

President's Message

Loretta Manzara, CSJ



The mist is slowly rising over beautiful rural Ontario as I travel by train to my last meeting of the Federation Executive. As the mist lifts wonderful memories of this year's activities come to mind. Early morning does that – awakens fresh thoughts and connections. A number of communications have come your way this Jubilee Year with the hope that our Golden threads of relationship continue to evolve. One of those mysterious threads shone during the Festive meal held by SAIL at the Peterborough main residence on August 16th. The Peterborough neighbourhood had graciously offered to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Federation at the annual dinner they host for the participants of SAIL (Sojourners in Active and Inclusive Love). Intercessions for the well-being of the Federation and its members were offered at the Eucharist; I was invited to say a few words of acknowledgment prior to the dinner; and a magnificent cake decorated with the Federation crest was served. The thread of connection that highlighted the event was an encounter with **Sr Monica Marie Kelly (Toronto)**, who expressed her delight in remembering the founding of the Federation back in 1966, when she and **Sr. Monica Downey** served the six founding General Superiors that day at meals. No longer was the birth of the Federation a narrative, but here was a real life experience! A big thank you to Monica Marie for sharing that memory! We look forward this month to our prayer together on or around the 20th. Prayer Services have been delivered to our Sisters throughout the Congregations, across Canada, and into the States. Many of our Associates/Companions have also received copies of the Service. We tried to circulate them as the production numbers allowed. During that prayer time I invite you to remember the good work that was

begun 50 years ago and the promise of abundant love that God beckons us to behold. **Sr. Nancy Sullivan** will be at the International Centre at that time and has indicated that she will use some of the Service as she leads prayer on the 20th. I am ever grateful during this term as President for the energy we have extended toward our Global relationships. Along with our regular representation at the Global Coordinating Group, the International Justice and Peace Commission, the International Centre, and the gifting of scholarship money as needed, this month we will also be represented at the opening of the new Archives by Sr. Nancy Sullivan and **Sr. Valerie Van Cauwenberghe**. The exciting feature of this collection is its interactive capability – thus it will be known as the Centre of Living History of the Sisters of St. Joseph. In October our three leadership teams/circles will be meeting in North Bay with guest presenter **Fr. Frank Morrissey**. His topic "New Situations Impacting on Consecrated Life in North America Today" will certainly engage a lively discussion. What a privilege to be able to participate in the evening conference call across the Federation membership! And so as I take leave of this leadership role for the Federation, I am reminded that just as Spirit knits us together at the table of Word and Eucharist, so we are united in the many acts of connection through committees, conversations, and prayerful presence. It has been a joy to serve as President, to carry out with **Sr. Ann Delaney, Sr. Alice Greer, Sr. Nancy Sullivan** and **Margaret Magee**, the work empowered by your Board. Thank you for the opportunity particularly during this Year of Jubilee and may we continue to call each other forth as instruments of transforming love. *(I just had to get that last musical image into this message!)*

Message from the Executive Director—Nancy Sullivan csj

The summer of 2016 will go down in my memory as glorious days of warmth and sunshine and the participation in not one, but two striking events. The first was in early July when eight Canadian CSJs travelled to Orlando, Florida to participate in the US Sisters of St Joseph Federation Event entitled, "Our Emerging Story of Being ONE ... God's Love Unfolding". What a wonderful experience to be with nearly 700 Sisters of St Joseph and partners from across the United States and beyond. All the talks are available on the US Federation website (www.sistersofsaintjosephfederation.org) under Event 2016 Orlando – Videos. I encourage you to tune in to a few words by **Pat Bergen** or have your heart moved by **Sara Thomsen's** song "Turning of The World". It reminded me that the Family of Joseph is so much more than our three Canadian congregations with our Associates, Companions and partners, and the opportunity we have to join with others to be of one voice as we continue to move together throughout the world.



Associate Companion Leaders Gathering in the Villa St. Joseph Ecology & Spirituality Centre in Cobourg—June 2016

The second event was the "Living Mercy" Pilgrimage for Young Adults on August 26-28 at the Hamilton Residence. Congratulations are due to **Vanessa Nicholas-Schmidt** and **Sr Mechtild O'Mara** of Faith Connections and all those involved in organizing and hosting the twenty-two participants. **Sister Mary Rowell** covers this well in a separate section of this Newsletter. The example of Faith Connections - a ministry of the Sisters of St Joseph of Toronto for young adults - is very much needed today. The late spring and summer months have passed busily in the Federation Office, with ongoing opportunities to acknowledge our 50th Anniversary, several meetings of the Executive, the Associates/Companions Leaders group at the Villa in Cobourg in June, Ecology



