Being confined when you want to get out. You say "they" ought to have prepared you (all those books on aging seemed philosophical, laudatory) I say, perhaps the only preparation is our life, How we meet our challenges along the way, Just as we learn in parenting the first time.

Middle Aged Daughter Observing Elder Father

Old Age Dirge

Who am I to say what you want to hear What you need— Something—anything Wise or hopeful? I am one who has followed in your footsteps And also walked my own shadowy path. The lessons in the dark have not been easy But I have learned, and this I know: Like it or not (and you won't) when bodies go HaYWiRe You've got to let go of pride stubbornness shame We love all of you just as you are BUT You must never let go of trusting God And knowing We are God's helping hands.

Reflections



The blue-sky floats on the water,

white clouds drifting by as the breeze plays

with sycamore leaves that wave at us

as we drift by.

She is behind me, and within me,

I see her in the mirror

when I look

and in the photos of family gatherings, of special trips.

I smell the lavender and sage,

and the wood from the fire as we gazed transfixed by the dancing flames. I taste the berries we picked from your garden.

I feel the stones at the edge of the lake, as we wade in to cool our feet.

I hear your voice and precious laughter,

I remember our chats over tea and honey.

On colder nights, I wrap up in the burgundy afghan you knitted me for Christmas.

There will always be an empty place in my days where you would have been. Time does not fill that hole.

But you are with me, too, and I feel that.

How special you always will be. How lucky I am, to call you My Mom.

> Deborah Paone, Friend of St Joseph dedicated to her Mom, Judy Paone, Consociate (1940-2010)

Gift of the Aged

We have the power to become greater through loss, not less.
It goes beyond our sight, our hearing, our speech, our thoughts.
It empowers us to reach beyond the stretch of our limbs.
Remember the voice of God heard not in the roar of the storm, but in the whisper.
Remember the journey of life is toward wholeness, not fragmentation.
It is a mystery, this transformation of the ordinary Into the divine.
It is you who have revealed this to me.
I am forever grateful.

Judy Paone, Consociate (1940-2010)

Cher-Poem

When you leave this earthly tether know that we will always be together.

Even though we will be apart you will always be tucked beneath my heart.

Until one day we will reunite and be one with God into the light.

Thank you for the hugs, laughs and tears we were always there for each other, my dear.

The deep love of friendship that we shared was full of love, understanding and care.

It helped us through sad times together God held us close, surrounded by love forever.

So for now my friend it is time to say Goodbye I will meet you with open arms again when I die.

Annie Hannahan, Consociate

Carrying On

The older I get the more I hear the big D knocking, sometimes unannounced. Please, Death, I pray, let me be prepared, knowing each leavetaking of one I love diminishes me. Spring brings new life but Winter's loss remains. My open heart holds both, what is buried and that which is not yet on the horizon.

The changing of seasons roots me, keeps me from slipping through time and place. Each season brings new delights. Fall comes around every year, but never for long. The shifting weather witnesses ducklings hatch and put on grown-up feathers, ushers in the blue pop of static electricity on a dry dark night. My attention falls with searing and intimate focus on the scattering of purple wild iris on my afternoon walks, then the silky lake water lapping at my bare feet; onto the smell of crunchy fallen leaves, which gives way to bare branches framing the swollen moon.

I am constantly delighted but rarely surprised by the staggering sense of awe the natural world brings me. A snowy peak glimpsed between billboards, a flame-colored fox at dusk on a city street, the dramatic flashes of a summer storm. I do not have to stand under an ancient redwood to feel a connection beyond myself. Yet I am always surprised and humbled by the awe I find in other people. In their talents and ideas, in their deep capacity for love and compassion, in the work they do and the moments they simply let themselves be.

My first time seeing fireflies, I was incoherent with joy as the field around me filled with winking stars. Community isn't abstract. It is a person, and another person, and another, individuals making up the fabric of a life, never separate from the land we live upon and among, never truly alone, winking together in the glorious darkness.

