



## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Trina Bottos, CSJ**

### A Reflection on "Liminality"

I remember a long ago Liturgy workshop where the concept of "Liminal Experience" was introduced. It referred to a process that can be part of a ritual.

According to Wikipedia "In anthropology, liminality (from the Latin word *limen* meaning threshold) is the quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs in the middle stage of a ritual when participants no longer hold their pre-ritual status but have not yet begun the transition to the status they will hold when the ritual is complete. ...More recently, usage of the term has broadened to describe political and cultural change. "During liminal periods of all kinds, social hierarchies may be reversed or temporarily dissolved, continuity of tradition may become uncertain and future outcomes once taken for granted may be thrown into doubt."

Every time I listen to or watch the news I think we are living in "liminal times." When I look around at our Community gatherings or meet people who ask "Are there women who are entering your Congregation?" or read yet another obituary of one of our Sisters, I think "liminal experience."

On a personal level, serious illness can be a liminal experience where previously taken for granted realities of agency, control, independence, privacy no longer apply.

There's a new normal but it hasn't totally revealed itself yet. To be a patient requires patience - the discipline of simply waiting with no known time of resolution.

Jesus' passion and death could be considered his liminal experience and the disciples after Jesus death, gathered together in the upper room or on their heavy hearted trudge to Emmaus and the women walking towards the tomb were in liminal space. The Resurrection was not yet their experienced reality.

What can we count on for security in these our liminal times? It is not a "what"-it is a "Who" - the God who promised to be with us through all the moments of our lives - the one who asks for our trust, no matter what happens or doesn't happen.

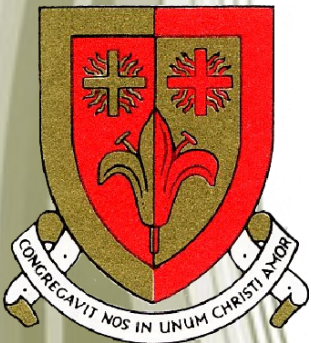
I know that God is with me  
(us) today -

just as surely as He was  
with His saints of old

I have neither to fear or  
to doubt

the eternal love and  
presence of my Lord.

Psalm 110 from  
*Psalms of Comfort*, Leslie Brandt





## **MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Loretta Manzara, CSJ**

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Liminality, gratitude, paying attention to differ-

ences, world consciousness, global connections – all these concepts are voiced and explored within the pages of this September newsletter. Our Federation writers continue to ponder the mystery of Divine Love in the concrete experiences of daily life. They share deeply of the Spirit's sway. May we too, as readers ponder the insights and energy with which they convey their thoughts. Every article strives to empower each of us in the passionate living of our charism of active and inclusive love.

You will also read of other news:

novices visiting from the United States, awards of significance that have been bestowed on members since our last newsletter, a gathering of Associate/ Companions leaders, significant dates of founders of our various congregations, and a list of committee meetings that will take place.

Since February you have been receiving weekly information about Sisters of St. Joseph in our global family. Many of you have indicated surprise that our charism is witnessed in so many lands. The prayer calendar was initiated at the Global Coordinating Group meeting in 2017. I will certainly bring assurance of your prayerful

support to the 2018 meeting in Rome in September.

Paul Baines, Coordinator of our Blue Communities project, has spent the summer meeting Sisters wherever he can, setting up his specified web site, preparing for presentations, and planning workshops. Please visit the web site to keep informed of activities in your locale. <https://bluecommunitiesnow.wixsite.com/water>.

Feedback about our newsletter is always helpful. Are there articles, news items that should be included? Just let me know.

May the changing season reflect the mystery of what was once, will be forever, and is now – Divine relationship!

## **U.N. HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF) 2018 Sue Wilson, CSJ on behalf of the Office for Systemic Justice**

In early July, I attended the High Level Political Forum at the UN in New York. This is the UN's main forum for follow-up and review of the world's advancement toward the sustainable development goals (the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development).

