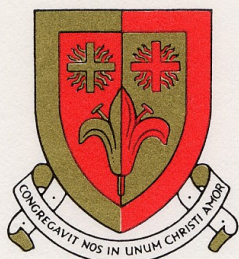


Volume 12, Issue 2

September 2015



FEDERATION OF SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CANADA

# Newsletter



## President's Message

*Loretta Manzara, CSJ*

On September 1<sup>st</sup>, I rushed down from the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of our London residence to our chapel to celebrate Eucharist with our Sisters. In front of the altar someone had created a beautiful display with lighted tea candles encircling the earth. Our chaplain noted that this day had been announced by **Pope Francis** to mark our concern for the well-being of the earth and its peoples. In spite of the fact that the readings of the day did not align with this concern, his preaching did indeed move us to cry out our intercessory prayer in appropriate ways for the care of this planet-our home and its peoples who are facing such dire situations across the boundaries of lands and races. I imagine that happened in all our community chapels. It is this unity that I would like to focus on in this message. Our Federation Mission Statement calls us to empower one another in the passionate living of our charism of active and inclusive love. We remind ourselves to do this in a collaborative way responding to the reality of our world, with our deepest desire to bring healing and hope to all creation.

Each day I recognize more and more that I personally cannot do this on my own. In the same manner that I found myself running to join my Sisters in prayer, so there is an urgency to join with all of you in intercession and action. My liturgical studies have ingrained a deep sense of the assembly as the Body of Christ at worship. Our Trinitarian spirituality urges me to intercede through Christ, knowing that Spirit is enlivened among us by that prayer. For me this is the basis of my understanding of how we are unified. We are women committed to life modelled on this Trinitarian relationship. Our members live into this relationship through their daily prayer, attentiveness and service. And, we have the benefit of such fine leadership from our Federation committees, who through their work draw us into concretising this Triune love. They offer insights into the things of our social structure that need to change (Office for Systemic Justice), ways that we can nurture care of the earth and all that it holds (Ecology Committee), and opportunities to invite others to join us in

this collaborative venture (Vocations Committee). Since our last newsletter the media has lifted before us so many of the everyday concerns of our nation Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has finished its work but the transforming experience of facing into the awareness, taking the next steps, making room for the exercises that will change our hearts is only beginning. The consultation of Canadian citizens regarding Bill 52 opening the door to assisted suicide has been announced, and the province of Quebec has advertised a kit to help doctors provide a means for persons to end their lives. With the pending Federal Election we are bombarded with a list of promises that we know will all be tempered by the reality of time and finances. The heart-breaking crisis of the plight of refugees is the vision of today's suffering Christ, and the cry from the world community expresses the stirring winds of the Spirit.

So my message today is – let's encourage one another to do whatever we can to make the difference. Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato si*, that this universe is shaped as an open and intercommunicating system, in which we can discern countless forms of relationship and participation. One of my dear sisters in community used this statement to remind me that everything is open to God's transcendence. Absolutely everything! We need each other to encourage one another in living out our part of letting that transformation happen.

Francis speaks from the experience of the developed world, much of which has been birthed by Christendom. He also speaks from his Argentinian roots which so concretely give us insight into the developing world. *Laudato si* conveys the message of the relationship between these two worlds. His ability to walk in both worlds is one of the reasons that his presence and words will help bring some direction to the negotiations over global climate issues. His steadfast defense of indigenous communities just might also provide a leading light for us in Canada.

And so let's rise each morning, give thanks for a new day of opportunity and grace, and try to be a presence of hope and reconciliation, knowing that we are doing this together, as sisters!

## Executive Director's Message — Nancy Sullivan CSJ



As Sr Loretta mentions, we are called to reflect and act in big and small ways as individuals, as congregations, as Federation and as active proud members of the "Global Family of Joseph", a term that was used frequently at the recent meetings of the International Centre Board and Global Coordinating Group in Le Puy this month. You will have seen the letter that was sent to the Prime Minister of Hungary on our behalf expressing concern with the state of refugees trying to move through Hungary. That is one action. Sr. Justine, our UN NGO representative brought us up to date on some of the activities she is involved in on our behalf at the UN, and with the help of JPIC and in partnership with other congregations and groups of like mind on particular issues. There will be more about this when Sr. Justine joins us for the Annual Gathering of the Canadian Federation Board in October at Invermara.

The International Centre in Le Puy continues to provide a focus for members of the "Global Family of Joseph" to dwell in the heart of our founding community for a short while as they participate in programs and tread the same soil as our founders trod so many years ago. There are a variety of programs offered which will be sweetened significantly with the opening of the Sisters of St Joseph Archives and Museum in May 2016. As the history of the Sisters of St Joseph is a living organic entity, its charism cannot be limited to the past and thus the Sisters in Le Puy are searching for an alternative name to "Museum".