Taylor Harwood, St Joseph Worker

Heirloom

In the picture, a woman, wearing a sunhat, is kneeling in the garden. Coaxing flowers from bulbs, beans and peas from seed, all this fed her soul. Outside was much more alive than in. Dust, dishes, laundry and clutter accumulated. Meals were slapdash at best, with lumpy potatoes and gravy, chewy roasts. But African violets on the porch were always in bloom. And daisies and pansies grew alongside the house weed-free. Once I brought her a school project terrarium full of sick plants. Within a month, the container was overflowing with lush. Years ago, she started a Christmas cactus from a slip. Now the knobby stems cascade and cover an urn in her granddaughter's house. And once a year, the feathery flowers bloom ruby red.

Kay S. Welsch, Consociate

In Season and Out

Think snow peas sweet snap. Think lettuce leafy low nests of sun. Think carrots. Cabbages tight veined, bluish, and crisp. Then how parsley spills a green spray. A moth visits, tangles of blossom and vine where beans dangle until you can reach them. Ping, Plop, Rustle. A thud and your bucket gets heavy. You pull with a grunt and the garden lets go of your shoes. You head for the house, trailing mud, breathing dill, blessing life, all its shapes, its overnight sounds, its large and small labors, even to be.

> Mary Virginia Micka, CSJ (1922-2018)



Watercolor

Barb Parisien, CSJ Garden Community

Solace

When the world feels like it is going awry, and I feel hopeless under the circumstances, I walk in my yard. I feel the sunlight shining on me. I listen to birds. I watch butterflies and the squirrels scurrying around racing up and down tree trunks. The plants bow and bend in the breeze. I gather stones, sticks and feathers and create a makeshift altar. I sit quietly and heal. Even this tiny patch of the natural world entombed in this big inner city can connect me to the universe, take away my worry and help me feel whole again.

Chuck Kausalik-Boe, Consociate



Acrylic Onions *Cindy Herbst, Consociate* The world is not a landscape painting. It is not passive or pretty. The cottonwood rustling in the breeze, The heron and the osprey, circling above, The eddying river, The darkening clouds— They demand my attention. Loud bursts of birdsong jerks my thoughts away from to-do lists. The golden light of evening turns everything else into a distraction.

Taylor Harwood, St Joseph Worker

Three Birds on a Blooming Tree



Clay *Ag Foley, CSJ*



Botanical Printing, before and after Anu Pasricha, St Kate's Community

This House in Minneapolis

I walk across the park lightly blanketed by the first signs of winter. I feel the wind's gentle whisper. I see the architecture set in stone. I stand in the shadows in unending wonder. A warmth embraces my heart that only Grace can provide.

I hear the joyful tolling That marks celebrations revealing the Greatest of Glories. I hear a mournful ring for the weeping of life's deepest sorrows As loved ones are given their final places of rest.

This house—it is on the edge of the skyline and Adorned by the saints and apostles. This house holds over one hundred years of stories.

It is a house filled with prayers of thanks, peace, and hope. It is a house surrounded by the imprints of men and women Who have walked by faith before us.

This house in Minneapolis; The colored stained glass panes of She who said yes becoming Mother of all, The most Sacred and Pure Hearts, and He who was crowned, crucified, and resurrected. The pipes rejoice triumphantly with angelic choirs. This house is guarded by the Father's holy army.

The faithful are accompanied by Our Lady, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Anthony, and St. Anne. In this house, there are the saints who work among us: The disciple who leads and teaches, The advocate who sees the dignity of the poor and answers their cries, The caretaker of this house, its community, and its celebrations.

This house in Minneapolis; It shelters all who enter in both joy and despair. In this house, there is the sweet smell of incense. In this house, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on the cross stand above the Sacrament most holy.

This house in Minneapolis; Within the city, this house serves as a beacon of hope.

The glowing remnants left by the sun close out the day.

