



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Trina Bottos, CSJ

*The Heavens tell about
the glory of God.*

*The skies announce what his
hands have made.*

*Each day tells more of the story and
each night reveals more and more
about God's plan.*

This beginning of Psalm 19 is from a translation entitled "Easy to Read Version," found among many others in a Google site entitled "Bible Gateway."

In some more remote areas of Northern Ontario where light pollution is not a problem, it is easy to view the night sky in all its glory and to be caught up in wonder. Thinking about stars, which have already burnt out, but whose light travelling at 186,000 miles per second is still visible to us, is mind boggling! The immensity of the Milky Way, our home galaxy, which is only one of the many galaxies in our cosmos, dwarfs us with its estimated 100 to 400 *billion* stars and at least 100 *billion* planets. What do these heavens tell of the glory of God? What do these skies announce about God's creation? What is the significance of one of us compared to this myriad of astrological bodies?

Matthew's Gospel gives us an answer: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore you are of more value than many sparrows." Matt 10:28-30. (RSV Catholic Edition)

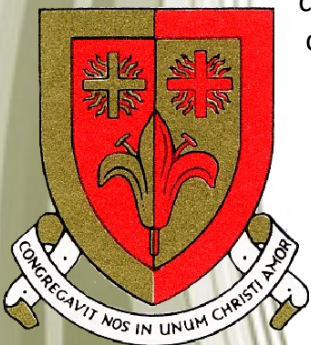
We can go from the macro to the micro -- the immensity of our cosmos to the particularity of a sparrow, or to one of us.

"Each day tells more of the story and each night reveals more and more about God's plan." Do we find new insights as we approach the celebration of Christmas and ponder again the familiar story of how God joined our human race? The big story is God's love for us and ours for God and how God's plan unfolds for us individually and as Congregations pledged to lives of discipleship of God's Son, our brother Jesus, Emmanuel: God-With-Us.

None of us know what the future holds, either for us personally or for our Congregations, or what Religious life might look like in the future. We know in whom we have placed our trust and walk in the faithful conviction that in God's time and way all will be revealed. Somewhat like those seekers of old, the Magi, we can search the night sky for the star to guide our journey.

Can we believe in the basic goodness of humanity, including our own, as redeemed sinners loved by God? Will this conviction allow us to live simply, aware of what really matters in life as Mary did from her first fiat to the birth and life of her son, to her courageous stance at the foot of His cross?

Starry skies, the immensity of God's creation, the wonder that is each of us, the Baby born in Bethlehem, all tell of the Glory of God. *O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR –

Loretta Manzara, CSJ

The beautifully reflective message from our President Sister Trina lifts our thoughts to the immensity of the galaxies and then ever so gently invites us into the intimacy of divine relationship revealed in human time. And so I offer these thoughts on how the now time of the past few months has drawn me more deeply into the blessing of relationships.



Federation Board

Our three Congregations met in Hamilton in October. Receiving reports from all of our committees made us all the more aware of the threads of connection that are strengthened by the work of so many members: Archives Committee, Associate Companions Leaders Committee, Ecology Committee, Vocation Committee, and our Office of Systemic Justice. Each of these along with those who attended Sojourners in Active and Inclusive Love have been living the mission of the Federation in concrete ways: preserving our historical patrimony, witnessing to our charism in everyday life,

spreading the ecological word, offering a listening ear to the seeker, engaging us in gospel justice, living the joy of relationships. We welcomed the neighbour as our two Sisters from the United States shared their activities around an organizational audit. And we heard reports on the new strategic plan for the International Centre. The

conversations widened from Canada to North America, to France.

Within a few short days I was on a plane to Le Puy for the International Centre Board Meeting.

There I met the team of Eluiza, Anita and Olga. And what fine women of hospitality they are! By now you have seen their newsletter, full of activities. Together they maintain the house, the bookings, the food, the menus, the cleaning, the gardens, the taxi service, the programming. France has the custom of

serving wine at the noon and evening meal. This certainly was helpful in loosening my unilingual tongue to find ways to communicate and develop new relationships.

Within the week a new group of Sisters joined us for the Global Coordinating Group. With excellent translators, we learned about our CSJ sisters in the Amazonia, Madagascar and other African villages. We heard of work among the refugees along the Eastern coast of Italy, and the vision of having our Sisters present at the UN proceedings in Geneva where the focus is on human rights. I boarded the plane for home realizing that our 2014 mission statement is truly about relationships.

