

Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Mary Anne McCarthy, CSJ

“And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.” (Jn 1:16)

This passage from the prologue of John’s gospel which we hear during the Christmas season speaks to the overflowing gift of God to us in Jesus.

These words of scripture reminded me of two experiences I had these last few months; one was a reading and one was a talk.

In the LCWR Journal, ‘Becoming One In Love’, there is a reference from Maria Cimperman, RSCJ who is quoted as saying “the language of diminishment no longer serves us.” I found this a curious statement as all of us, not only in religious life, but in our world are experiencing diminishment and loss. I emailed Maria and said that I would like to read more on this topic. She responded and said that diminishment language does honestly name a part of our reality with the changes in numbers and ministries but it can also be used to stop conversations and actions that would help us to live in God’s reign here and now. God is moving all around us in these very realities of our world today. When we speak of what we lack, we can limit our capacity to see God creating. She stressed that God is far more creative than this word as it is often used.

At the ATRI Conference this fall, Ron Rolheiser, the keynote speaker, spoke on the “Spirituality of Stewardship” and he emphasized that we are stewards of God’s abundant providence. He spoke of the biblical meaning of stewardship and a key idea for me was his emphasis on the fact that the faithful

steward always operates out of a sense of abundance rather than scarcity and never loses sight or focus on the preference for the poor. He acknowledged the struggles with being a faithful steward. But if we are persons of faith, we are always confident about the future and we do not give into the demands of ‘maintenance’ but rather are always ‘mission driven’. He challenged us to operate out of a mentality of abundance rather than a mentality of scarcity. Our response to the fullness we have all received is a heart and mind of gratitude.

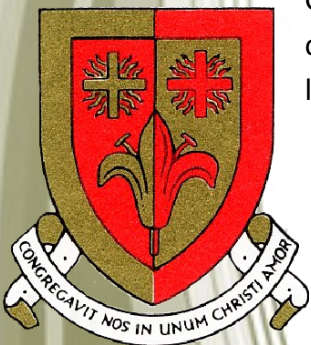
As we strive to live out of the fullness and abundance of God and respond to God’s desires for our world, let us unite in this Christmas prayer:

Emmanuel

You have come near, God with us.
Not only made your home among us,
You have come to dwell within us
making of our heart a habitat of
divinity.

At each moment of every single day
You open the way for us to love,
to go beyond our selfish inclinations,
to seek the good in each person,
to eliminate the barriers that divide,
to be a welcoming home worthy of
you.

Joyce Rupp,
Fragments of Your Ancient Name





MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Loretta Manzara, CSJ

Advent – the days grow shorter, darkness lingers yet the promise of light and new life shapes the journey. I recently travelled with Sr. Sheila Fortune, to Lynn Lake Manitoba to share a few days with Sr. **Bonnie Bryson** (CSJ in Canada) and Sr. **Andrea Dumont** (CSJ Toronto). There in the far north, darkness arrives midafternoon and the day begins in that same womb like atmosphere. There also, hospitality reigns among the locals and every occasion is taken as an opportunity to be community, and to live into gratitude.

In this edition of our newsletter we offer a reflection on the hospitality of Divine Love making a home among us (**President's message**), the sharing of that Divine nature through our baptismal call and Eucharistic life with the next generation (**Vocation Committee**), a new meaning of the 'flesh' that the Word became, calling us to seek the innumerable places the God of goodness can be discovered (**Green Window**). And where most opportune to meet the Holy One

than in the gratitude expressed at our meal tables! (**Food for Thought**). **Paul Baines** encourages us to unwrap the gift of water, celebrate its sacredness, and seek how to reciprocate what has been given. Together as Federation we reflect and give gratitude during this festive Advent/Christmas Season.

Gratitude goes out to Sr. **Anne Karges** (CSJ in Canada) who in September completed 8 years as our Federation representative at the annual Global Coordinating Group (GCG) meeting. Anne has helped us grow in awareness of the global family of Joseph. She has been a conscientious conveyor of the vision and content of the GCG meetings and has shown a sensitivity to the ways that we can collaborate with our sister congregations throughout the world. We are deeply grateful to Anne for her service, dedication, and enthusiastic participation in this global work. Sr. **Marlene Roy** (Sault Ste Marie) has generously agreed to take on the position as our Canadian representative. Thank you Marlene!