As night begins to fall, the stars silently dance over this house belonging to Christ. The light illuminates Mary, Mother Virgin, blessed, and immaculate, and to whom this house belonging to Christ is dedicated.

This house in Minneapolis Brightens the darkness until morning rises again.

Angela Cotta, Consociate

The Basilica of St. Mary is the church that inspired this writing.



Ansgar Holmberg, CSJ (1934-2024)

Start anywhere

taste a snowflake answer a bird song feel the wind blowing where it will lungs breathing deep heart pumping oxygen to every cell stirring dreams, hopes anew, memories recurring

From wells so deep within we call them of God From hopes so far beyond we call them of God From loves so lasting we rest and nest in them the embrace of God.

Start anywhere. We live in holy communion with all that is and is of God.

Joan Mitchell, CSJ

Trapped Bubbles

Bubbles numerous wondrous bubbles Like starry nights Casting lines to imaginations Patterns Trees in the forest Popping champagne City lights seen from spacecraft

> Cracks in the patterns Are they meteor shots? Fissures in earth? Creature byways?

> > The cracks in ice They've always Been there To alarm skaters To take notice of Shifting ice Inequal freezing

> > > mlmenikheim

But the bubbles Newcomers mostly How come? Take notice, Not of ice danger But carth danger.

The bubbles Trapped methane and Carbon dioxide from Trapped decay underwater Dead invasive vegetation From nitrates flowing Into crystal waters Suffocating fish and Other life creatures.

Mary Louise Menikheim, Consociate

Reflection on the Visitation

A journey of 100 miles; A young lady who braved this difficult journey Carrying within her the secret, precious gift of the Most High God Who became small, insignificant, dependent on His creature for giving life You, Mary, had received astonishing news-That you are holy The Lord is with you And you are called to be Mother of God! You proceeded in haste into the hill country An unknown and perhaps dangerous pilgrimage But you had to know Was it true? Could the woman who had been barren. Cut off from society, Looked upon as being punished by God in her inability to conceive Could it be true what the angel had said: that Elizabeth was pregnant? All of those thoughts must have filled your heart, Mary As you travelled your journey You finally arrived; you saw your cousin You grew in your belief that God was able to make all things possible What a courageous, strong and faith-filled act that you did You responded 'yes' to the Spirit's actions within you. There is no record of you complaining about having to take this long perilous journey. You were inspired and trusted your inspiration without question. How I long, Lord for Your inspiration For a trust like Mary's For the assurance that You are ever with me On every journey I am called and chosen by some strange grace To be follower and companion to people Travelling on the way. Help me in my journey; even in places which challenge, stretch me and call me beyond myself.

Doris Dimaya, CSJ Associate, St Louis


Carmen Shaughnessy Johnson, Consociate

Christmas Goat

Instead of a Christmas tree I have a Christmas goat. A julebukk of woven straw with a red ribbon around its neck. A reminder of my Norse ancestry, the goat that pulled the Julenisse's sleigh, the goat that pulled Thor's chariot, the goat that pulled Thor's chariot, the goat that reminds us not to take ourselves too seriouslyeat what you want, frolic, play, have fun. So rather than over committing and running around trying to do everything, I relax and let go as I look at the Christmas goat.

Chuck Kausalik-Boe, Consociate

Julebukk - Norwegian for Christmas goat, a necessary item under each tree Julenisse - Norwegian Santa Claus



Needlepoint

Annie Hannahan, Consociate

God Bless the Compassionate Ones

I would like to say something controversial: Ebeneezer Scrooge's greatest sin was not greed. If you would like to meet a true embodiment of greed in the Christmas villain pantheon, I suggest stopping at the bank in Bedford Falls and enquiring after a Mr. Potter. Unlike Potter, who would stop at nothing to gain control of the Building and Loan despite already owning the rest of the town's financial institutions, Scrooge is not constantly preoccupied with the quest for more. Scrooge does not cheat, he does not swindle, he commits no fraud, he creates no monopolies. In fact, it seems all of his hoarded wealth was earned honestly. While no one could accuse Ebeneezer Scrooge of being generous, the spirits do not seem overly concerned with dragging him to various charities that could benefit from his generosity during their visits on Christmas Eve. No, the great sin of Scrooge is not avarice; it is apathy.