“we collaborate with Sisters of St. Joseph globally and respond to the evolving reality of our world, bringing healing and hope to all creation.” (continued on page 3)



Global Coordinating Group

It helps every now and then to give some background about organizations that are at work among us, the Congregations of St. Joseph.

In the recent issue of her newsletter (*CSJ UN Annual Report (2016 – 2017)*) Sister Justine Senapati described the formation and work of the *International Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation* group (I-JPIC).



Federation and International Congregation has a contact person to disseminate and collect information through their respective justice and peace coordinators, with the understanding that each justice and peace coordinator will circulate the information to the Sisters and Leader-

At the 2016 meeting of this group in Florida, a sustaining structure was established. The core committee consists of: Sisters Sue Wilson and Joan Atkinson (Canadian Federation), Linda Pepe and Barbara Bozak (Chambery), Jeanette Londajim (French Federation from Algeria), and Rita Bosch (Jos de Buenos Aires, Argentina).

These six are responsible for

sending information and gathering materials relative to our mission and presence throughout the world, and for enhancing our collective capacity to create systemic change by coordinating local, national, and international efforts. They directly link with persons of every Congregation and Federation and with the work of our NGO at the UN. Each

ship team of her Congregation.

One of the challenges noted at our Global Coordinating Group meeting in Le Puy, at the end of October is the communication trail that is so essential to benefit the work of our I-JPIC. We agreed to do everything possible to strengthen the flow of information so that our CSJ voice can be heard at the various round tables in New York and Geneva.

(Executive Director message continued from page 2)

One of the local ways we will bring healing as a Federation is through our new initiative of pledging to become *Blue Communities*. We will indeed empower one another to witness to the care of creation, making a difference, helping to appreciate and use water not as a commodity but as gift to all peoples and earth.

In this edition of our newsletter you will read of

- ◇ Sister Sheila Fortune's first meeting at the US Leadership Assembly.
- ◇ Sister Nancy Wales explains all things about "food kits."
- ◇ Sister Mary Rowell expresses our Advent/Christmas theme from both an ecological and vocation perspective



NOTES FROM THE U.S. FEDERATION LEADERS ASSEMBLY—

Sheila Fortune, CSJ

I was pleased to be invited to share a little of my first experience of attending the 2017 Leadership Assembly of the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Latham, N.Y. The Assembly followed on the heels of our Canadian Federation gathering in Hamilton, ON. Sister Patty Johnson, the Executive Director of the U.S. Federation and Sister Peggy Sullivan, Co-Chair were our guests and had shared some information about the U.S. Organizational Audit. I could never have imagined the amount of work involved in such an endeavor nor dreamt that I would have the opportunity to be part of small table conversations as the Sisters re-visited their Mission, Vision, and Value Statements, emerging needs of the Congregation and its members, and so much more.



I could feel my own energy level rising during the discussions as we looked at how the Federation might become a visioning force, helping its member Congregations to embrace a vibrant Future nurturing the mission and charisma and promoting life-giving relationships. I certainly felt that the spirit is indeed alive in the

pull of wanting some conversation around our membership in the Canadian Federation. Is it possible that in the future, we might want to include the Associates, and other representatives of those who share our charisma in an intentional way?

The Sisters were so welcoming and affirming of our efforts in the Canadian Federation to deepen our relationships through contemplative prayer and dialogue and our efforts to speak with one voice on current issues that affect people and our



planet, such as our pledge to become Blue Communities. They were also very interested in the work of our five standing committees, their mandates and reports to the Federation Assembly.

charisma, vision, and mission of the Federation and its members. Speaking of membership, I felt the

Truly, I felt fortunate to be able to participate in the work and efforts of the U.S. Assembly. I could sense our mutual desire to share with and learn from each other.



THE GREEN WINDOW - "GLOW TO HIM WOOD AND TREE": AN ECOLOGICAL REFLECTION FOR ADVENT—Mary Rowell, CSJ on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee

A powerful image of the presence of God in the natural world is found in the *Carmina Gadelica*, a beautiful compendium of Gaelic prayers and poems collected from around the Hebridean Islands between 1860-1909 by folklorist, Alexander Carmichael.

