
Albany Province



Carondelet East

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and CSJ Associates

February 2021



“Lent comes providentially to awaken us, to shake us from our lethargy.”
— *Pope Francis*



by Sister Margie Edic

Hope “speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart.”
(Fratelli Tutti)

“I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart... Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfillment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love... Hope is bold... it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile. Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.” (Fratelli Tutti)

It was the time for the February reflection. What to write about... what to write about? Recently I was reading *Fratelli Tutti* and preparing for our PLT-BOT meetings. The passage above kept drawing me back. I could not help thinking—hope, I need hope, and we need hope. Not that we do not have hope, but how do we live more hopefully? How do we enliven that hope? Hope has worn thin these days as the months of the pandemic “tick by.” Could things get worse? Somehow it has. The turbulent times in our country with civil unrest and violence, Covid 19—sickness, deaths, loss, unfair treatment of our fellow citizens, our “dear neighbor,” etc.

How can I restore or strengthen my hope in these times? I believe it starts with each one of us—a collective hope depends on a personal hope.

Hope “speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart.” For me, it starts each morning when I rise. I crawl out of bed, turn on the coffee and look out my front window. I wonder, “What will this day bring?” I pray, “God, give me the strength and wisdom I need for today.” I try to start fresh, leaving the burdens of yesterday in yesterday (whenever possible), looking at today with a fresh start—starting the day with renewed hope. Today is a gift. Today is a new beginning. Today will be a good day.

Hope speaks to us of ... things that fill our heart and lift our spirit—truth, goodness, beauty, justice and love. What fills my heart with goodness and beauty? Since August, I have gone to our Provincial House every day. I parked the car at C Wing, jumped out, grabbed my bags and ran into the house. One morning I stopped; I looked out towards Troy. The morning’s beauty caused me to pause, breathe in the fresh air, gaze upon all the beauty—the sun rising, fog, snow-covered trees, layer upon layer of rolling hills. This is now part of my daily ritual. The beauty lifted my spirit, calling me to a more positive, relaxed and hope-filled day.

(continued on the next page)

They will perform all the spiritual and corporal works of mercy of which woman is capable.

—John P. Médaille, SJ

CARONDELET EAST
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www.csjalbany.org

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Sister Danielle Bonetti, CSJ
Province Justice Coordinator

Carondelet East is the monthly, internal newsletter of the Albany Province, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. Its purpose is to provide a vehicle of communication for congregational/province news with a particular emphasis on the acts of congregational chapter.

We welcome signed news information relating to the congregation. Please submit articles electronically, not longer than one printed page. Such material is subject to editing and revision. The deadline is 9:00 a.m. on the first day of each month unless otherwise stated.



Cover Design
by Mary Rose Noonan, CSJ
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Leadership Perspectives (cont'd)

My heart and spirit are lifted in the goodness and love of our sisters. "A Time to Mourn: A Time to Dance." This past weekend's celebration of the lives of our thirteen sisters was inspirational—*grieving our loss and celebrating our sisters*. We listened, laughed and shook our heads in affirmation as each sister was memorialized—listening to how each sister reached out in goodness and love throughout her life, connecting with all "of the dear neighbors," accomplishing "all of which a woman is capable." We watched as each sister was revered; her picture touched lovingly, received a bow and a candle. I envision each sister listening to the words spoken about her, smiling and dancing. "What I longed for, I now see; what I hoped for, I now possess; in heaven I am espoused to him whom on earth I loved with all my heart."

What fills me with justice and love? *Hope is bold*. We are called to be bold in justice and love, to be courageous, brave, valiant and unafraid. *Hope can open us up to ... make life more beautiful and worthwhile*" We work for and are hopeful that laws will be passed assisting marginalized people, hopeful that our country will be more peaceful and just, hopeful that the vaccines will soon be readily available to all.

How do I keep myself hopeful? How do I help others be hopeful? We do it by filling our life with truth, goodness, beauty, justice and love. We do it through our relationships with our God and with our 'dear neighbor,' with our sisters. We pray, listen, reflect, observe and send out hopeful thoughts. Pope Francis' words called me to be hopeful. I may not have interpreted the ideas exactly as Pope Francis intended, but these are thoughts that came to me as I read and prayed over his words on hope.

"Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope."

Summary of Minutes Province Leadership Team January 24, 2021

Present: Rose Casaleno, Margie Edic, Joan Mary Hartigan, Kay Ryan, and Diane Zigo

Guests: Danielle Bonetti, Social Justice Office

AGENDAITEMS

Opening Prayer

Margie Edic led us in reflection at the beginning of the meeting.

Minutes

The minutes of the December 18, 2020 Province Leadership Team were approved upon motion by Margie Edic and seconded by Rose Casaleno.

Occasional Paper Discussion

The team discussed two articles found in the LCWR Occasional Papers. Discussion focused on the value of the articles and sharing the concepts shared. The team will continue to use the Occasional Paper article by Ted Dunn for their next meeting.

Upcoming CLG Meeting

The CLT had sent us a request regarding *Laudato Si* that the team responded to in preparation for the February meeting.

Upcoming Meeting with Sally, Peru, and Albany

The team discussed the upcoming meeting with the Congregational Leadership Team, Peruvian Leadership Team, and us.

Conversation on Continuum of Care

- Clarification was given regarding Medicaid and PACE Enrollment.
- Initial conversation on how to provide care to sisters not on PACE living at the PH and outside of the PH.

Conversation about Meeting 1 Hour in between our PLT/BOT Meetings

The team agreed to schedule a shorter meeting between PLT and BOT meetings to update one another and enhance communications.

Memorial Services

The Memorial Service for our Sisters will be held on January 31. The program will be shared with Sisters and family members by video and on Channel 7.

Updating on Enrichment

Maureen Sullivan, OP is able to present a Zoom meeting on May 22 from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Maureen was going to be with us at Community Weekend October 2020, and we have been working with her for an alternative presentation.

Agrégées

The team received information on the development of the Agrégées "movement." There have been articles in various communications, and the committee will be preparing short videos on this development.

Associates

The Associates have begun to plan for their June 2021 commitment weekend. At this time, the team encourages them to plan for both a Zoom and in-person meeting.

Role of Liaison

The team had a discussion on the role of the liaison to boards and committees.

UPDATES

Province Boards/Committees

The team received updates on the work of the following boards and committees: Province Agenda Committee, Selections, Driver Assessment, Government and CSJ Emergency Relief & Homeless Prevention.

(PLT Summary, cont'd on the next page)

PLT Summary of Minutes

(continued)

Sponsored Ministries

a. *The College of Saint Rose*: The team received an update on the ongoing communication and transparency of Marcia White, President, regarding the restructuring process to secure the financial status of the College.

b. *Shaker Pointe at Carondelet, Inc.* The Search Committee has advertised for an Executive Director.

c. *Hospitality Center*: The Hospitality Center remains closed through March 2021. There are tentative bookings for summer and fall which will depend upon COVID safeguards.

Report Review

The department reports were reviewed.

Justice Coordinator

Danielle Bonetti, Province Justice Coordinator, met with the Leadership Team for her annual report. She presented information on the Peace Retreat which included participants from the Congregation and Federation as well at the Province. She is working on the Ash Wednesday, March 16, 2021, and Thursday reflections to be shared during Lent that will be shared on Zoom and Channel 7 for Sisters. In addition, she shared her efforts to work with other groups and her hopes for the direction of her ministry.

Summary of Minutes

Province Board of Trustees

January 25, 2021

Present: Rose Casaleno, Margie Edic, Joan Mary Hartigan, Kay Ryan, and Diane Zigo

Guests: Linda Birochik, CFO; Catherine Interlicchio, Benefits Specialist; Don Bertoldi, Network Administrator

AGENDA ITEMS

Opening Prayer

Margie Edic led us in our reflection.

Minutes

The minutes of the December 1, 2020 meeting were amended and accepted upon motion by Diane Zigo and seconded by Kay Ryan.

CFO Report

Linda Birochik, CFO, joined the Board and presented information on Charitable Donations, updates on the second round of stimulus checks, and information on a memo she will be sharing with the sisters.

