



**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE –
Mary Jo Radey, CSJ**

“Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them.”

A.A. Milne

This Federation newsletter catches

us in the middle of Lent, that most blessed time in our Church calendar year, to prepare us for the Easter Event. There are more prayers popping into my inbox, as I signed up for all kinds of interesting reflections, I have more reflection booklets that they give out in our parish, and I wrestle with how I'm fasting and giving alms for this year...why? Because I need this season in my life!

We know that “Lent” means “Spring.” And that is a serious reminder for us in the Northern climes, that the mountains of snowbanks that currently obscure our vision, making the side streets treacherous as we ease our way out into oncoming traffic unable to see, will begin to recede, melt and as Isaiah says,

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater (Is 55:10 NRSV)

So many see those first signs of Spring in the lovely crocus, that can poke through the snow, and offer a dazzling possibility of colour in the midst of the grey slush and dirt of the remnants of Winter. My sign of Spring is the dandelion!

When I made my Final Vows in 1991, I chose

the dandelion as a symbol of how God works in my life. As this Lent of 2023 moves along, the depth of that symbol never diminishes for me. If anything, it grows stronger. And the four aspects of that symbol can also apply to our life in the Federation as the Family of Joseph. -- The closed bud of potential...the life and vibrancy yet to come. --The full yellow flower reflecting the sun, often distinct in a sea of green. --The puffball of seeds, fragile and light, awaiting the breath of wind that will send it flying to begin life anew. --And the roots...thick, strong, deep and able to break through concrete when necessary.



So what is that to our Federation...well, in our last Newsletter I spoke of how strong our “roots” were with the Six and the One in 1650...no ecclesiastical power could weed us out! The seeds have blown throughout the world, as the Global Coordinating Prayer Calendar demonstrates every Monday! And our works continue to reflect the Son, whether in the past as our Archivists share or in the present as we seek out the “dear neighbour” sitting next to us,

Continued on page 2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Continued

Continued from page 1

wherever we may be.

I invite you to read this Spring Federation Newsletter in that same sprit of newness, with a Lenten heart open to all the possibilities that God is about to lavish upon us in abundance. This Canadian Federation is alive and strong as we “cross pollinate” between our Congregations.

With Dotsy Schweitzer’s Vocation Alive article reminding me of the vibrancy of our Vocation

Animation Committee meeting last month, I leave you with part of Michelle Sherliza’s song “In the Name of Love (Do You Remember the Call?)” [Click here](#) for full song:

Can you remember the Word that your heard,
when the story began in you?

Listen, remember, catch glimpses of Springtime
and roots sinking deep in the heart of God.

And you were carried, green and stretching
toward light, in the Name of God.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Carole Umana

Over the past few weeks, we have been looking at ways to refresh the Federation website in order to profile the vital and life-

giving missions and social justice work undertaken by Sisters. This has been a joyous project that has included reaching out to the Congregations for photographs of Sisters in service and action.

What a timely project -- during this Lenten season – to be reminded of God’s love through these beautiful images of service to communities and individuals; pictures of works that communicate compassion and caring as much as they improve lives. Indeed, that commitment to the ‘dear neighbour’ is shared and lived by all in the Family of Joseph. As Sr. Dotsy so eloquently stated in this issue’s Vocation Alive article, “We Sisters and Associates/Companions – everyone in the Joseph family - are still needed in our suffering world

today, even though maybe we cannot now do what we once did. And every one of us is needed to play her part, by her creativity, her support, and especially by her prayer.”

Truly, these are changing and challenging times ... but the shared work of Sisters, committees, associates, staff, and partners-in-mission continues to sustain and grow the increasingly necessary work for equity, peace, and justice. In this issue of the Federation newsletter, you will read about some of these collective actions to build a better world, locally and globally. For example, in

her article ‘Moving from Vision to Reality’ Sr. Sue Wilson describes the important collaborative work between religious and civil society groups to help shape the



London Soup Kitchen mission. Image graciously provided by CSJ in-Canada archives.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

dialogue at the February (2023) United Nations (UN) gathering in New York for the Commission on Social Development.

Over the coming weeks as we continue to review photographs as part of the website project, we will be reminded and inspired by each image – each one a testament to the love and charisma that is at the heart of it all.