In the Christmas carol found in that text, "The Nativity" we read:

*This night is the long night,
Glowed to Him wood and tree,
Glowed to Him mount and sea,
Glowed to Him land and plain,
When that His foot
was come to Earth.*

The carol speaks of the light of Christ's birth penetrating, being received by and reflected in all of God's creation. Soon, we will again light the candles of Advent as we prepare our hearts to receive the light of Christ at Christmas.

This year, we wait for the "long night" of Christmas in a seemingly "long night" in our world. Today, our experience is of a "night of darkness"; a night filled with violent conflicts worldwide and

the threat of nuclear annihilation, of the sufferings of people fleeing persecution, torture and starvation, a night of ecological degradation, of chaotic weather patterns and climate change. It is a night in which the "cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor" is heard calling out to us, with urgency, as one cry! We face a night where the possibility of the

light being extinguished forever seems real in ways not previously experienced in our world.

And yet ... as Christians familiar with mystical references to "the dark night" we find in our reality of faith the light of Christ at the heart of all things. In this is hope. So as we light our candles this Advent we are reminded that with Christ we are called to be "God's light in our world." Advent invites us once again to reflect upon the confluence of the realities of our time and the hope of Christian commitment and that of our religious profession. The silent, enveloping waiting in the long night calls us ever to the primacy of prayer in and for the world. It invites us to prepare in contemplative movement the prayer-filled actions that will make a difference – in the "already but not

yet" birthing of Christ in our world. Advent offers us a sacred pause, to again search our hearts for practical responses that will contribute to the integrity of God's creation, healing relationships in a spirit of reconciliation and that will respond with true commitment to those who are poor and marginalized. In the long night "when all creation groans" (*Romans, 8:22*) we again hear a call to new beginnings in the face of the challenges of our times - that as Christmas dawns our hearts, our lives, all of creation will indeed "glow where His foot was" and will in us once again, "come to Earth."



FOOD FOR THOUGHT - WHAT WOULD MY GRANDMAS THINK?

Nancy Wales, CSJ on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee

While enjoying a little more TV than usual during the summer I was intrigued by the increasing number of TV spots advertising food kit subscription services. You may ask, "What are meal kit services?" Meal kits are made by various food companies who deliver right to your doorstep ready-made meals or boxes containing all the ingredients and kitchen-tested illustrated recipe cards to prepare dinner. Some Canadian food kit delivery services include: *Chef's Plate* (Toronto), *Jolly Table* (Calgary), *ChefX* (Ottawa), and *Dinnerlicious* (Hamilton).

Google Enlightens

I googled "food kits" to learn more about this growing food trend. Here is what I found:

Why the Need?

In the midst of the hectic and busy lives of individuals and families and an increased consciousness of the necessity of making healthy food choices, it is not surprising to see alternatives to fast food take out dinners surfacing.

How About the Pros?

Revuezle.com focuses on product reviews and comparisons. In its article, *5 Surprising Benefits of Food Kit Delivery Services* it highlights five reasons in support of this growing culinary trend. These reasons are outlined in subsections on: *Perfect Portions, Less Food Waste, Healthy Cooking Made Easy, Time and Cost*

Savings and Access to Ingredients Not Easily Obtained Locally.

Furthermore, the meal kit option is cheaper than restaurant eating. However, bear in mind, kits are more expensive than do it yourself supermarket shopping.

Takechargeamerica.org points out that kits may also help the consumer minimize food waste by



providing just the right quantity of ingredients needed for the recipe. Whereas shoppers often buy more groceries than required and end up with food spoilage.

Kits are often tailored to meet various dietary needs such as vegetarian, gluten-free, dairy free or low-sodium meals. Some services offer organic food options. Although there are numerous benefits to meal kit services, the main perk remains convenience. Kits provide a great way for diners to try new foods, flavours and cooking methods.

How about the Cons?

The main con cited by *takechargeamerica.org* is related to

price. While costs vary, most meals average about \$10 a meal per person. One could experiment with several providers and take advantage of the usual significant discount offered on first-time orders. This would allow a lower cost option for trying out the meal kit cuisine.

Another deterrent

takechargeamerica.org cites in purchasing ingredients delivered to your doorstep is expanding your carbon footprint. Kits involve excessive packaging since the ingredients within your insulated box are individually packed and in addition there are the cold packs.