At this forum, nations report on both progression and challenges in their implementation of the sustainable development goals. For this reason, data-collection is an important topic for study and dialogue. Amidst these conversations, I found myself thinking about community.

The city in which I live is in the middle of a process to address poverty head on. Yet early in the conversation, it was decided that data would focus on the whole picture in the city rather than breaking down the statistics to see how various groups were doing within the whole (Indigenous, immigrants, disabled persons, various genders, races and ages, and more). The argument was that this was about the whole community.

At the HLPF, conversations about data took a very different turn.

Here, experts discussed the importance of breaking down the statistics to see how various groupings are doing within the whole. This is the only way to ensure that no group is left behind.

It may be counter-intuitive but paying attention to difference is the key to fostering community.

To see Canada's report (both synopsis and full report) go to: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/canada>

## ***THE GREEN WINDOW - CREATIVITY, MYSTICISM AND LAUDATO SI' - Priscilla Solomon, CSJ on behalf of the Federation Ecology Committee***

"We are in critical times and therefore creative times. ... Structures have collapsed and with them many ways of looking at things. But dreams remain. They are an essential part of being human and will always persist. They even allow new visions and furnish the enthusiasm needed for thought and creativity."<sup>1</sup>

Leonardo Boff in his book *Ecology and Liberation* speaks of a "creative crisis" and of a new paradigm intended to shift humans from dominance over creation to recognition of our oneness with creation. He goes on to reflect on some of the same issues identified by Pope Francis i.e. religion and 'religious feeling'<sup>2</sup> in relation to the new cosmology, culture, social justice and science and technology. He then invites us to move "from ecology to global consciousness"<sup>3</sup> and from "world consciousness to mysticism"<sup>4</sup>.

It is this movement that inspires me to connect creativity, mysticism and the hope-filled messages of Pope Francis, Boff and the late Richard Wagemese. Pope Francis writes: "Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection... Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness."<sup>5</sup>

Each and every part of the universe and of the earth community also reflects God's creative Love through its integrity, incredible variety and differentiation.

Speaking of creativity, Wagemese says: "You stoke the fires of creativity with humility, gratitude and awareness. You need to ask for the gift to be directed. Writing is a spiritual process. To create, you need to connect with the Creator."<sup>6</sup> What a powerful witness to the link between creativity and contemplative living, mysticism in action.

Wagemese also speaks of dreams. He says: "My elders say that the dream world is a reality, just as valid, just as vibrant, just as alive as the physical world. Dreams are not illusory things. They are meant to guide us. They ask us to use our intuition to interpret them. That's their biggest gift – returning us to our intuition, our highest level of thought. When we intuit, we think spiritually with a free, flowing energy."<sup>7</sup>

Pope Francis dared to dream. He dreamed of inviting a global dialogue on care for our common home. I believe his dream - coming alive in so many - is creating a new energy and compassion for and with creation today. He says: "In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home."<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere, speaking of his patron, Saint Francis

of Assisi, he says: "He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and the outcast. He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace."<sup>9</sup>

What do I dare to dream? What 'new visions' arise from my dream? How does it feed my thought, creativity and intuition? How does my dream lead me to contemplation and compassion? Can my dreams lead to a mystic heart?

Leonardo Boff dreams of human beings moving from the old paradigm of dominance and individuality to a new paradigm in



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## THE GREEN WINDOW—Continued

which we know our interconnectedness, our interdependence and our belonging to an earth community. In speaking of this as ‘world-consciousness’, Boff says:

The human mind and heart have a special place for those promptings of the spirit that urge human-kind to a mystical relation with the universe as a whole. In this new conception, spirit is contrasted not with the body but with death. To be spiritual means living in accordance with the thrust of life toward and in unison with society and nature. In its mature stage, spirituality becomes mysticism. This allows us to transcend the material



limitations of things and to discern behind the structure of reality that area where “tenderness” comes

into its own.