Linda also shared updated information on the Trends program, and discussion focused on area of revenue and expenses that can be explored. Catherine Interlicchio, Benefits Specialist, joined us for this discussion on the benefits and enrollment process for Medicare and Medicaid.

Technology

The board approved a Technology Policy regarding the purchase, disposal and budget process for the Provincial House IT needs. The study on bandwidth showed it was sufficient for current use but would need to be increased if employees began working remotely.

IT Audit

The board approved funding for an audit of the IT system in order to assure security of our information.

Prior Approval

During the month of December and January, the board approved the following expenditures through emergency meetings:

- Request for \$15,000 for rapid testing from Gurry Board
- Meals for employees who worked during the COVID crisis (\$2,000.00).
- Policy for employees to work remotely.

Eddy Health Alert Approval

The board held a discussion on the safety or our sisters and the ability to enter into an agreement with Eddy Health Alert System to provide mobile alert systems for sisters living at the Provincial House

or outside of the house. More information is needed prior to implementation.

Silversphere Call Pendants

The call nurse buttons on A Wing are in need of upgrading. Two options were presented and the board is requesting additional information on the proposals.

UPDATES

IASJ (Investor Advocates for Social Justice) Proxy Voting Update

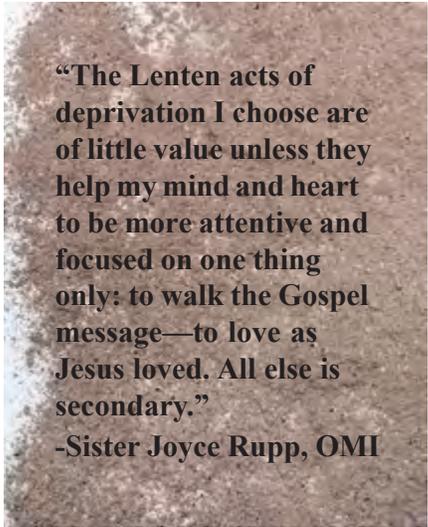
The IASJ will cast the proxy votes for both the Province and Gurry Investments for a cost. The Board approved the cost for the Province proxy votes. The Board will forward the information to the Gurry Board for their consideration.

Requests for Charitable Donations

The board discussed criteria for charitable donations. These include Chapter Future Direction, Food Insecurity, Sisters' Ministries and special requests.

N-95 Masks

Additional N-95 masks were purchased for use by housekeepers, dining service, and other staff when they go to the floors of the Provincial House.



“The Lenten acts of deprivation I choose are of little value unless they help my mind and heart to be more attentive and focused on one thing only: to walk the Gospel message—to love as Jesus loved. All else is secondary.”

-Sister Joyce Rupp, OMI

CALENDAR: PROVINCE LEADERSHIP TEAM

February 2021

9	LRP Subcommittee Meeting	JMH, RC
10	The College of Saint Rose Mission and Values Meeting	ME
11	The College of Saint Rose Educational Programs Committee Meeting	DZ, ME
11	The College of Saint Rose Enrollment Management Committee Meeting	DZ
11-12	The College of Saint Rose Board Meeting	DZ, ME
16	LRP Meeting	PLT
17	Ash Wednesday Prayer Service	DZ, JMH, KR
18	Shaker Pointe Executive Committee Meeting	JMH
18	Associates Meeting	RC
21	PLT Meeting	PLT
22	BOT Meeting	BOT
2/25-3/1	CLG Meeting	PLT

March 2021

5	Shaker Pointe Board Meeting	JMH
9	HomeLand Committee Meeting	ME
11	Initial Membership Coordinating Group (IMCG) Meeting	RC
13	Province Jubilees	PLT

Abbreviations

BOT	=	Board of Trustees
DZ	=	Diane Zigo
JMH	=	Joan Mary Hartigan
KR	=	Kay Ryan
LRP	=	Long Range Planning Board
ME	=	Margie Edic
PEC	=	Joan Mary Hartigan, Margie Edic, and Diane Zigo
PLT	=	Province Leadership Team (Joan Mary Hartigan, Margie Edic, Diane Zigo, Rose Casaleno, and Kay Ryan)
RC	=	Rose Casaleno

St. Joseph's Academy Seniors Volunteer at Foodbank



St. Joseph's Academy Seniors working at the Baton Rouge Food Bank. Sister Chris Pologa is pastoral care and service coordinator at SJA.