A beautiful day in June—Ecology Committee Members at Villa St. Joseph Ecology & Spirituality Centre in Cobourg

Committee meetings at Villa St. Joseph Cobourg in June and the Hamilton Residence in September. We continue to be grateful for the work carried out by members of all our committees. Planning is now well underway for the Annual Meeting of the Federation Board October 18-21 in North Bay. As Sister Loretta has mentioned, we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the date of establishment of our Federation on September 20, 2016. Many have expressed gratitude for the very meaningful prayer service which was shared throughout our congregations – a wonderful celebration of 50 years of Federation. On the global front this year, I travelled to Le Puy for the May 4-6 Meeting of the International Centre Board, and as this issue goes to press, I have just returned from the September 19-21 Board gathering, followed by the annual meeting of the Global Coordinating Group at which I was joined by **Sr Anne Karges**. We'll share details of the very special formal opening of the Archives in Le Puy in our Christmas issue. As for the US Federation event mentioned earlier, we continue to be grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the global face of Sisters of St. Joseph.

Vocation Committee — Rosemary Fry, CSJ on behalf of Committee Members

Sociologists tell us that the two greatest longings of people today focus on a deep desire for community or sense of belonging, and a vibrant spiritual life. Doesn't that strike a note when you consider the key elements of religious life, namely community, prayer and service?

Pope Francis in his reflection on the 51st Vocation Sunday about the attractiveness of Religious Life in our world underlined the desire to live our lives in union with Jesus and Mary.

"I invite you to listen to and follow Jesus, and to allow yourselves to be transformed interiorly by his words, which "are spirit and life" (Jn 6:62). Mary, the Mother of Jesus and ours, also says to us: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5). It will help you to participate in a communal journey that is able to release the best energies in you and around you. A vocation is a fruit that ripens in a well cultivated field of mutual love that becomes mutual service, in the context of an authentic ecclesial life. No vocation is born of itself or lives for itself. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people, in the experience of fraternal love. Did not Jesus say: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35)?"

Is this not who we are? Each and every day as we live our very ordinary lives we want to witness to the primacy of our love for Jesus and

our total radical commitment to him. This is what we long for and strive toward and this is what is attractive about our life today.

If the following prayer is meaningful for you, relax and reflect on it and let its message become part of your life.

Loving God, We are busy about many things, and it is so easy to forget that it is the heart and the mission of Jesus that we wish to be about.

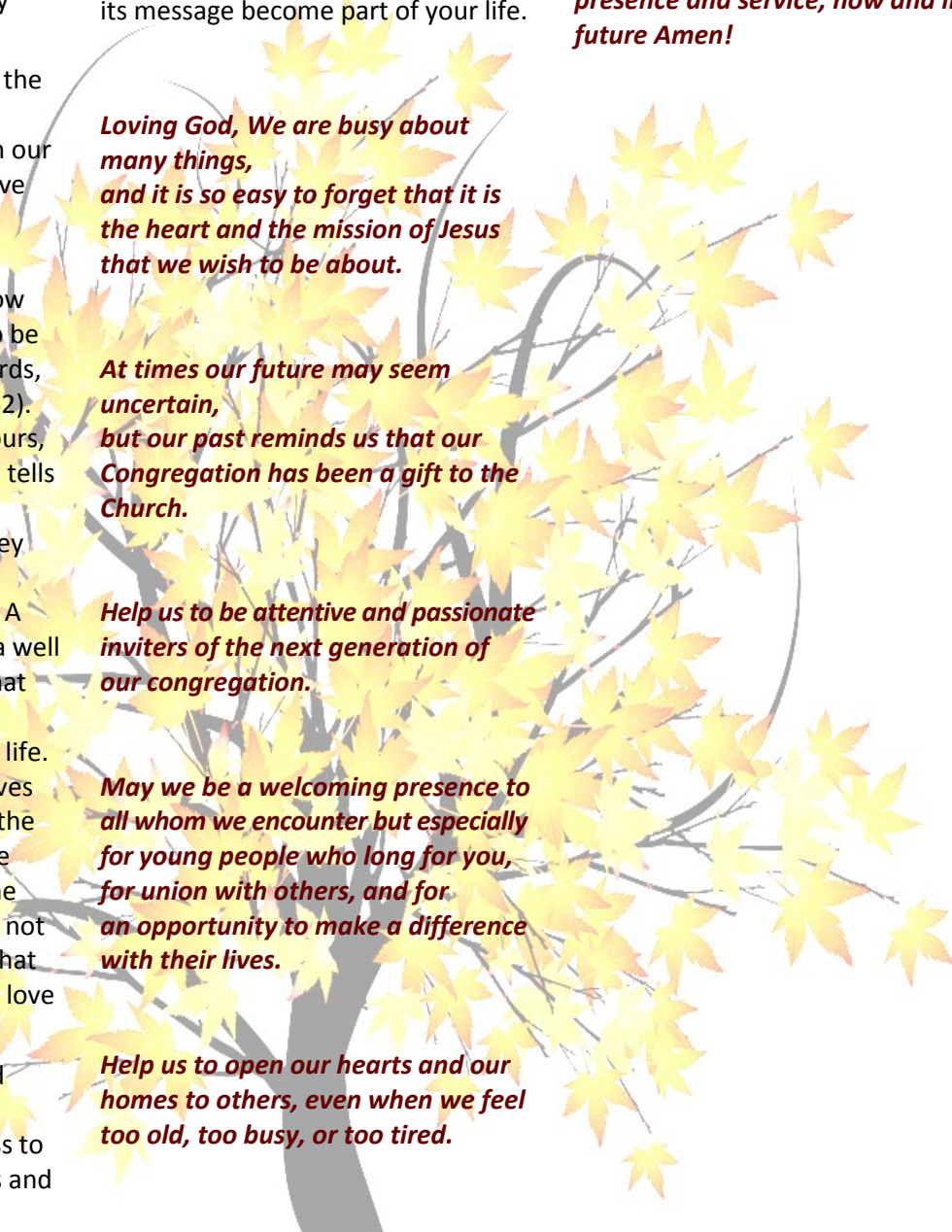
At times our future may seem uncertain, but our past reminds us that our Congregation has been a gift to the Church.