It also shows us where the welcoming and loving mystery prevails that enables us to

communicate with

God, the Father and Mother whose loving kindness is boundless.<sup>10</sup>

I love that Boff contrasts spirit ‘not with the body but with death.’ Our bodies are aging and failing, but our spirits are called to an even greater vitality – not just for ourselves, but for the deeper living out of our call as “the Congregation of the Great

Love of God”: to be “women of active, inclusive love.” How freeing to know and believe that this ministry depends not on our physical capacities but on the depth, breadth and strength of our love.

<sup>1</sup>Leonard Boff, *Ecology and Liberation A New Paradigm* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995) Preface Pg xi

<sup>2, 3, 4</sup> ibid. Table of Contents p. vii-ix.

<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis *Laudato Si’* article 6.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Wagemese, *Embers, One Ojibway’s Meditations* (Douglas McIntyre Ltd., 2016 )

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 97

<sup>8</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* Article 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Article 10.

<sup>10</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation A New Paradigm* p. 137-138. (Images sourced from Google Images)

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT - GRATITUDE, GRACE AND GOD’S GOOD EARTH

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

A couple of years ago I was with friends in a restaurant in Toronto. At the table next to ours a rather “affluent-looking” group of young men and women were gathered for dinner. As their meal arrived they all made the sign of the cross and proceeded to share a most beautiful and moving grace before meals. It wasn’t a rote grace but one in which they gave thanks for the gifts of the Earth, the work of human hands, and remembered in their prayer, those in the city who were poor,

hungry and lonely that night. What a powerful witness of simple gratitude! Such an action has the power to move us, to change our concepts, our life, our world for the good of the Earth, for all our neighbours.

Gratitude is one of the central themes in the Encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. Pope Francis claims that destruction of the environment and the related impoverishment of peoples finds its source in the

human heart turned in on itself – a heart that is lacking in gratitude. He says: Humans have ceased to look upon “our Sister, Mother Earth” as a gift to be received (*Laudato Si’* # 1). We have come to believe that we can “plunder her at will.” (*Laudato Si’* # 2). The Encyclical then calls us to a conversion toward gratitude.

A simple way to strengthen our “attitude of gratitude” is through the practice of grace before meals. This serves as a powerful reminder of our

utter dependence on God for the gifts of life, of the Earth, of other's generosity toward us. God is the Creator and Sustainer of all living things and from God comes every good gift (Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1: 16-17; James 1:17). Living in a generally materially comfortable society, it is easy to forget this abundance which we enjoy. Praying grace before meals permits us to stop momentarily to acknowledge God's gifts and to give thanks.

Giving thanks before meals, imitates Christ himself. As we read in Scripture, Jesus frequently gave thanks at meals. Notably at the Last Supper he took bread and gave thanks, broke it as very gift of himself (Matthew 26: 26-28). This thankfulness and associated self-gift of sharing food, was also evident before the feeding of the multitudes. Thus, as we give thanks we are reminded of those who do not have what is rightfully theirs. Thankfulness calls us to self-gift and to share the goods of



the Earth. Praying grace can awaken us to the realities of global inequity, to reasons for our current ecological

decline, and to related human suffering.



In his moving book, *Living the Sabbath*, Norman Wirzba says that in giving thanks we are able to turn our eating into a "focal practice," a practice that gives us some understanding of our current food economy and its many abuses. He asks: "Can we really enjoy a meal if the food is produced in an unwholesome manner, or in a way that exhausts or poisons land and water or unjustly treats farmers and food producers?" Acknowledging the gift of healthy food "will most likely require us to shop differently by frequenting local markets," by forming partnerships in direct marketing with farmers, by becoming gardeners to produce some of our own food. Wirzba says: "This small practical shift, when done by enough people, will have enormous implications for our food economy – the big, heavily subsidized producers will be replaced by local organic growers.

... The net effect will be that we think differently about food. It will be understood no longer as mere fuel but as the gift of God that it is."