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Inc. Shaker Pointe at Carondelet Summary of Minutes of Meeting January 25, 2021

Present

Rose Casaleno, Margie Edic, Joan Mary Hartigan and Diane Zigo

Guests

Shaker Pointe Executive Team: Kay Ryan and Lauren Van Dermark

Marketing

The MEMBER received a copy of the most recent snapshot of sales and occupations at Shaker Pointe and Parkland. Both Shaker Pointe and Parkland are fully occupied at this time.

Finances

A summary of the Shaker Pointe combined finances including the balance sheet and profit-loss report was included in the meeting materials.

Leadership Transition

Joan Mary Hartigan reported the Search Committee (Joan Mary, Hartigan, Eileen McCann, Charla Commins, Diane Cira) and Tracy Needham have advertised the position and shared the timeline with the MEMBER. The Search Committee has not addressed next steps should no viable candidate emerge.

Strategic Plan

Dining: The MEMBER received a summary of the work of the Dining Committee.

Cultural Legacy: This committee is gathering information about the history of Shaker Pointe for the past ten years. The material will provide both an archive of information and be helpful for the development of resident and staff orientation.

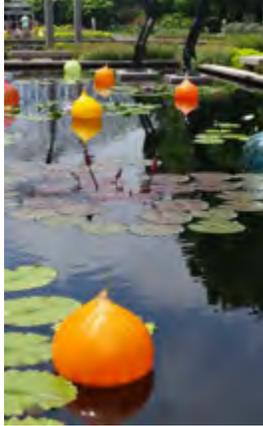
Updates

The Executive Team shared a written summary highlights of the staff and resident life.

COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES

by Sister Renee Adamany

In my childhood I loved to color pictures in coloring books. I could not draw or create a painting, so coloring was my artistic expression. Mostly I used packs of eight or sixteen crayons. Once I received a box of sixty-four with a built-in sharpener!



Renee has also found that coloring outside the box in photography is achieved by experimenting with light, texture and color!

I particularly enjoyed coloring the pictures with thick, black lines. I carefully studied the picture to decide the best splash of color. Those lines filled me with confidence that my crayons would not stray. In those days, “coloring outside the lines” was not appropriate. Staying inside the lines was a sign of perfection.

Now, as I reflect on those thick, black lines, I envision them as signs of security, and maybe even protection. Whoever thought that to go outside, see friends,

and participate in “normal” activities would be life threatening? Life is upside down and nothing like many of us have ever experienced. This is why I decided to learn how to color outside the lines. The year 2020 was supposed to be one of perfect vision.

It turned out to be imperfect vision. Or was it?

I learned new activities, some by choice, others by necessity. I made a conscious effort to embrace the slogan, *Progress over Perfection*, the inspiration of one of my students. The most challenging adventure was learning to teach on the computer. At first, it was terrifying! However, thanks to my generous colleagues, I learned how to organize students in groups, share my screen, and a host of other functions. I could not say I really enjoyed this method of teaching as much as being in the classroom, but at least we were able to communicate with each other.

And more! My students implemented a project for eight different agencies and collected over \$3,000 worth of goods. They filled me with such hope and confidence.

Since I love being outdoors, I gave golf a try this summer, and I loved it. I am sure my Dad is saying, “Why didn’t she learn this while I was alive?! I did stick to a par 3 course, which is good enough for now. Believe it or not, there are heated driving ranges, and that will be my next adventure.



Renee’s photography also shows her enjoyment in choosing to color within the lines or color outside; it doesn’t matter because everyone brings a different perspective.

I also learned to crochet, no easy feat since my small-motor coordination is limited. Even so I was making scarves, and maybe expand to hats! When I wasn’t crocheting, I researched *The Taste of Home* site and cooked many new dishes.