BLUE COMMUNITY - Creating Brave Spaces Amongst Our Peers ***Paul Baines, Blue Community Manager***

For the past year and a half I have been participating in a ‘community of practice’ group called Decolonizing Efforts for Water (or DEW for short). The group was formed and largely framed by Arlene Slocombe from Water Watchers and myself. We are all non-Indigenous people who work on water issues and almost all of us work for various non-profit organizations in Canada.

Throughout 2022, there were 16 members from groups such as: Our Living Waters, Toronto Environmental Alliance, Wilderness Committee, Water Rangers, Junction Creek Stewardship Committee, Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership, and KAIROS. One member works for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Consistent with the broader demographic of water protectors, all but two of the members identify as women.

Our purpose is to host a forum for water advocates to support each other in unlearning our colonial worldviews, forming good relations, and forwarding decolonial water efforts. We acknowledge that all of us are learners but bring our own unique perspectives, experiences, and gifts to these conversations. Our CSJ Blue Community mandate includes education, advocacy, service, and reflection.

The DEW group is a forum for reflection so that we are less likely to reproduce the same ideas, practices, and relationships that we are trying to change.

The group meets online once a month and rotates three key roles: Helpers, Divers, and the Circle. The two Helpers facilitate the flow of the meeting and take notes. For the majority of the meeting the two Divers explore a topic of personal and professional interest as the remaining members in the Circle just listen. Then the Circle comes in to broaden the conversation and connections.

The group also created a set of ‘community agreements’ that support an authentic space for learning. The headings of these longer agreements are summarized as: be like water, presence, embodied listening, risk, accountability, love & connection, trust, and unlearning.

I share these key agreements and format to highlight the amount of intentionality it takes to build trust and vulnerability in a group who don’t know each other that well, but want to explore very personal and political topics. For instance, we’ve been developing a framework as we work month after month about what we are Pondering and what we are Practicing. Here are a few examples:

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

Pondering:

- How do our different lived experiences of colonization shape our understanding of what is 'decolonization'?
- How to respectfully navigate the various types of Indigenous leadership?
- How do we scale up and adapt our individual learning journeys to create change at the interpersonal, organizational, and social movement levels?
- What human and non-human kin are we accountable to?

Practicing:

- Being wary of the uses of "we", "us" and "our."
- Trying to learn some Indigenous words from the territories we live in and being uncomfortable about making mistakes.
- Honour the teachings we have received from Indigenous leadership by giving our time and attention and sharing our voice and gratitude for these teachings.
- Sharing our decolonizing journey with family, friends, and peers.

A highlight for this community was a recent retreat at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre, just outside of Guelph. Twenty of us met for the weekend at the end of January. There were DEW members, Ignatius staff, and a few invited peers. Our program was deepened by four black and Indigenous guests who shared their decolonizing journeys and gave guidance on our allyship work for social justice and water protection. An Ignatius staff member also gave us a tour of the Centre's creek and forest rehabilitation projects – inspired examples of what is possible not just for water and trees, but our potential roles for repair.

So far in 2023, we are reflecting on the retreat and renewing our commitments for the year ahead. Some members are leaving and new members are joining. We are keeping our tested format and diving into a variety of strategies and topics to decolonize efforts for water in Canada and we are aiming to organize another retreat in January of 2024.

Our CSJ Blue Community program is grounded in water justice and repairing damaged relationships with water and Indigenous peoples. The DEW group is a unique and emergent effort for common cause that multiplies individual and organizational learning to benefit the broader water NGO community and potentially beyond. I am grateful for the conviviality of this community and indebted to the brave space we have created.



In February 2023, nation states and civil society groups from around the world gathered at the United Nations in New York for the **Commission on Social Development** (CSocD). The theme for the Commission was: *“Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”*

To help to shape the dialogue at CSocD, civil society groups (including religious orders) created a **Joint Statement** in which we called for a new **social contract**. The statement points out that “current global economic structures, regardless of the income level of a country, are not providing for the wellbeing of all.” Therefore, there is an “urgent need for all nation states to create decent work, strong social protections, and full access to



quality education as well as digital education and skills training programs.” The statement also calls for “economic models that protect the natural world while promoting human prosperity.”

The **Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada** signed this statement. The challenge, now, is to advocate for the various levels of governments in Canada to implement policies and programs that will help to make this vision a reality.