To my mind, apathy is the true root of all evil, not money. There is a very telling exchange at the beginning of A Christmas Carol between Scrooge and two gentlemen who are collecting money for the poor. Scrooge refuses to give a donation, saying he pays taxes that fund the poorhouses and prisons and those should suffice. When he is told that many would rather die than go to those places, Scrooge says he does not know if that's true. "But you might know it,' observed the gentleman. 'It's not my business,' Scrooge returned. 'It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!" Scrooge hears that others are suffering in the world, chooses not to believe it, and justifies his behavior by saying he's simply tending his own business. It's strange, the name Scrooge has become an improper noun in our culture, referring to someone who is almost comically ungenerous, and yet his behavior here is a trap most of us fall in to from time to time. In fact, globally, apathy seems to be a growing problem. Pope Francis refers to this as the globalization of indifference. In his recent interview with Sixty Minutes, Pope Francis said to Norah O'Donnell "People wash their hands! There are so many Pontius Pilates on the loose out there, who see what is happening, the wars, the injustice, the

crimes... and wash their hands..." Pope Francis follows this with an urgent request: "Please, we have to get our hearts to feel again. We cannot remain indifferent in the face of such human dramas. The globalization of indifference is a very ugly disease, very ugly."

This desperate plea is so striking, as it speaks to the very core of our souls, to the exact place where our humanity connects to the Divine. Compassion is that Divine spark in all of us, calling us closer to God, showing us how to model Christ's love for all. Scrooge's desire to tend to his own business and shut out the rest of the world is very human. It is so tempting, so easy, to stay in our own little corners of the world. Indeed, that's what almost every other species in the world does, and what our ancestors had to do, in order to survive. And yet, we are called to more. It is my firm belief that the pull towards compassion and empathy is truly of God, it is how God made us in God's own image. It is how we become part of something so much greater than ourselves. It is such a beautiful gift, the ability to care for others.

In the end, of course, Scrooge is redeemed. He rediscovers his compassion and starts living a new life of love and generosity. It's a very radical change, but fitting for a Christmas story. After all, the story of the Incarnation is that of the Divine wanting to experience what it is like to be human. By rediscovering his compassion, Scrooge shows us all how humans can discover what it is like to be part of the Divine. Compassion is the bridge between the two, and it only takes a lifetime to cross. May God bless us all, everyone, upon our journey.

Rebecca Dobias, Consociate Candidate





Needlepoint Patricia Gries, Consociate



Felt tip pens

Maren Bjork, Consociate

Writing when Trees Blossom

I thought about writing today. But, the maple tree outside my window is blooming.

> Yellow, green bundles Polish the tip of every branch.

> > All I can do is look

at one promise and then another

What simple beauty— What a necessary prayer.

Jill Underdahl, CSJ



Felt tip pens

Maren Bjork, Consociate

Lenten Reflection

March 22, 2015

I am a younger member of a religious congregation, the Sisters of St. Joseph. I inherit a great wealth of mission and spirit lived faithfully and well by thousands of sisters. Our jubilarians (sisters celebrating significant anniversaries) this year alone have contributed thousands of years of prayer and ministry toward the mission "of loving God and Neighbor without distinction." As you can imagine, twenty years from now the number of sisters and contributions of sisters will be far less. Like you I can experience sorrow about this reality. Yet, I, we, carry on knowing that the spirit and mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph is not ours to possess and control like property. Rather it is to be lived as the love-story that it is: to be lived attentively, with wonder and care, and willingness to persevere for the possibilities that exist in responding to these times, building new relationships, and claiming new expressions and models of living commitments to our spirit and mission. (Imagine...) With this potential I find great joy!