Praying grace mindfully and in the context of our world today can lead us to become more intentional in our eating and more involved in those initiatives that seek to right the wrongs of global food inequalities. Perhaps we will eat less meat to impact the global growth of crops that could indeed, "feed the world."

When our simple graces become more than rote words – they become true reminders of the



gifts of our lives, food, water, companionship, and of all we are called to become gift in response. They can lead us to become better carers of our Earth and people of open hearts and hands. They can invite us to live more simply, that others may simply live!

(Images sourced from Google Images)

## YOUTH PILGRIMAGE

### Costanza Romano, CSJ on behalf of the Vocation Animation Committee

The three congregations planned for almost a year to host the *Living Faith Youth Pilgrimage* in connection with Faith Connections. This year the gathering was held in North Bay.

The young people slept at San Jose Camp on the shores of Trout Lake. During the day, activities took place at St. Joseph's Motherhouse, on the shores of Lake Nipissing. We were

story to life and the sharing that followed was deep and personal.

Saturday evening, Bishop Marcel and Father Daniele joined us as we gathered for Taize Prayer, confessions and spiritual direction.

On Saturday, we participated in the Stations of the Cross, based on Development and Peace intentions and highlighting ministries of the Sisters and the many justice issues that are part of our world today.

Bishop Marcel presided at our Sunday liturgy where the pilgrims participated as readers, in the offertory and in the procession.

No gathering is complete without some snacks and laughter. We could not have a bon fire due to rain, but a make shift campfire served our purpose as we played Catch Phrase and Charades. We

were happy that Father Daniele was able to join us for some fun.

On Sunday, morning we began with morning prayer and then heard

three witness talks. The personal stories shared helped each of us to reflect on our own journey. When asked for one word to explain the experience of the weekend, we heard joy, hope, companionship, and life.



pleased that Bishop Marcel Damphousse, Bishop for the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, was able to join us all weekend. Twenty-one youth plus Kataryna Ryba (Faith Connections) and her husband

Dominic joined us for a weekend of prayer, liturgy, witness sharing, and laughter. Friday evening 3 of the pilgrims re-enacted the *Woman at the Well*, as written by John Shea. These three women brought this



We shared in a blessing with the Kathy Triccoli song *Go Light Your World* and we all held up our candles in honour and praise of our faith and our time together. Bishop Marcel then blessed us all before we headed for lunch and then travels home.



# **CROSSING BORDERS, CREATING FRIENDSHIP, AND LIVING CHARISM**

## **Mary Rowell, CSJ on behalf of the Vocation Committee**

At Villa St. Joseph we're looking forward to a special new initiative and an engagement with our Sisters in formation across the Canadian and U.S. Federations. In October this year we will host a week long programme for "post-canonical novices," their directors and Sisters with whom they live in community. This includes second-year novices and those now in first vows who have completed our combined Federations canonical novitiate. The programme will focus on Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, integral ecology and living our charism as Sisters of St. Joseph. To date, those registered to attend include our Toronto Sisters, and Sisters from Boston, Springfield, St. Louis and Orange, California and registrations are still coming in. Our own Sister Christine Carbotte will join with the team to welcome these Sisters and to participate along with her peers.

In April, 2019 we will receive the present novices who have just

begun their canonical year with our Sisters in Rochester, New York, (back row: Jennifer Berridge, Sally Koch, Sarah Simmons; front row:



Joann Carramanico, Chizuru Yamado from Japan and Tram Nguyen) and their Directors, Sisters Barbara Staropoli SSJ of the Rochester, N.Y. community and Sister Michelle Leshner, SSJ from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia. The canonical novices will take part in a 5-day programme on integral ecology and charism designed to "dovetail" with their current prayer, learning and experience in the novitiate programme. (Alas we have

no Canadian novices this time around!). Sisters Linda Gregg and Mary Rowell will be the facilitators of these programmes and the whole Villa Team will extend their lovely welcome to these our Sisters as together we grow in friendship across our borders and living out our charism for a new time!