Meanwhile, I became a diversity trainer for two non-profit agencies, by Zoom, of course; and an advisor for the SUNY Schenectady Student Volunteer Organization, where the students created birthday boxes for those in need.

I share all of these adventures to fill you with hope and inspiration. I am grateful for all of you, my friends, family and local community. Let us continue to embrace gratitude, blessings, and the love of each other. Let us continue to find ways to color outside the lines, living in hope and love.



Lenten Retreat with Pope Francis and Sister Joy Milos: Assisting Us in Our Chapter-directed Discernment

by the Province Justice Committee

What is “Fratelli Tutti” all about? The “work of spiritual discernment” so needed in our times, says one analyst about Pope Francis’ new encyclical (“America,” 10/4/20). And when we CSJs look at this Encyclical’s call, we must ask, how does it assist us in our Chapter-directed spiritual discernment?

To aid in this spiritual discernment, the province is offering Sisters and Associates a Lenten retreat with Pope Francis and “Fratelli Tutti,” and a special presentation by Sister Joy Milos.

The retreat opens with prayer on Ash Wednesday, February 17, at 7:00 p.m.

Thereafter, beginning on Thursday, February 18 and continuing through Lent, each issue of “Thursday Updates” will contain a brief reflection on one chapter of “Fratelli Tutti.” Sisters and Associates are invited to enrich their Lenten days with these reflections, individually or in groups, on their own schedules.

In addition, on March 16, from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m., Sister Joy Milos, Professor Emeritus in Religious Studies, Gonzaga University, will guide us through a reflection which will help us to deepen our appreciation of “Fratelli Tutti” and how it is connected to the Future Directions of the 2019 Congregational Chapter.

In “Fratelli Tutti,” Pope Francis emphasizes over and over again the global population’s need to work together as sisters and brothers, to take down all walls, all barriers to oneness. As we read and reflect on the words of the Encyclical, may we see them in the light of shared grace as we CSJs journey together.

Perhaps this Lent our God is calling us to spend some time, as much as each one can, listening and reflecting as we journey forward together.

(Registration information for the opening service and Joy Milos’ presentation will be in Thursday Updates.)

SUMMARY

A Lenten Journey with Pope Francis through Fratelli Tutti

“Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.” (Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti)

Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship is the last installment in a trilogy of writings by Pope Francis. First, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Joy of the Gospel) focuses on repairing the Church. Next, *Laudato Si’* (Praised Be) examines repairing the planet. Now, *Fratelli Tutti (Brothers and Sisters All)* explores building a culture of peace and dialogue in order to work together to care for each other. In this time of polarization, let us step back and listen to pope Francis’ call to love charity and kindness.

Our Journey

Ash Wednesday - Prayer - 7:00 p.m. - See Thursday Updates for link.

Each Thursday, beginning on February 18 - April 1, there will be a reflection sheet attached to Thursday Updates. Each reflection sheet will focus on a chapter of the encyclical. This sheet can be used for individual reflection or for small-group sharing.

On **March 16, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m., Joy Milos, CSJ** will guide us through a reflection which will help us to deepen our appreciation of this encyclical and how it is connected to the Future Directions of the 2019 Congregational Chapter. Watch Thursday Updates for more information and registration for this opportunity!

WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS

Sister Frances Dillman (SL)
January 4, 2021

Sister Jean Marie Abbott (SL)
January 7, 2021

Sister Joan Casey (SL)
January 12, 2021

Sister St. Luke Copeland (SP)
January 13, 2021

Sister Ann O’Neill (SP)
January 15, 2021

Bill Keating, brother of Sister Jean Keating, January 7, 2021

Thomas Morosco, brother of Marie Morosco, CSJA, January 15, 2021

Anna Vassallo, stepmother of Sister Marilyn Vassallo, January 20, 2021

Cecelia Walsh, sister of Sister Maura Rhode, January 22, 2021

Charles Nathan Lynch, brother of Sister Mary Clementine, January 29, 2021

Sisters, Associates, Family and Friends Gather by Livestreaming to Honor the Lives of Our Beloved Dead

On Sunday, January 31, the PH Community joined with sisters, associates, family and friends in a **Mid-day Prayer and Memorial Liturgy** celebrating the loss of 13 of our sisters: Sisters Sara Cannon, Mary Alfred Holdredge, Susan Marie O'Connor, Maria Joseph Cokely, Lamese Farhart, Anne Lawrence Clark, Joan Harrington, Helen Leclerc, Theresa Fournier, Germaine Hilston, Maria Mercurio, Gloria DeCotis and Joan Curley; the 13 sisters died between November 25 - December 22, 2020. The prayer and Mass were live-streamed throughout the country during this time of COVID 19 when relatives and friends would normally gather together to remember the lives of their loved ones.