Takechargeamerica.org points out that although services allow you a certain leeway in naming 'no way' ingredients and flavours, there remains the probability of getting a dinner you don't like.

Listed on the website is a factor which dissuades me from purchasing a meal kit and that is the lack of wiggle room for creativity or last minute changes.

Grandmas' Reaction

Finally, I'm left wondering what Grandma Wales or Grandma Walsh, great home cooks, would think about dinner in a box.

What are your thoughts on subscribing to food kit delivery?

VOCATION COMMITTEE - "VOCATION, RESPONSE AND NEW LIFE: VISIO DIVINA FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS" Mary Rowell, CSJ

This Advent we are reminded, through repeated Gospel readings of the story of the Annunciation, of the centrality of Mary's "yes" to her call to birth Christ in the world.

Reflecting on Advent I was reminded of a very evocative painting, "the Annunciation" by the African American artist, Henry Tanner (1859-1937).

A striking aspect of Tanner's painting is that it doesn't follow an overly-pious depiction of the Annunciation. Rather, it shows a "realistic" young woman looking perplexed, questioning, a little unsure. The ruffled bed covers speak of some "disquiet." Yet, there is also a sense of peaceful openness as she moves toward her ultimate "Yes" to God. The painting may provide a meaningful focus on vocation for Advent, a "visio divina," praying "with the eyes of the heart" while reflecting on an image. (Clear copies of the painting may be accessed on Google Images).

In our "religious lives" recently, like Mary, we may have prayerfully struggled trying, as Sister Janet Mock, CSJ puts it, to live "the

Great Love in turbulent times;" turbulence in our personal and communal lives, in our sense of vocation, in our comprehension of an evolving reality of religious life and in the Church and world today. In this context it can be so easy to give up hope, to miss the stifled whisper of God, to forget that within the same turbulence, God



still calls. What now, does our "Yes" mean? We may share the apparent "disquiet" of this image. Yet, paradoxically, it may be precisely the "disquiet" that leads us to newness of life; disquiet that has the capacity and bears the gift of "confidence and audacity." to use the words of a Carthusian novice master, in our "yes" to religious life, today. For, as the "Portrait of

a Sister of St. Joseph" reminds us, as we "look on the world with eyes open" to its realities, we are always to be "in holy *disquietude*, searching in order to understand what God and the dear neighbour await from us today."

Advent offers us a season of waiting - a time of reflection and hope-filled prayer. If, like Mary, we can embrace the disquiet, yet offer anew our "fiat" in faith despite an unknown future, we will walk with those, who like us may be searching, finding it hard in the clamour and in the disquiet of today's world to hear the Divine call clearly. We witness to and affirm hope. We renew an invitational attitude through the fullness of our commitment to a vibrant culture of vocation, to religious

life lived with the marks of "confidence and audacity," as well as to other expressions of our charism as we "live the Great Love in turbulent times." Then as Christmas dawns with joy we will celebrate once again that "Great Love," incarnated in history and in the "yes" of our lives today. With Mary and with others, we birth Christ again in our world in the hope of new life.



*Wishing you deep peace and joy over the
Christmas Season and praying for
the reconciliation of all that is severed in our world.*

Trina, Mary Anne, Sheila, Loretta

**~ SAVE THE DATE! ~
for the
FEDERATION ECOLOGY RETREAT**

*Discipleship for the 21st Century -
In the Spirit of Laudato Si.*

May 28 – June 3, 2018

*Villa St. Joseph Ecology and Spirituality Centre,
Cobourg, ON*

*For details and registration please contact
Sr. Loretta Manzara at the Federation office*

**FEDERATION OF THE SISTERS OF
ST. JOSEPH OF CANADA**

Box 487, 485 Windermere Road
London, ON N6A 4X3

Phone: 519-642-7029

Email: can.csj-fed.bellnet.ca

Website: www.csjfederation.ca

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

**United by a common story
and charism, we Sisters of
St. Joseph of Canada, form a
Federation to empower one
another in the passionate living
of our charism of active and
inclusive love.**

**Urged by God's spirit, we
collaborate with Sisters of
St. Joseph globally and
respond to the evolving
reality of our world,
bringing healing and hope
to all creation.**