Help us to be attentive and passionate inviters of the next generation of our congregation.

May we be a welcoming presence to all whom we encounter but especially for young people who long for you, for union with others, and for an opportunity to make a difference with their lives.

Help us to open our hearts and our homes to others, even when we feel too old, too busy, or too tired.

As you once inspired Father Medaille and our early Sisters and moved them to make radical choices, so now breathe new life and vision into us, urging us to be a congregation of great love, of presence and service, now and in the future Amen!



Food for Thought—October 2016

Ann Marshall CSJ on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee

“How Does Your Garden Grow?”

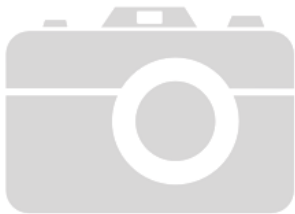
Spring is a siren call for all creation to a renewed relationship with Mother Earth to bring forth new and abundant life. The die-hard gardeners among us are at the starting gate even before spring officially arrives. These nurturers of the soil and spirit tell us that gardening is gratifying, and simple tasks like pruning and weeding can relieve stress, improve mood, fill one with hope, and help develop emotional wellbeing.

There is a sense of purpose and achievement in cultivating a garden, it is a vehicle for connecting with others, and spiritually it provides occasions to spend time outside communing with nature and breathing in the great outdoors.

Food for Thought is highlighting some Federation gardeners. The following is merely a “taste” to tempt you to our Federation website very soon, as we gather many more pictures from our wonderful gardeners.

From **Sister Sharon Miller** in North Bay, we hear: “Composting holds the dream of the Earth. Each year we keep approximately 18,000 litres of waste from going into the landfill and producing methane gas. By our composting we are “keeping” 2.7 cars off the road, diverting 12.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide going into the atmosphere per year! The relationships that sustain us are not static but are continuously expressing themselves through the exchange of energy.”

We'll let you know when more pictures are shared on our website.



An enthusiastic Sister Gwen Smith (Toronto) and volunteers at the community garden growing food for nutritious meals for the Mustard Seed Community.



Sr. Lydia Smeets writes: My interest in gardening and growing up in the Netherlands certainly gave me that passion. I enjoy beautifying and caring for the earth and its flowers, plants, veggies, trees etc. to watch them grow produce, bloom and be used for others' enjoyment.



Sr. Jane Fischer, Pembroke, can hardly wait for the snow to be off the ground before she begins making plans for her precious plants—flowers and vegetables. Jane's floral window boxes are primarily for sisters who can't walk outdoors anymore, but appreciate watching them grow and thrive in the summer. Her tomato plants are thriving in the Pembroke sunshine.