The altar at the PH with photos of the deceased



Sister Genevieve Joseph Cizek brings the candle for Sister Gloria DeCotis to the altar.



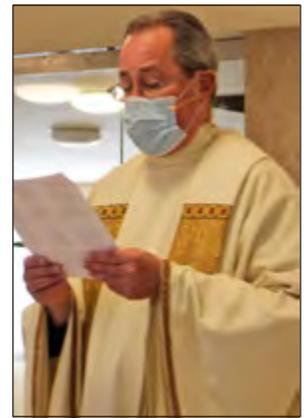
Sisters Marguerite E. Donovan, Fran Dempsey and Katie Eiffe await their bringing to the altar the memorial candles for Sisters Anne Lawrence Clark, Maria Mercurio and Germaine Hilston.



Muna Hassan and Sister Ranah Phelan



Sisters Margie Edic and Joan Mary Hartigan



PH Chaplain Fr. Geoff Burke

St. Joseph Academy Seniors Serve Others Despite Pandemic

by Mindy Brodhead Averitt and Sister Chris Pologa

Creatively dealing with restrictions in place because of COVID-19, the St. Joseph's Academy Class of 2021 participated in the annual Senior Service Day on January 26. The 287 seniors were able to sign up for one of six activities to serve *the dear neighbor* in the Baton Rouge community.



Among the activities were a virtual bingo bash for guests in the day shelter of St. Vincent de Paul; collecting essential items to fill backpacks for the homeless; and baking cookies for St. Vincent de Paul to include in lunches served to the hungry in the local community. Seniors were also able to sign up to sort and box donated food items at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank or make brown bag lunches, called Sticker Sacks, for donation to St. Vincent de Paul. The sixth service option was serving as a collection coordinator to track and catalog the myriad items delivered to Mother Alice Hall for pick up by St. Vincent de Paul.



Sister Chris Pologa is SJA's pastoral care minister and service coordinator. She facilitated Senior Service Day activities. "In the parable of the Sower (MK 4:1-20),



Jesus exhorts the people to listen and really hear, to allow the Word of God to take root in their hearts, so that they will produce an abundant harvest," she said. "Our seniors have done just that in their warm-hearted response to the needs of the hungry and homeless in Baton Rouge. Their generous giving produced an abundant harvest of Sticker Sacks, cookies, backpacks and joy to our needy neighbors. Our Sticker seniors, living their Gospel values and following the example of our founding Sisters of St. Joseph, gifted the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and the St. Vincent de Paul service agencies with their time, talent and treasure. My heart is proud of the way each young woman, guided by the Spirit, is actively engaging in outreach to the dear neighbor, celebrating our oneness with Christ Jesus."



Sister Chris Pologa

Senior Mary Granier volunteered as a collection coordinator and saw firsthand the outpouring of generosity from her classmates. "I knew we made a huge impact when we finished filling the truck and Sister Chris had to ask them to come back for a second load," Granier said. "It is amazing that each person contributed a little bit and we had such a great outcome."



In This Darkness, Is There Also Light?

by Sister Fran Dempsey
NCR Online, January 16, 2021

Over my 82 years, I have had many experiences of darkness coming and darkness going away. So when I try to comprehend theologians who teach and mystics who experience non-dualism, who say darkness and light are one, I am mystified.

Recently, posted in our Provincial House's "Daily News" channel, were the names of three sisters with COVID-19 who are "diminishing" right now. That is, for them, death is imminent. In just a couple of weeks, the nursing-home wing went from no COVID-19 at all during this entire pandemic to 8 to 12 to 27 to 47. With nine deaths already and maybe more coming, the outside world's darkness has stormed into my world with darkness that seems the deepest I have ever known.