Our immediate past president Sr. **Trina Bottos** (SSM) finished her

term this summer. With the Sault Ste Marie and Toronto congregations' election of new leadership teams, our executive committee now consists of: President - Sr. **Mary Anne McCarthy** (Toronto), Sr. **Sheila Fortune** (CSJ in Canada), Sr. **Mary Jo Radey** (SSM). We express deep gratitude to Trina for her leadership over these 2 years, for her thoughtful and reflective messages to the membership, and wish her generous healing and God's abundant blessing as we hold her in prayer.

Information has been distributed regarding the 2019 programs at our International Centre in Le Puy. Please be in touch if you would like an additional copy.

As you will see on the final pages of the newsletter, I have been gathering stories of our global connections and ministries honoured. Please keep me informed of your activities. These stories indeed witness to our Federation mission. Our spring edition will our focus on the hospitality we extend to refugees.

May this Advent/Christmas Season offer ample opportunity to be community and to live into gratitude.

VOCATION COMMITTEE - Advent Reflection

Rosemary Fry, CSJ

Each year during the liturgical season of advent we are invited to enter anew into the mystery of the incarnation; into the mystery of a God who came, who will come, and who comes continuously. We move slowly or quickly, week by week, up to Christmas, the celebration of God who entered our history conceived in Mary's womb and born, the baby Jesus, in a manger in Bethlehem. At the same time we recall the Christ who, as we say in the Creed, will come in the future to judge the living and the dead. Most important, however, at least for me, we are invited anew to recognize the Christ of love entering our lives at each moment of every day, to use us to light the fire of love in our world.

This coming, we know, is the sharing in the divine nature given to us at

baptism and renewed again and again in the Eucharist. St Paul told the Ephesians that this was not just for us humans but for all of creation. "to unite all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth Eph.1:10 . The whole of



creation and not just us humans, experiences this power of the incarnation. During Advent we are called again to recognize and celebrate this.

This Advent follows on the completion in Rome of the synod on "Young People the Faith and

Vocational Discernment." Soon the Final Document will be available in English. In the meantime we know from frequent comments of Pope Francis that we have been invited to let go of our pre-conceived ideas and listen intently to the young to learn of their ideas, hopes and expectations.

Teilhard de Chardin tells us "The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason for hope."

If during this Advent time we renew our commitment to long for and work toward the fullness of God's life in our world we will be women of hope for the young and for each and every person in our troubled world.

BLUE COMMUNITIES PROJECT– Unwrapping the gift of water

Paul Baines, Blue Communities Coordinator for CSJs

A friend of mine shared a [short video](#) with me the other day with a simple message. A man wakes up in disbelief and wrapped up in Christmas paper. He unwraps himself just enough to move and speak and then proceeds to unwrap his wife and then his kids who've stumbled into the bedroom wrapped up like holiday mummies.

He's now fully awake, exuberant and most of all thankful for all these kinship gifts in his life. Next comes the unwrapping of a light switch, a faucet,

food, a briefcase for work, a car in the driveway, and finally, a warm cup of coffee.

"This Christmas, may you be grateful for all the gifts around you" marks the ending of the video and this left me thinking about the Federation's Blue Community pledge I've been working on these past 8 months.

While we can't wrap the Great Lakes up in Christmas paper, we can start to feel an immense amount of

over

BLUE COMMUNITIES PROJECT– Unwrapping the gift of water continued

Paul Baines, Blue Communities Coordinator for CSJs

Associates across the Federation are blessed with clean, dependable, and affordable water for all their needs.

It's not a perfect system in many ways since there are those in the watershed without healthy tap water, there are toxic teams of pollutants inherited from the past and saturating the present, and there is a drawdown of political commitment and oversight to protect the waters. There are still 75 Drinking Water Advisories for First Nations in Ontario, there are still 37 Areas of Concern in the Great Lakes with usually high amounts of water pollutants, and we just saw the Environmental Commissioner's Office shut down in Ontario, while threats to water quality need more (not less) watchdog research and advocacy.

Water is often talked about as a resource, a source of life, sacred, and sometimes as a gift. But what is the best way to reciprocate a gift? Mainly, it should be to thank the giver and cherish the gift as a signal of how much you cherish the relationship between you and the giver – between you and the Creator, God. The good news is that this reciprocation is alive and well across the Federation and with Blue

Community plans being made into and beyond 2019.

I'm of the opinion that our water-care is more present than we think. By naming and encouraging more of this care, I think we can motivate a wider circle of water protectors.

Through my work with Great Lakes

The second section shows how learning about water also gives back. When we care about someone, we want to learn about them – what makes them tick and to understand their experience of the world. So Seeking Knowledge is not just about learning, but offering our thoughtful attention towards what we value.