The Green Window—Part 22

Priscilla Solomon CSJ on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee

A Window on Hope — The Green Window symbolizes the opportunity to look beyond our present situation and see the horizon, perhaps to imagine a new horizon. Today we need horizons of hope and sustainability. I needn't describe the present reality of excessive carbon consumption and climate change. Nor do we need a description of the desperate situation that many Indigenous Peoples in this land face. The need for reconciliation emotionally, spiritually, politically, socially and economically is very evident. So also is the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and at least 94 ways or actions to accomplish this, as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

There are instances of hope – of new horizons. On Sept 22, **Thessalon First Nation** welcomed the public to tour their **Bio Centre**. This is how it



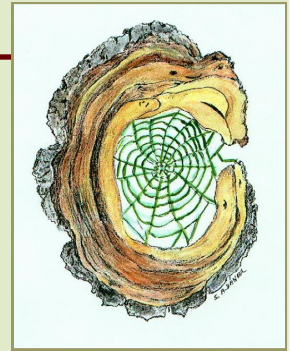
is described in the media advisory. “Thessalon First Nation acquired the tree surgery in 2000, which was previously owned by the Ministry of Natural Resources. Today, the Bio

Centre has the capacity to produce elite plants and trees using cutting edge technologies and can house several agricultural ventures simultaneously. Some modern equipment and facilities include, a 6000 square foot refrigeration building, 17 climate controlled greenhouses, 100 acres of arable fields, access to organically certified facilities, and an on-site biological lab....” The tour was offered to Thessalon FN members, potential partners, investors, funders and vendors. When I spoke to **Nadine Roach** she said the “Thessalon First Nation” is already working with such groups as “Sustainable Forest License Holders,” “Corridors for Life” and the “50 Million Tree Program.”

The Centre provides economic resources to the community, including employment. It also provides Thessalon FN a way to be a leader in sustainable development, thus meeting their traditional value of care for the land and all its inhabitants. They work with organizations that also have the desire to protect the earth, the water and the plant and animal life it sustains.

Another example is the Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek (BZA) First Nation who are developing two run-of-river hydro projects on the Name-waminikan River in partnership with AXOR Group and two other Lake Nipigon First Nation communities (The AXOR Group specializes in the

generation of renewable energy and green energy in Canada and across the world). The



reserve is also involved in commercial fishing, forest harvesting and the construction business. **Ray Nobis**, a community spokesperson says the community of about 340 on-reserve band members has its own forest licence permit and has “laid out a partnership with Taranis [Contracting Group] for our construction.” Nobis also relates how they harvest lumber every year and have a strong silviculture program in place to nurture new trees for planting and sustainability.

These inspirational projects are but two of numerous First Nations initiatives for creating new hope, new horizons and a better future. Traditional wisdom bringing healing for our Mother Earth and her peoples.

Useful Websites:

<https://www.thessalonfirstnation.ca>

<http://anishinabeknews.ca/2016/09/21/multi-faceted-economic-development-projects-in-biinjitiwaabik-zaaging-anishinaabek/>

<https://www.corridorsforlife.org/about>

<https://www.forestsontario.ca>

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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.

LIVING MERCY BRINGS HOPE

Mary Rowell, CSJ



Young Adult Pilgrims prepare for Prayer and Hike Activity

Compline of Mercy, An Examen of our Weekend, and, a Eucharistic Celebration. There was an opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Spiritual Companionship plus time for reflection on spiritual questions and faith sharing. The talk titles given by our Sisters and Young Adults included: "Who is our God of Mercy?" "Mercy Pilgrimage," "Contemplative By Nature," Living Mercy in My Life (Towards Myself)," and, "Practical Ways of Showing Mercy Towards Others."

A weekend to remember took place on August 26-28, 2016, when twenty-six young adults gathered with Sisters of St. Joseph at their residence in Hamilton, ON. Participants travelled from as far away as Sudbury and Buffalo, New York and several places in between. They entered into a "Living Mercy Pilgrimage" sponsored by Faith Connections (Fontbonne Ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto) in Collaboration with the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada. This was the second pilgrimage of its type. The first one, "Living Joy" took place during the summer of 2014 in London, ON. Having had a wonderful experience in the first pilgrimage, I eagerly anticipated this the second one.

We prayed together in various ways --- Taize, Gospel Contemplation Using Our Imagination, State of the Heart,

A Prayer and Hike activity put us in touch with the loving presence of Sisters of St. Joseph in Hamilton since 1852. They interacted with persons who were ill, dying, poor, orphans, immigrants, set up schools, administered homes for the aged, built hospitals and met many social, pastoral and spiritual needs both of the city and the diocese of Hamilton, and beyond. Their concrete expressions of mercy continue to this day. Two opportunities for us, as pilgrims, were to visit with infirm Sisters in Martha Wing for a musical interlude and to help reap the harvest in the organic garden.

I was deeply touched by the faith of the young adults, their desire to grow closer to God, their efforts to seek out other young adults whose faith is central to their lives, their struggle in living out their values in their work place and their joy in knowing God and interacting with each other and our Sisters. I am filled with hope!

Celebrating Our Story!
1966 - 2016
The First Fifty Years