Such **political advocacy** is one way in which the **Office for Systemic Justice** works on behalf of all Sisters, Companions and Associates to be in **solidarity** with people who are marginalized by our society and exploited by our economy; it is also a way to care for eco-systems and species that are overburdened by our social and economic systems.

You can read the full CSocD Joint Statement [here](#).

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS **From the Federation Archives and Heritage Committee**

In 1966, the six Canadian CSJ Congregations (Toronto, Hamilton, London, Peterborough, Pembroke, and Sault Ste. Marie) established the Canadian Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada.

Led by six visionary General Superiors, they together created the mission of the Federation which continues to guide our work today: “united by a common story and charisma, we Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada form a Federation to empower one another in the passionate living of our charisma 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.”

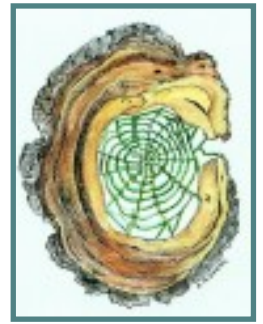
In honour of their vision, the Archives & Heritage Committee is continuing its ‘Historical Highlights’ series in 2023 with an article dedicated to each of the Federation’s six Foundresses. This new series begins in March with an article about CSJ-Toronto’s Mother Maura McGuire (1956-1968). You can find all of the articles – which will be published bi-monthly -- on the Federation’s website under ‘Latest from the Federation.’



Mother Maura

GREEN WINDOW - “Dying and Rising” An Ecological Reflection for Holy Week

Mary Rowell, CSJ, on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee



As we enter the sacred mysteries of Holy Week we are conscious of a traditional call to conversion. For many, the Paschal Mystery is all about human redemption. Yet also impinging on our consciousness is the call to ecological conversion expressed urgently by Pope Francis and numerous other religious leaders. What is this ecological conversion?

The *Laudato Si’ Movement* defines ecological conversion as the “transformation of hearts and minds toward greater love of God, each other, and creation. It is a process of acknowledging our contribution to the social and ecological crisis and acting in ways that nurture communion: healing and renewing our common home.”¹ An evolving reflection on Holy Week offers us a way of understanding and committing to this wider conversion as once again we walk the journey from Palm Sunday to the cross and onward to resurrection.



As Holy Week begins we witness the procession of Jesus into Jerusalem. Scripture scholars remind us that alongside Jesus’ procession was another on the other side of the city; a great imperial procession. This procession was marked by majestic triumphalism, an exhibition of power, oppression, wealth and military might; some of the very characteristics of which we are aware in our own times as more and more people are crushed and the land decimated. The cry of the poor is indeed the cry of the earth!

Jesus’ procession, Marcus Borg points out, deliberately countered what was happening on the other side of the city. It was a procession of peasants, the marginalized who looked to Jesus for hope, who were embraced and affirmed by his very self-offering.² His living and dying is at the heart of the Gospel and the dynamic in all of creation. Jesus walks towards his crucifixion as the whole of creation groans and suffers (Romans 8:22). The redemptive act of Christ then is not only for us humans, but for all of creation – a cosmic redemption that costs all. As Holy Week begins in which

procession do I find myself?

Through the days of Holy Week, we accompany Christ on the road to crucifixion – a road to conversion. We are called, said theologian Sallie McFague, to embrace “cruciform living” for our times. In her book, “Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology for a Planet in Peril”, McFague is clear that if we are to be Christian disciples of integrity today we must witness to the cross in the realities of a broken world marked by extreme human suffering and earth’s destruction. Ultimately, our call to walk with the crucified Christ will lead us to a radically prophetic view of the abundant life; one that is centered not on endless consumerism and life-destroying practices but in re-imagining the world in just and sustainable ways. Conversion will be guided by a “philosophy of enoughness”, a spirituality of inconvenience, sacrifice with that of Christ, for the sake of the other.³ We will share earth’s resources, we will wash feet, we will struggle in the garden, we will embrace the cross and it will cost all! As we enter the days of Holy Week this year what will this ecological conversion look like in our day-to-day living?

And after the cross comes the stillness of Holy Saturday with its invitation to liminal space as we stand outside the tomb between what was, is now, but not yet. We are called to Sabbath waiting, to restfulness and disquiet. We are challenged by this day to live our days in letting go, leaving fallow, embracing a life of greater simplicity, to the contemplation of possibility as with tenderness we touch the earth and its suffering peoples. We wait, we rest from all of our destructive ways and with the new day will come the light of resurrection in the world, the light of the Cosmic Christ - the Christ of new life.