Part of the international meetings is dedicated to Sisters sharing activities and initiatives underway by their Federations or congregations and some fruits of reflection on how the CSJ charism is being experienced at the present time. From that section of the minutes, we find:

### *Reflection on Charism and Mission*

*Members shared their reflections with the group noting many beams of light/signs of hope. These included: excitement about the growing role of lay people in the life of the congregations; the work of JPIC especially in its efforts to address systemic justice; gratitude to the Hilton Foundation and the Cultural Diversity Program it supports; efforts by congregations who work in the same areas to work together; the desire to speak as one voice as CSJs; the sense of growth and bonding as the global family of Joseph; flexibility of the Global Coordinating Group to 'open its tent' and finally, the pondering of our responses to the question: 'What can we do better together than alone?'*

We circle back then to Sr. Loretta's message and the call to unity pondering the question above, 'What can we do better together than alone?' It is exciting to think where the answers to this question will lead us in the years ahead.

## Ecology Committee Meeting



Ecology Committee members gathered for their early fall meeting at Villa St. Joseph in Cobourg September 4-6. A packed agenda was covered and social times enjoyed together. Reports on the various activities were shared, such as the very successful Village Earth Program attended by 12 Eco-Theology students for credit at the University of St. Michael's College, as well as a couple of non-credit students. Discussions were held with Dr Dennis O'Hara, Director of the Elliott Allen Institute for Theology and Ecology regarding possible collaboration with that Institute. We continue to be grateful to Ecology Committee members for their "Green Window" and "Food for Thought" submissions to this Newsletter.

# Federation Office News



Now with summer holiday days and summer gatherings over, we turn our heads towards events to come over the coming fall and winter. Preparation for the October 20-23 Annual Meeting of the Board is well underway, and we are pleased this

year to welcome as the Guest Speaker, **Sr Justine Senapati**, our NGO representative at the UN. Sr Justine will speak of her work on our behalf, her relationships with other UN/NGOs, and collaborative efforts which evolve. As has happened at

previous Board meetings, it is hoped to hold a conference-call opportunity when it will be possible for all Sisters in our congregations to hear of Sr Justine's work – details will be shared.

## Associate/Companion Leaders Committee— Annual Gathering 2015

For this year's gathering, the group was hosted by the Toronto Congregation at the lovely setting of Invermara in Orillia May 4-5. The time spent together was well enjoyed, at meetings, in meaningful prayer, the guest presentation, sharing of hopes, and social times. Many thanks were expressed to Guest Speakers **Srs Ann MacDonald** and **Mabel St. Louis** (CSJ in Canada, London Neighbourhood). A full morning

trafficking, forced labour and migrant workers, the sex trade, servitude/slavery, and the various stages of exploitation. True and moving

entered the Canadian Criminal Code in 2005. Following this gathering in July, news was heard of the tragic traffic



accident resulting in the death of **Doreen Veilleux** and her husband, **André**. This has been of great shock and sadness not only to her family, but to her own congregation in the Peterborough Neighbourhood, and beyond to other congregations and the Federation Office. As a valuable member of the Federation Associate/

was devoted to their presentation on "Human Trafficking" and their work with the Windsor Human Trafficking Coalition, focusing on issues such as recruitment tactics and transportation of persons, domestic and international

stories from victims and survivors were shared, as well as statistics on the lucrative aspects of Human Trafficking and an outline of government developments over the years since Human Trafficking finally

Companion Leaders Committee for the past three years, she is remembered and honoured for her integrity, honesty, cheerfulness, and grounding influence. She will be much missed.

# The Green Window—Part 19

Mary Rowell, CSJ on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee

## LISTENING FOR THE HEARTBEAT OF GOD IN THE WORLD

In his beautiful book, “Listening to the Heartbeat of God”, **J. Philip Newell** says, “To listen to God is to listen deep within ourselves, including deep within the collective life and consciousness of the world.”

In childhood, this listening to the “beat of God’s heart” in our surroundings often arises spontaneously. Most of us have memories of experiencing the “music” of a running stream, the “magic” of new shoots in Spring, the magnificent colours of Fall and the “silence of snow”. Such experiences commonly gifted us with our first sense of Sacred Presence, the call of God to both intimacy and service. Yet, as Philip Newell says such experiences will not have been affirmed generally in our religious tradition.

Despite early Christian tradition, found especially in the Celtic Church, that taught that God is revealed in both the Book of Scripture and the Book of Nature a dichotomy between the two, historically occurred. A dominant Roman tradition emphasizing a spirituality in which God is to be “found” only within the context of the Church, its rituals and formal teachings eclipsed the earlier perspective in which as the Celtic theologian, **John Scotus Eriugena**, claimed, “all things, visible and invisible can be called a theophany” (a revelation of God).

The Celtic vision was inspired by a

devotion to St. John, the beloved disciple, who leaned against “the heart” of Jesus at the Last Supper. This spirituality, as Newell says, lent itself easily to “a listening for God at the heart of all life”, an understanding of a world of wonder and mystery in which the Holy Spirit affirms God’s continual presence in creation.