The third section wants the gift to be shared. When we truly appreciate a good song, meal, joke, or moment, we want others to join in. When we make the experience of the gift more communal, our pleasure is multiplied by the pleasure it brings others.

The last section of this compass commits to health. When we care about someone, we want to take care of them when sick and better yet, take precautions to help them avoid illness and

pain. When we work to improve water quality, we are celebrating yet another dimension of our care.

So during this season of gift giving and receiving, let's remember the gift of water and how we can reciprocate our care through a diverse set of actions.

Connect to *the project* by visiting the website: <https://bluecommunitiesnow.wixsite.com/water>



Compass of Care

Commons, we developed this Compass of Care graphic to give credit and commitment to the various ways we care for water as a sacred gift.

Our first section promotes Gratitude and comes in many forms. This can be through prayer, making offerings, and generally celebrating your thankfulness for water.

***THE GREEN WINDOW - "The Word became flesh and blood
and moved into the Neighbourhood"
- Nancy Wales, CSJ on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee***

Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, in her article, "For God so loved the cosmos" points out that when Christ became human, he also became part of the vast physical body of the cosmos.

**"Scientific discoveries have made it clear that human flesh
is part of the evolutionary network of life on this planet.**

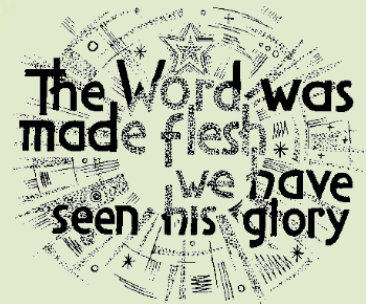
**Which in turn is a part of the solar system,
which came into being as part of a long cosmic history.**

**This awareness of our natural
history provides new meaning of the 'flesh'
that the Word became. "**

In Johnson's accentuating for her readers this incredible scientific reality she not only stretches our thinking about Jesus' incarnation but also begs us to ponder the wonder of our own human form. As the Psalmist heralds, "I praise you for I am wonderfully made." (Psalm 139) It is so easy for us to take our human body for granted. Yet in this gift of God, the wonder of God's creation abounds.

<https://youtu.be/4aoIBROXvZ000>

Furthermore, we often miss appreciating the oneness Jesus, himself, felt with all of creation. Jesus frequently framed his message in the context of the natural world. Scripture incorporates numerous images of nature that he relied on to convey his message: lost sheep, sower and seed, birds of the air, lilies of the field, fields ripe for the harvest, etc. Might not our encounters with the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels help us better attune ourselves to the wisdom found in creation.



For God so Loved the Cosmos by Elizabeth Johnson
U.S. Catholic.org
Google Image

FOOD FOR THOUGHT - WHAT IS A MEAL?

Kathy O’Keefe, CSJ on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee

With the festivities of Christmas on the horizon, this is an apt time to reflect on the significance of sharing a meal. While we need nutrients to keep our bodies healthy and strong, meals consist of far more than food and drink. We are also meant to be nourished psychologically, mentally and socially. Family meals may still be valued; however, it is more challenging than ever to sit down to regularly dine together. What are we missing out on in our fast-paced society as this once common place ritual becomes less and less the norm?

Festive meals are a significant part of meaningful celebrations. We extend warm hospitality to others when we invite them to share Christmas dinner with us. Before our guests are welcomed into our home, much planning and preparation has taken place. From start to finish, food and drink pass through many stages and require the involvement of countless people prior to appearing on our dining room table. It is truly a labour of love to take the necessary time and energy to organize, shop for, cook, bake, serve, and clean up after a communal meal.

As we intentionally come together

to leisurely partake in a delicious meal, we also share each other’s lives by being lovingly present to each other. In this circle of life and love, there is a sense of belonging and inclusion. For the sake of the common good, we may choose to let go of past conflict and differences to be united for this celebratory feast. Perhaps we have invited someone, who would otherwise be alone at Christmas, to join us.

Taking time to say “Grace” before meals is very important. We ask God’s blessing on the bountiful gifts that are bestowed upon us. Our gratitude is extended towards those who prepared the meal and those sharing the fruits of their labour. It is a time to be mindful of persons who lack adequate food and to pray for the grace to work towards change so that all may be fed.

The gift of this meal includes tradition, favourite dishes, and a celebratory atmosphere. Our senses are heightened as we take note of all that is before us ... the beauty of the table setting, the wonderful aromas, the vibrant

colours, the varied textures, the life-giving conversation and laughter, the smiles and warm touches, and the pleasing taste on our palettes. What a sensory delight!