¹ see: <https://laudatosimovement.org/news/what-is-an-ecological-conversion-en-news/> (accessed March 6, 2023)

² Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, “The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach us about Jesus”, 2007

³ Sallie McFague, “Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology for a Planet in Peril”, 2001, p. 14

FOOD FOR THOUGHT - The Egg: An Easter Treasure **Kathy O'Keefe, CSJ, on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee**

One of my favourite childhood memories is the delight that I felt when my Aunt Frances gifted me with a large Laura Secord Easter egg with my name written on it. Perhaps some of your best recollections of Easter also include eggs. Have you ever wondered how eggs originally became associated with Easter?

Since egg production was dependent on sunlight, prior to the introduction of industrial farming, hens laid very few eggs over the winter months. With the coming of spring, eggs appeared once again. The egg, an ancient symbol of new life and rebirth, was associated with pagan festivals celebrating spring. Over time, this custom was adopted for Easter celebrations.

During the Lenten season, eggs were formerly a forbidden food. Thus, our tradition of having pancakes on Shrove Tuesday began. The egg is seen by followers of Christianity as a symbol of resurrection, while being dormant it contains a new life within it. Some Christians symbolically link the cracking open of Easter eggs with Jesus' emergence from the tomb. In Orthodox churches, Easter eggs are blessed by the priest and distributed to the congregation at the end of the Paschal Vigil.

Decorating eggshells is an ancient practice. Engraved ostrich eggs discovered in Africa are 60,000 years old. As an Easter tradition, decorative eggs date back as far as the 13th century. Christians in Mesopotamia dyed eggs red symbolizing the suffering and death of Christ Jesus. Many cultures, especially Ukrainians, have their own tradition of egg decoration. Cadbury's made the modern chocolate Easter egg in 1875, two years after the first one was created by J.S. Fry and Sons of England.

Using hard boiled eggs, naturally dyed Easter eggs are a wonderful option. There are many forms of dye from which to choose, such as: raspberries, red wine, beets,

red and purple cabbages, red and yellow onions, kale, parsley, spinach, carrots, blueberries, tea, coffee, chili powder, and cayenne pepper. Also, eggs can be boiled in natural substances such as oak or alder bark or black walnut shells.

You can bypass the process of dying Easter eggs by raising breeds of chickens that are known for producing a rainbow of coloured eggs. The Araucana hens, originally from Chile, lay blue eggs. While the Ameraucana hens, bred in the United States, lay light blue to greenish blue eggs. **"Easter eggers"** are a mixed breed of chickens that produce pink, blue, green, sage, and yellow eggs that resemble dyed Easter eggs.

The tradition of hiding Easter eggs began in Central Europe. Martin Luther instituted outdoor egg hunts for his congregation. The modern-day rabbit comes from the 17th-century folkloric *Osterhase*, a German egg-laying hare. When German immigrants came to North America, their children made nests in which this creature could lay its coloured eggs. Eventually nests became decorated baskets. Rabbits, known to be prolific procreators, are an ancient symbol of fertility and new life. Whether or not Easter eggs come to you from chickens or rabbits, they certainly are a welcome site on Easter morning!

Credits:

[Easter: A Scottish three year old's take... - YouTube](#)

How Did Easter Eggs Become a Tradition? Sorcha McCrory Managing Editor at "Scandinavia Standard"

How Did the Egg Come to Represent Easter? Food Historian Sam Bilton "English Heritage" 16 March 2020

Farmers' Almanac Staff Feb. 22, 2021

[Easter egg - Wikipedia](#)



VOCATION ALIVE - Encanto, Butterflies and Joy

Dotsy Schweitzer, CSJ, on behalf of the Federation Vocation Animation Committee

Our CSJ Federation Vocation Animation Committee, whose members are Sisters Pat Carter, Mary Rowell, Mary Jo Radey, Rosemary Fry, Dotsy Schweitzer, and Julie Cachia met at 10 Montcrest Blvd., Toronto, from February 16-19, 2023. Our time together included prayer, faith sharing, hard work planning for future events, assessing past initiatives, some relaxing together, and celebrating our friendship and God's love. Thanks to Sister Mary Jo, who brought the DVD, as we enjoyed watching 'Encanto,' the delightful story of a young girl who showed her courage and perseverance, and who became a true heroine and life saver of her whole family.