Contemplating the rhythm of this love-story between God and us in light of Paul's letter to Hebrews, I see the obedience of Jesus more importantly as faithfulness. In love with God, the people he encountered, and the natural world, Jesus faithfully lived the love-story. He invited, taught, healed, celebrated, prayed, and eventually suffered death. Jesus lived love amid the joy and suffering he encountered, and he experienced resurrection!

Approaching Holy Week all of this is ours to continue to contemplate: How do we/how will we faithfully live the love-story between God and us amid the sorrow and joy we experience? Amid the dying and new life we encounter?

Jill Underdahl, CSJ

St Brigid's Crosses in Ireland



Carmen Shaughnessy Johnson, Consociate

What is redemptive is to understand that walking the path of integrity brings me to the cross which is the place of tension.

The center of the cross becomes the place where I walk into that integrity again and again and again . . .

because that is what the moon teaches me. The moon teaches me that one dying is not enough.

I die and then something new rises in me, and I live that cycle again.

Roseann Giguere, CSJ (1934-2013)



Acrylic Bunny *Cindy Herbst, Consociate*

Resurrected Jesus meets his Mom for the first time on Easter

Backdrop: Mary's at a friend's house where she has been staying since Jesus came to Jerusalem last week, where he was adorned with palm branches and songs of Hosanna. It's really hot out today, and Mary has gone up on the roof patio to think about all the painful things that have happened since that "Palm Sunday." The last two days of her son's life had been so unspeakably horrible, and after they had buried Jesus, they had to go home because the Sabbath was starting. She couldn't even visit the tomb on Saturday. And then today, the women brought back strange reports that the tomb was empty, that an angel had told them that Jesus had risen, and they were to go tell the disciples. So much to ponder... She didn't know if she even had any tears left to shed. Yet in her grief, something in her believes there is more. As she looks out over the City and the Temple, she remembers that Jesus had said that if the Temple was destroyed, he'd rebuild it again in three days.

Suddenly she hears from behind her, "Mom?!"

It's a voice she knows and one that is certainly not dead, but full of life.

"Oh Jesus...." She runs into his arms. They stand there weeping and crying as they hug.

Jesus finally sits his Mom down, but continues to hug her.

"It's alright Mom. It's over. I will never have to suffer and die in this body again."

Mary looks so happy and incredulous.

"I can't believe it's really you! But I do believe. I just kind of knew, or sensed, that I'd see you again before 'the end of time.""

"Well, here I am! But Mom, I'm so sad that you had to see me suffer. It was terrible wasn't it? But I can't tell you what it meant to have you be there with me, to stay with me even until I died. And then you helped bury me, too. That must have been so hard. Your support and undying love meant the world to me, then and now. At first I felt like My Father had abandoned me, but then I could see you down there, and knew I was never alone. I hadn't been abandoned. I love you so much, Mom."

"Oh Jesus. What will you do now?"

"Well, I've already gone to see My Father in Heaven, and heard him love and praise me again as his beloved Son in whom he is greatly pleased. Then I got to visit Joseph. He misses us so much. But he understands the important work we are doing. He is very healthy and happy and really busy as he waits for us. Then I went to the place of the dead, and ushered all the people, those whom my Father and I have always loved... which is the world... into eternal life. I wish you could have seen the joy and new life everyone is having. It's a party up there, Mom!

And all those wonderful dogs and cats and other critters, are whole and happy and get along with each other. Wait till you hug your first tiger. It's so much fun!

But now, now the work really begins. There are so many people who are lost. They have no idea how much the Father and I love them. And they have no idea how much we are relying on them to use their gifts to bring about the Kingdom. We need painters and plumbers, and scientists, and musicians and fishermen and everyone, to discover their true identity and boldly use the gifts we've given them.

Mom, how do you think you want to help?"