Reflecting on our shared experience, we realize that besides savouring the food and drink, we have basked in the pleasure of having spent quality time with each other. We leave each other with a deep satisfaction at being full physically and with a strong sense of well-being. Having been gifted with wonderful memories to ponder, we move out in various directions to be



“food and drink” for others in need ... until the next time! As Christmas approaches, let us foster an attitude of gratitude for meals shared and not take this valuable gift for granted.

(Image taken from Google – The Philippines)

Sr. Sheila Fortune and Loretta attended the leadership Assembly of the United States Federation held in Scottsdale Arizona from Nov. 4-8, About 60 Sisters were present from across the States.

The purpose of the Assembly was stated as: "Immerse ourselves in prayer and reflection on our heritage and charism so as to benefit from the wisdom of our foremothers to guide us in the transformation asked of us today." Reflect together on the information contained in the Annual Report and engage in deep dialogue to further see how congregations can assist each other."

Reflection on the heritage and charism occurred in two specific ways.

Each morning prayer focused on a specific maxim and the singing of the CSJ Mission Statement composed by Lori True, followed by sharing of the heart. The prayer also included foundational CSJ scripture passages with commentary each day by one of Marcia Allen, Bette Moslander, and Mary Pellegrino. The prayer highlighted one person of the Trinity each day.

Sr. Mary McGlone, CSJ presented three talks on the early history of the Sisters of St. Joseph, drawing on her treasury of experiences gathered in researching her book "Anything of

Which a Woman is Capable", published in 2017. One evening we were entertained and awed by the viewing of a video "Four Women in Black." Published for television sometime in the late 1950's, and featuring the actress Helen Hayes, the film depicted the trek of the seven CSJ Sisters who journeyed



from the west coast to Arizona. The journey actually began in Philadelphia, but only the last lap made it to film. Of course some dramatic freedom was taken for the sake of production, but the underlying spirit of the women was deeply moving, ensuring that every encounter was an opportunity to lean into right relationships and inclusive love.

Looking at how congregations can assist each other, the assembly heard from Sr. Sharon Euart, RSM,

Executive Director, Resource Centre for Religious Institutes. She explained the significance and process of engaging a "Commissary," a person from another religious community who would maintain governance for an Institute when leadership is no longer available.

Discussions about the Annual Report

focused on such issues as the decision to expand membership, clarifying reserve powers, and the setting of membership fees for Associates, Agregées, St. Joseph Workers, etc.

As is the custom, we were invited to share on our Federation activities in Canada. Many expressed gratitude for the information about the work of our Office for Systemic Justice, as well as our efforts with the Blue Communities project.

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Haiti—In early November Sr. Jacqueline Janisse joined 6 other volunteers to visit Maison Ke Kontan (MKK) orphanage which is home to 15 children. The group provided furniture for the family room, cushions for the metal kitchen chairs, purchased a solar panel, completed a vegetable garden and built 2 sets of soccer nets. A quote from Jackie “My motivation for returning to Haiti was simply to be a part of the change I want to see happen for these children. As small as these projects were in the scheme of things, life is a little better for everyone at MKK.”



Guatemala—From October 20 –30, Sisters Andrea Dumont and Pat Dowling visited Guatemala to celebrate the beatification of Father Tulio Maruzzo. The Toronto Sisters originally went to Morales Guatemala in 1968. The Diocese of Izabel was just beginning with Guatemalan Bishop G. Flores. Father Tulio, a Franciscan from Italy was serving on the newly formed parish team. The Sisters prepared leaders in the mountain villages to serve in the church, did health care and worked with youth. Sr. Andrea and Sr. Pat worked with Fr. Tulio for 12 years and knew him very well. He along with Abdulio Arroyo, a catechist, were both martyred the same night. During that brutal time about a thousand others also died for the faith. The Sisters had to return to Canada for safety.

In 2018 the Diocese celebrated 50 years as well as the beatification of Father Tulio and Abdulio. For pat and Andrea, one of the most emotional moments was when the relics were carried in – vestments of Father Tulio and a shirt of Abdulio, the first native Guatemalan to be beatified. Both Father Tulio and Abdulio had received death threats and knew the risk they were running in helping the poor, but were sensitive to the sufferings of the campesinos. About 10,000 people came to the celebrations, with at least 350 priests present at the Mass as well as two of Father Tulio’s brothers from Italy and a group from his native parish in Italy.