We discover this in the beautiful prayers and blessings of the Western Isles of Scotland handed down for



centuries in the oral tradition and which in the nineteenth century were recorded by **Alexander Carmichael** in the beautiful texts of the

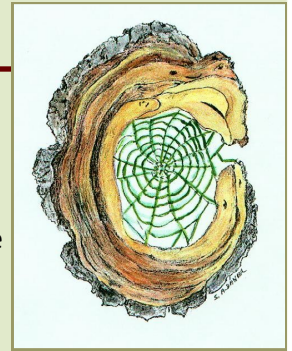
*Carmina Gadelica*. Here we read blessings of “the ordinary things of life”, praises of God in nature such as “Behold the Lightner of the stars on the crests of clouds.” In a Christmas carol, is written, “this night is the eve of the great Nativity, the souls of His feet have reached the Earth” and in response, “Earth and Ocean illumined Him, mountains and plains glowed to Him, the voice of the waves with the song of the strand announced to us that Christ is born.”

This all speaks of a deep sense of incarnation and of a spirituality that perceives elements of the Earth as expressions of God’s grace calling us

to a prayer of contemplative listening for the heartbeat of God

in all creation, in all people as well as in the Church and to see the whole of life as sacramental. We are called by this listening, as Newell says, in new directions, “social and political as well as ecological” by “the conviction that God is the life of the world and not merely some religious aspect of it.” As **Pope Francis** reminds us in his recent and compelling Encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, “In the heart of the world, the Lord of Life, who loves us so much, is always present. [He] does not abandon us, [He] does not leave us alone, for [He] has united [Himself] definitively to our earth, and [His] love constantly impels us to find new ways forward!” Together we live in the pulsating rhythm of God’s heart in all life – let us listen anew.

*(It has been my privilege to write this reflection first suggested by **Sister Nicole Aubé** and which I am sure had she been able write at this time would have been so much more inspired, steeped as she is in this beautiful spirituality. Thank you Nicole for all the grace and wisdom you have brought to your work for the Committee and more generally for showing us how to live in every place and moment listening to the heartbeat of God.)*



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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.***



Further resource materials include:

***Food Rules: An Eater's Manual*** by

Michael Pollan; ***The Third Plate:***

***Field Notes On The Future of Food***

by Dan Barber; ***Organic Food*** on the

Development and Peace website;

and, [www.tastereal.ca](http://www.tastereal.ca).

*Designed by Valerie Raftrey Lemieux*

## THE TRUTH AND MYTH OF ORGANIC

KATHLEEN O'KEEFE CSJ

ON BEHALF OF THE ECOLOGY COMMITTEE



Over the past two years, I have been blessed to live at Villa St. Joseph Retreat and Ecology

Centre in Cobourg, ON; and, most recently, I spent the summer months at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre in Guelph, ON. Experiencing earth to table eating has allowed me to enjoy the wonderful sensory delight of organic food. **Nettie** and **Susan**, two gifted cooks, skillfully prepared delicious meals that were nourishing for both body and soul! I learned that persons in Cobourg and in Guelph have the opportunity to rent community garden plots if they wish to grow their own food organically. Community Shared Agriculture in Guelph provides freshly harvested organic products for persons to take home for family meals. Also, it has been a real joy visiting farmers' markets and connecting with the people who grow our food. Local food is not necessarily organic, and organic food is not always local. So we need to keep an eye out for the perfect combination: local food grown using organic or ecological practices. Look for such opportunities in your own community!

"Why Your Food Choices Matter: A Guide to Buying Local and Ecologically Grown Food" is an informative pamphlet produced by Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, Ecological Farmers of Ontario, and the National Farmers Union Ontario. "Organic farmers only use the ecological approach and follow the specific organic practices stipulated in **Canada's National Organic Standard**. Among other requirements, the organic standard makes sure that certified organic farmers do not use:

- synthetic pesticides (including fungicides, insecticides and herbicides);
- synthetic fertilizers;

- genetically engineered seeds or animal feed;
- animal feed made with animal wastes or slaughter by-products;
- synthetic hormones, antibiotics or other animal drugs to stimulate growth or production of livestock;
- sewage sludge (recycled human waste) or waste from factory farms and bio-solids (water waste from industry) on their land."

To maximize profit, most farmers use chemicals to increase the size and quantity of their produce. Pesticides are poisonous and do harm to our bodies. While most research cannot prove beyond a doubt that organic food is more nutritious, it is much safer. Organic farmers work with the diversity that nature already offers: They save and exchange seeds and knowledge. Healthy soil that is rich in minerals and nutrients produces food that is also rich in those minerals and nutrients. The quality and taste of organic food are said to be superior. Since they do not contain additives, organic foods have more natural flavour.

In Ontario stores, you will see the "Canada Organic" logo. The logo will also be put on organic food produced outside Canada. To be labelled "organic", processed foods must have more than 95% organic ingredients. Check the ingredients list to see which ones actually are organic. There are misleading labels out there, such as "organics," "natural," and "organically produced" without evidence of certification. As the saying goes, "we are what we eat." It is important to know exactly what our bodies are digesting and how it came to be on our plate in the first place. The wisdom of organic farming speaks for itself. To sample some tried and true recipes, you can visit Susan Sprague's blog at: [loyola-housekitchen.wordpress.com](http://loyola-housekitchen.wordpress.com).  
Bon Appetit!