"Oh, I'll tell everyone I meet that I've seen you alive, and that we've got work to do. And I'll keep helping with the poor and the grieving widows. I've been there. I can relate."

"That's great, Mom. And just wait until the Holy Spirit, (The Father's and My Spirit) comes at Pentecost. You'll be on fire!

Something I want you to know though, Mom, is that everyone will now be my body on earth. I, in this resurrected body, won't be here for long—but I will be here in each member of my human body. So you're going to house me again, just like when I was in your womb. But now you'll know me and hear my voice, and feel my love and presence. And so will everyone else who opens their hearts to love. And you will become a Mother for my universal body; a Mother anyone can call on and relate to if they choose. Think big Mom. We've got lots of people and creation to reconcile and unite and heal. We're going to be very busy.

(And here's a little secret, I can even work for good through those who don't know me. I just wish they did because I love them so darn much!) I am love, and wherever there is love, there I am."

Mary stands and they hug again for a long time. And then, just as suddenly as he appeared, he's just gone from her embrace. Mary heard later that he had met up with some men on the road to a town called Emmaus.

If Jesus saw you there, and he asked, "How do you think you want to help?" What would you say?

Mary Kietzmann, friend of the CSJs

Majestic Wonders of Creation



Acrylic on Canvas *Angela Cotta, Consociate*

Desert Dreams



Acrylic on Canvas Angela Cotta, Consociate

Summer Solstice at Timberlee

The beginning of the summer marked the end of the St. Joseph Worker year. Those final retreat days at Timberlee sighed a breath in the series of goodbyes, packing, and cleaning, a pause for women changed forever. Rain and shine, laughter rang out, meals, hearts, and wisdom were shared, gallons of sun tea prepared and consumed, journals filled with attempts at making sense of that which had no words.

The lake drew everyone: Swimmers and boaters, of course, but foot-danglers, sun-worshipers, contemplatives, seekers, skinny-dippers—all, all revered the elemental gift, the sacred space; a welcome presence at every conversation, a constant prayer.

One solstice morning, the sun rose remarkably early, as usual, and I rose remarkably early, for me, to sit in the swing and gaze--to be intentionally present to the moment of solstice, our largest star,

> as close as it would ever come to us, with this fullness of light,

and simply be.

The pastel pinks and purples of the clouds, the orange-gold sun painted the sky and water. Across the still lake through the light fog from the evening's chill, came a single kayak. Silent, strong, confident, a St. Joseph Worker paddled into a new season, an ending that was a beginning, into herself.

Marilaurice Hemlock, Consociate

Full Moon

You, O Beautiful One, Your soft, round rising in the sky, silent, full, tilting Yourself just slightly downward as though smiling with your golden gaze at our mere nothingness.

We have come to You, set our feet upon the craters of your soul and looking down were revealed to ourselves as Whole.

You, O Beloved, drawing our waters out, far from shore. pulling at the tides of our hearts throbbing in the night.

We who circle our planetary Sun, held as we are in orbits of gravity, dark density, behold You in endless, open sky floating and rising free.

Jeanne Stodola, CSJ



Pine Needle Basket *Cindy Herbst, Consociate*



Bead Ornament & Pine Needle Basket *Cindy Herbst, Consociate*

The Spider

She spins and weaves and tweaks her creations all day long - in sunshine, clothed in dewey jewels, letting her light shine, her creation dazzle and befuddle. All - all from her body, with her finely wrought tools, doing her being, led, inspired perhaps not seeing the whole - but attentive to some inner knowing that all is step, rhythm and form - all prompted by the inner voice, guide, instinct, dancing lightly, with ever a graceful turn here and there - one thread tied here, another glued in place, one dangling for another day's vision or call or dew fall or surprise.