We feel privileged and happy to be given this responsibility to participate in our North American formation initiatives and in growing relationships between our Federations. Special thanks to Sisters Loretta Manzara and Patty Johnson, Federation Executive Directors for their unfailing encouragement. As this all unfolds we will be sure to send out further details and communications. Please hold in your prayers all of our current Sisters in formation across the world and pray also for vocations to our own Congregation and to our global communities. Thank you, Sisters.



## **ASSOCIATES AND COMPANIONS**

Leaders representing all of our Associate /Companions groups throughout the Federation met at Invermara May 27 – 29, 2018 in Orillia. The days were productive with sharing of lived experience of the charism and hopes for the future. Presently we have a total of 581 Associates/Companions.

## GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

In our last edition we featured trips taken to South Sudan (CSJ's in Canada) and India (Toronto). As the edition was going to press Sister Anne Delaney (Toronto) was just returning from her trip to Haiti. Here she offers some reflection.

I was privileged to join *Mission Haiti*, by invitation of our Canadian Federation, to visit the various missions which the organization supports. The group was led by Shelly Butler (a member of the Board), and Sue Torgersen CSJ. Others in the group were CSJ's and CSJ Associates, women and men. I was the only Irish-Canadian; all others were from the United States. The experience truly changed me in a significant way. I am very grateful to my congregation for such an opportunity.

We began our pilgrimage in Port-au-Prince. The airport, seemed as if every unemployed Haitian was there to meet us and take our bags. However, our planners had it all arranged. We were greeted by our driver who knew well how to manoeuvre the van in chaotic traffic. There is only one set of traffic lights for the whole city! One of the biggest shocks for me was the

garbage in the streets, the smell of the rotting fruit, the stray hungry animals rooting for food in the dirty water, as well as the shacks for dwellings. The reality of the



Haitian social situation confronts you everywhere. Evidence of the corruption is seen in the depleted tax base for an infrastructure, the lack of clean drinking water, the 80% unemployment rate, and the high crime rate resulting from the extreme poverty. It all seems to be an incredibly difficult challenge for all concerned.

Evidence of the 2010 earthquake is everywhere, a constant reminder to the people of the catastrophe and referenced in almost every conversation no matter where we travelled. We visited the earthquake memorial, spent some time there in contemplation and prayed a brief prayer together. It was a

very moving experience. Some wonderful sites have been rebuilt since the earthquake. We visited Annunciation School where the U.S. and Canadian Federations sponsor ten students on an ongoing basis. We brought donations, treats and small gifts for the children.

There were lots of signs of hope. We had a tour of the newly built children's hospital, St. Damien's, which is under the direction of Father Richard Frechette. They are attempting to educate so that "Haitians help Haitians" rather than having them rely on assistance from other countries. Sister Edna shared that it is a very slow process.

We also visited another site for children who are unwell and many



undernourished. Sometimes a mother brings the sick child to the clinic but does not return to take the

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## **GLOBAL CONNECTIONS - Continued**

child home as she is unable to care for the child. We were told that there is an orphanage which has five hundred children in it — but many are not really orphans.

While visiting a home for elderly women we gave them some "spa" treatments: manicures and pedicures, etc. The Sister who is the Administrator told us that many come from the hospital because the families cannot afford the medical hospital and so abandon them



completely. Although the women seemed to welcome us, I thought many showed a deep sadness in their eyes even though they were singing to entertain us.

We also visited a school supported by a foundation which teaches women and men skills in cooking and sewing to enable them to find employment. They treated us to coffee and freshly baked fruit cake, which gave us time to interact with the students.

On Sunday evening we joined Father Richard

Frechette for a beautiful charismatic Mass by candle-light in the outdoor chapel. I was truly impressed with his simplicity and dedication to the Haitian people.