Joan Atkinson, csj on behalf of the Office For Systemic Justice



**US-CSJ Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee – Meeting in Wichita, Kansas
November 5-8, 2018**

Our days were wrapped in the contemplative tone set by Sr. Janet Mock from Baden, PA. Janet created space in which our reflections and sharing about the work of justice each of us are engaging on behalf of our Congregations contributes to the healing and wholeness of our world. And nothing happens just by accident, because the U.S. Mid-term elections were happening in the middle of our meetings. Carrying concerns about migration, poverty, jobs, and many moral and ethical questions facing the Sisters in the U.S. and the people they work with, we were encouraged by the faith and wisdom of each other as we shared stories and experiences where we touched the mysterious ways into which God is walking this journey with us.

The group represented many of the CSJ Congregations in the U.S. and I brought a voice from Canada. Janet Mock's words reminded us over and over again that

we are not alone in this journey.

One of the justice animators from the CSJ Orange, CA, Maria Elena, shared her experience of being at the canonization of Oscar Romero. Maria Elena comes from Central America and was so moved to be present since anyone who grew up in Central America knows Romero's journey of solidarity with the poor that eventually cost him his life. As Maria Elena talked about this experience she was moved to tears and talked about what this moment means for the people of El Salvador and all of Central America. The struggle continues with many migrants who are fleeing violence and walking to the border to the U.S. seeking a better life. It is important we bring those experiences into our dialogue with God listening to how God is leading us. So we left those days knowing our journey needs deep listening to our world, and still needs our prayer and energy. God is not finished yet!



Sr. **Virginia Varley** was honoured with the Ignatius Award on November 14, given to persons who have made a significant contribution to the Jesuit retreat ministry. Sr. Virginia was a staff member and later the Director of the Centre for six years. Appreciation was expressed for her skills in spiritual direction, group facilitation and administration. Much of the art displayed throughout the centre was painted by Sr. Virginia.



Sr. **Mary Rowell** was the recipient of an award given by the National Religious Vocation Conference in the United States, in early November. Mary was honoured for “her outstanding leadership, service and dedication to vocation ministry in the Catholic Church”.



Sr. **Florian Atkinson** displayed her quilts in July at the London Residence. To date she has made 15 masterpieces, given as gifts to Sisters and families. Each quilt takes 2-3 months, and all are given away except one that she treasures. She continues to enjoy all the designs through a photo album.



Sr. **Ruth Hennessey** was the recipient of the 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her contribution in education and refugee ministry. Status of Women Minister and Peterborough-Kawartha MP Maryam Monsef created the Women’s Leadership Awards to celebrate women who serve as leaders in the community. Twenty-one local women were recognized, and Missy Knott, a musician from Curve Lake First Nation, and Redpath Singers, a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, provided the music for the event.



DATES TO REMEMBER...

- January 3 *Anniversary of death 1929: Mother Ignatia Campbell (London)*
- January 8 – 11 Federation **Ecology** Committee meeting, Invermara
- January 30 – February 1 **Vocation** Committee Meeting, North Bay
- February 7 *Anniversary of death 1856: Mother Delphine Fontbonne (Toronto)*
- April 3-5 International Centre Board meeting, Le Puy
- April 6 - 10 US novices at Villa St. Joseph, Cobourg for programme on integral ecology and charism
- April 24 **Archives** Committee meeting, Hamilton
- May 13 – 19 Bus tour pilgrimage, Mother Delphine
- May 27 – 29 **Associate/Companion** Leaders Gathering, Invermara
- June 5 *Anniversary of death 1954: Mother St. Philip McGrath (Sault Ste Marie recognizes two women)*
- June 13 *Anniversary of death 1868: Mother Martha Bunning (Hamilton)*
- July 2 *Anniversary of death 1945: Mother Madeleine Mahoney (SSM)*
- July 30 *Anniversary of death 1930: Mother Vincent Carrol (Pembroke)*
- September 20 Federation's 53rd anniversary
- September 24 **Archives** Committee Meeting
- September 26 *Anniversary of death 1901: Mother Austin Doran (Peterborough)*
- October 1-4 Federation **Board** meeting at Invermara (SSM host)
- October 12 – 14 Global Coordinating Group meeting, Le Puy
- October 15 – 17 International Centre Board Meeting, Le Puy

God poured love out upon the world in the compassion and mercy of Jesus. May each of us become that flow of love to all persons and creation.

Christmas blessings to all.

*Mary Anne McCarthy,
Mary Jo Radey,
Sheila Fortune, Loretta Manzara*



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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.