Besides wanting to reach out to younger adults and to let them know that we still do exist, part of our mandate, we feel, is to call forth enthusiasm and passion in our present membership. We are not dying. We sisters and associates – everyone in the Joseph family - are still needed in our suffering world today, even though maybe we cannot now do what we once did. And every one of us is needed to play her part, by her creativity, her support, and especially by her prayer.

We were happy to recall the success of our book club in January and February, on Margaret Silf's book *Hidden Wings*. It was wonderful to have Sisters and Associates sharing the insights and wisdom of the process of metamorphosis of the caterpillar into a butterfly, and how this relates to our present reality. Even though we may feel trapped right now in the chrysalis, or stuck in the slurpy soup of today's world, we trust that there is a beautiful butterfly waiting to emerge in each of us!

A second event was the newer Sisters panel held on line on January 14. Each of the four panellists,

including Kristine Fernandes (Toronto CSJ), Jennifer Berridge (Congregation of St. Joseph, WV), Elizabeth Mendy (Annecy Institute, Gambia, Africa), and Yolanda Soy (Carondelet, Peru), shared with us something of her own call from God. It was an inspirational happening for all of us who were able to be present. A few future initiatives for you to look forward to are the following: a book club in the fall (title to be announced soon, we hope), an Advent program on our CSJ spirituality, and another newer religious panel for the spring of 2024. We all agreed that it is a privilege to be

members of this committee, because we have fun together, gain energy and enthusiasm for bringing God's love to others, and leave tired but grateful.

So thank you, God, for all your gifts!!!!



Associates/Companions' Annual General Meeting Mark your Calendar!

You are cordially invited to this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will take place (via Zoom) from Wednesday, May 31 to Friday, June 2. In addition to the business portion of the meeting, Sr. Mary Rowell will graciously lead the retreat portion of the AGM with an exciting topic entitled "Contemplatives in Action: What it means in our lives and in troubled times in society, our Church, the world."

Please email cumana@csj federation.ca by May 25th to register.

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE PROGRAMS IN LE PUY - YOU ARE INVITED!

Starting off the 2023 International Centre programs, Sr. Mary Rowell (in-Canada) will lead ***Toward the Future*** – an exciting new program for Associates, Agrégées, partners in mission, and friends of the Joseph Family. Offered May 1-7 in Le Puy (France), this new program will help participants discover the history, spirituality, and charism of the Family of Joseph as they journey into the heart of where it all began.



The popular ***Mission Alive!*** program, led by Sr. Dolores Clerico (Philadelphia), will be offered September 2-9 as a pilgrimage for lay partners in mission - providing an immersion experience into the original spirit and global dimension of the charism and spiritual tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The week-long experience offers a rhythm of presentations, interactive participation, prayer,

and visits to historic sites in Le Puy-en-Velay as well as a day trip to Lyon.

The Lace is Not Yet Finished will be offered by Sr. Jane Delisle (Orange) from September 16 -22 and enables participants to get in touch with and claim once again the transformative power of this charism in our midst and into the future. Participants will also explore the streets of Le Puy-en-Velay and visit and pray in the original Kitchen, Living History Centre, Cathedral of Notre Dame du Puy, Chapel of St. Michel d'Aiguilhe, Eglise du Collège, and Tree of the Martyrs.

Rounding off September, Sr. Linda Buck (Orange) will lead the ***Prophetic Stance of Relationship: The Two Trinities as a Model of Dynamic Love*** from September 29 to October 5. This program offers a pilgrimage of the heart for all who are drawn to the charism of unifying love and will explore the prophetic nature of the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph which calls us to move relationally into the world, with the dear neighbor without distinction.

You can read about these International Centre programs as well as registration details at <https://centreinternationalssi.org/programs>

FEDERATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CANADA

101 Thorncliffe Park Drive,
Toronto, ON M4H 1M2
416.467.2649

Email: info@csjfederation.ca

Website: www.csjfederation.ca

Newsletter Layout: Theresa Murphy

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.



Graphics - Google Images unless otherwise stated.
Photos submitted by columnists.
Permission granted for use of photos.