One of the highlights of the trip was morning and evening prayer. At evening prayer we used a simple structure. They asked: What was "the thorn" that pricked your heart today? What was "the rose" that delighted your heart today? What was the "bud" that held hope or was a sign of new life for you today? Because we had all visited the same site each day our sharing lasted quite a while but very enriching. We really knew one another at a very deep level by the end of the pilgrimage together.

Unfortunately time did not permit us to go up north to Cap Haitian where our Toronto Sisters had been in ministry. I continue to reflect on the experience and recall the images and consequences of the extreme poverty while we in Canada enjoy the privilege of abundance, fresh drinking water, cleanliness and a beautiful, peaceful, safe environment.

*(Photos courtesy of Sister Anne Delaney)*

## **OTHER GLOBAL CONNECTIONS**

The CSJ's in Canada have connected with the Sisters of the Institute of St. Joseph in Africa, through the President of the Italian Federation (the General Superior of the sisters in Turin, Italy). Financial assistance has been offered to their formation program, located in Kinshasa the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

As a Federation we are grateful for the many ways in which God invites us to strengthen our global relationships.



*(Photos provided by the Institute of St. Joseph)*





## CONGRATULATIONS TO...

**Sister Anne Anderson** (CSJ in Canada – Hamilton) received a Distinguished Service Award at the Association of Theological Schools Biennial Banquet in Denver on June 22, 2018. This award acknowledges and honours persons who have contributed in extraordinary ways to the Association’s mission “to promote the improvement and enhancement of theological schools to the benefit of communities of faith and the broader public.” This is an international, peer nominated award.

**Sister Bonnie MacLellan** (SSM) received a lifetime Achievement Award from the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada, at a gala banquet in Niagara Falls, May 10, 2018. This award is given to persons who have mentored and inspired others in Catholic Health Care and whose accomplishments over the years have strengthened the ministry of Catholic Health Care on a national and provincial organizational level. Bonnie was acknowledged as an “energetic and enthusiastic advocate in addressing the unmet needs of vulnerable seniors.”

Sister Bonnie also received the Governor General’s Academic Gold Medal, June 15 at Convocation of St. Paul’s University Ottawa, for the graduate student achieving the highest standing. Acknowledgement was given for her work in highlighting the Canon law concept of Public Juridic Person in its role of sponsorship in continuing the legacy of the religious congregations who began Catholic health care in Canada.

**Sister Costanza Romano** (SSM) received an Honours Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a minor in Religious Studies from Laurentian University along with the George Hartman Memorial Scholarship which recognizes the student with the highest overall average in Religion for a New Generation.

**Sister Patricia Carter** (SSM) has been elected chair of the Catholic Association of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario.

*S.A.I.L. continued from page 10*

Keep us in your prayers as we begin to plan for our next gathering in Peterborough, **August 19 – 22, 2019.**





## **DATES TO REMEMBER...**

September 10 – 13	International Centre Board Meeting, Le Puy, France
September 15 – 17	Global Coordinating Group meeting, Rome, Italy
September 20	<i>Canadian Federation's 52<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary</i>
September 24	Archives Committee Meeting (Hamilton)
September 24	Vocation Animation Committee meeting
September 26	<i>Anniversary of the death of Mother Austin Doran (Peterborough)</i>
October 9 – 12	Canadian Federation Board Meeting, Invermara
October 29 – November 1	Federation Ecology Committee meeting (North Bay)
January 3	<i>Anniversary of the death of Mother Ignatia Campbell (London)</i>
January 8 – 11	Federation Ecology Committee meeting
February 7	<i>Anniversary of the death of Mother Delphine Fontbonne (Toronto)</i>
June 5	<i>Anniversary of the death of Mother St. Philip McGrath (Sault Ste Marie)</i>
June 13	<i>Anniversary of the death of Mother Martha von Bunning (Hamilton)</i>
July 2	<i>Anniversary of the death of Mother Madeleine Mahoney (Sault Ste Marie)</i>
July 30	<i>Anniversary of the death of Mother Vincent Carrol (Pembroke)</i>

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

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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.**