Linda Taylor, CSJ

JENNIFER'S SCONES

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup cold butter
- [•] 3/4+ cup buttermilk

INSTRUCTIONS

 Mix dry ingredients. Cut in butter and mix with pastry cutter or fingers, until mixture forms fine granules.
*Optional: add 1/4-1/2 cup chocolate chips, nuts, dried fruits, or other ingredients prior to the buttermilk.
Mix in buttermilk until dough is moist and holds together. If dough appears dry, add additional buttermilk 1T at a time.
Place moist dough on floured board and form into an 8-inch circle, about 1/4inch thick.

4.) Brush top with cream and sprinkle with sugar.

5.) Cut into 8 wedges, place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown.

Baking is a spiritual practice. In my 20s, while baking at St. Martin's Table Restaurant and Bookstore, I refined my scone-making skills. One day, a guest came back to the kitchen with a request. She was enduring chemotherapy and told me that the oat scones were the only food she was able to eat. In the weeks and months to come, she ordered dozens to take home, freeze, and enjoy. I was humbled to make the only food that this guest could consume. It taught me to always put love and intention into my baking and cooking. More than just ingredients are shared when we prepare food for another.

Jennifer Tacheny, Agrégée

Adapted from the CSJ Community Garden Cookbook

Sarah's Interfaith Blessing

Creator, by all the names we know you, We thank you for our lives today. We thank you for the food we are about to eat and for Earth giving us animals, fruits, vegetables, and Grains; For Rain and Sun making it ripe and good. For the many hands that worked in forests, streams, mountains, and fields to bring it to us and Those that prepared it for us to eat giving us energy, health, and strength.

Thank you for this beautiful day and for happy hearts, As we receive your blessings. Thanks for darkness, stars and moon at night to give us rest. We thank you for Sarah's and for women who are welcomed home to Sarah's finding Hope, peace, safety, love, and beauty.

We think of all residents, staff and volunteers who have ever been 'welcomed home' to Sarah's. We think of all of the people including the Sisters, Consociates, Friends of St. Joseph, Agrégées, St. Joseph Workers, Employees, Donors, Volunteers, and other Partners in Mission who are our great supporters and we know are thinking of us. We are grateful every day, all of us One together.

We hope that we may become kind and good in all we say and do And in doing so grow more loving to each other and to all of the creatures in the world, some lacking love, and those who do not have a home like Sarah's or food to eat.

May peacemaking Prevail on Earth today. Amen. Amin ("Ameen"). Om ("Oh-m"). Namaste (I bow to you).

> Sarah's blessing to bless women of many faiths. The words come from many faith traditions.

God among and between us, around and within us, blessed be your names, you the whole, we a part. May every day dawn with new delight and every night grow seeds of justice in our hearts. Feed today us the fruit of our hands and your Earth Forgive us the harms and hurts we do to others as we forgive them the harms and hurts they do us. Lead us from certainty and cynicism to curiosity and awe and free us to find you as you are in all things. Amen

Joan Mitchell, CSJ

Martha's Table January 25, 2024



Connie Bowen, Consociate

Dear Wind of Change and Holy Healing, Lead us, call us from the future Hold us together as we move Into uncharted territory. We are already one with everything Yet are moving always toward . . . Moving individually within the whole Feeling connected Feeling left behind. Oil us with your healing salve Ready to be pulled forward.

Cathy Steffens, CSJ



Cathy Steffens, CSJ

I don't want an I-am-with-you God. I want a fixer-upper, make it ok miracle it over God. I want a giant anesthetizer a Santa Claus God. I want a barrier removing pot-hole filling God. Spare me the pain, the introspection, the suffering, the agony.

Don't say – I Am your Emmanuel Don't promise to be with me in it through it. I don't want a rock-hard, Jacob's pillow God. I don't want a wade in the water God.

I want a split the sea and give me dry land God. I want a Tabor God not a Calvary God. I don't want a thorn-crowned God. I want a Palm Sunday God. I want an empty tomb 'cause there was no dying God. The God I want doesn't exist. "I AM the One who is Always with you" is the Only God.

Linda Neil, CSJ from Albany & Sister Companion with the Agrégée

Consociate Commitment Tanka

Love of God, they said and for all neighbors also, that's how we should live and I agreed on that day and it has made a diffrence.

In many small ways I try to hold that thought, God, knowing You are near, encouraging with Your grace, helping me to serve and pray...

to smile...offer...pause...listen...love

Linda Crosby, Consociate

My God

My God is a Welcoming God. Always there, present, quietly, lovingly, Welcoming me into life. I go along, Often inattentive Until I need that warm sustaining presence and those open arms to tuck me into wonder, joy, and life-Sometimes in sorrow and sadness-Most often in Contentment as I experience divine presence in communion with my companions on the way.

Kathy Ryan, CSJ

Awaken to the Presence

Rain falls on my hand *I awake to the presence* Sun warms my face *I awake to the presence* Purple amid grass green *I awake to the presence* Phoebe call her name *I awake to the presence* Air moves with my breath *I awake to the presence* Sophia-Wisdom: *The presence to which I awaken*

> Gina Webb, CSJ (1935-2023)



The Vastness of the Universe within Reach

Elea Ingman, Consociate & St Joseph Worker

You are the God of Stillness

"Be still and know that I am God," says Psalm 113. In the same context, I also recall these words from T.S. Eliot: "Teach us to care and not to care Teach us to be still Even among these rocks, Our peace is in your will." I believe that your will for me, O God, is to be attuned to the Sacred. I ask of you, Attentive One, for a sense of your presence this evening. Help me to absorb reverently the moments you give me and to find richness and strength in them. Keep me from moving too fast from one activity to another. May I work against a sense of urgency – that I must be in perpetual motion because my causes are worthy ones. Give me the gift of pausing to savor what is happening now before I plunge into the next activity. May I see, hear, and touch each moment attentively. Time and place are so sacred. With our country at war, much of the world in combat with hunger and homelessness, call me to prayer and thoughtful action. But for now, Great God of Silence, help me to be still.

> Rose Tillemans, CSJ (1923-2002)

LOVE Could Not Contain Itself depicting the moment creation began



Cathy Steffens, CSJ



Kathy Ryan, CSJ

We Say Grace on the Bus

For the rumble of the wheels For the driver For the neighbors sitting before and behind For the river, and for the bridge over it For every road we travel and every hand that built them We give thanks.

Let us give up our seats when we can Let us find seats when we cannot And let us not miss our stop, but be wakeful when the time comes Let us look out the window, and bless what we see.

(Amen.)

Dana Schiewe, St Joseph Worker



Clay *Ag Foley, CSJ*

Bertha & Noah – "Rock & Roll"

That night we first came together - <u>almost serendipitously</u> - the IDEA to get on board the boat. Bertha and I indoors, wondering what this notion of building a boat was all about - parts coming <u>effortlessly</u> all together. Bertha said, "It's like weaving a rug - it gets BIGGER and BIGGER." And I, from my superior wisdom saying, "YES!" Then a thump on the door padding and shuffling steps on the deck. Bertha and I hiding under the table, shaking, holding, clutching one another. Then a **Screech**, a ROAR, a SQUEAK... "pad," "shuffle," THUMP...

Bertha: "Should we open the door???"

<u>My thought</u>: "NO!!! NO!!! NO!!!" Then, (did I hear myself right???) a tiny squeaking, whispering "yes..."

"Who said that?" whispered Bertha.

"I'm sure I don't know," I said... and then, as if not knowing why, my fumbling hands <u>opened the lock</u>. An instant of moonlight shone through the door, then giant tusks, fur, paws, feathers, wings, tails, scales, beaks... the kiss of butterfly wings on my check... all of us in the hole, whole, hold together. We all sought purchase, then... as if carried and blown by some unseen force... we cast off.

"Wh... where are we going?" asked Bertha. And from my great wisdom and experience, I said "I'm sure I don't know."

Linda Taylor, CSJ