But in this darkness is there also light? Am I so formed by night following day following night and so much cultural dualism — so stuck in dualism — that I am unable to believe that dark and light are one?

"Lord, I accept, or at least I want to."

A few years back, during one Advent week, I had cataract surgery. I was unaware that I was living in semi-darkness until after the surgery. But when the Christmas tree lights went on, I saw anew: the white lights, the red balls and the silver tinsel were so bright! Cataracts, growing over time, had dimmed my vision, blurred my seeing. Ever so slowly darkness had slipped in. I did not see it, so to speak, until the cataracts were removed. In my new light, I saw the darkness, i.e., light came after darkness, not within it.

A few years earlier, another deeper darkness grew in me ever so slowly. The darkness of depression starts with only slight, unnoticed shadows around one's

being. My depression, intensified by anger, stayed unnoticed even as it grew darker and darker. One day, sharing tea with a friend at a McDonald's in Hoboken, I lowered my head to the table and could not raise it. A few days later, when my body slipped to the floor in a psychologist's office, I could not stand.

The wise doctor said, "Sister, this will end, but not tomorrow." Unlike the instant cure of darkened vision that cataract surgery brings, the cure for a darkened spirit was a two-year furlough from teaching and five years of first daily, then weekly, then monthly therapy. But I learned, as many do, that my darkest days yielded new light, light that changed the second half of my life for the better. Again, after the darkness came light.

How many times have dark times led me to new, life-giving light? So are darkness and light one? It did not seem so.

"Lord, I accept, or at least, I want to."

Today, darkness is everywhere: the ever-growing pandemic, the depths of inequality, the effects of Earth's mistreatment; endless war. Will this darkness finally end and light prevail? My inclination is to work and pray to end the nation's, indeed the whole world's, current chaotic painful darkness. But was the world ever filled with only light, the light of peace and justice that I long for, the light of the kingdom of God?

No, for Jesus taught that the kingdom is here and the kingdom is not yet here. Is that how light and darkness are one, even while my dualism keeps them separate? I recognize that within the depths of this time's profound darkness there are new lights: the light of greater awareness of global oneness, as every corner of Earth shares the suffering of COVID-19; the light of greater awareness of the depth and breadth of human inequality, of economic and racial injustice; the light of greater awareness of ever more destruction of Mother Earth and all her gifts.



Should I pray that starting in 2021 the world will embrace the power of love, thus enabling these dim lights to grow stronger? Am I experiencing now that darkness and light are made one by love? Am I believing that in the deepest darkness is also blinding light? That if I choose to bring love to dark days and to bright days, to bring love to days when my soul feels smothered in darkness and days when my soul glows, that I will see darkness and light as one?

Yes. Right now, when my home with my sisters is smothered in the spread of COVID-19 among us, smothered in the deaths of dear sisters one after another, I marvel how, though separated as we are by quarantine and 6-foot spaces and masks, in this darkness the light of love rises among us, love among us grows and glows.

Non-dualism is the belief that all is one. Love is what makes all things one. Thus, the psalmist's song:

"If I asked darkness to cover me
And light to become night around me,
That darkness would not be dark to you,
Night would be as light as day."
—Psalm 139

A version of Fran's story also appeared in the Feb. 5-18, 2021 print issue under the headline: In this darkness, can there also be light?

U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph Condemns the Violence at the Capitol

The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph joins with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in praying for peace after witnessing the violence and terrorism yesterday in our nation's Capitol. We are deeply concerned about the state of our country and the future of our democracy. Our hearts ached as we watched white nationalists participate in these despicable actions that threaten not only to destroy our government but to rend the bonds that unite us. We commend and thank the members of Congress and staff who courageously continued their service to the nation last night even amid the chaos, as well as the law enforcement who helped protect and secure the building so the members could resume their responsibilities.

In our increasingly divided nation, we are saddened but not surprised by the predictable outcome of yesterday's events. The Federation renews our Gospel Charism and commitment to being a unifying presence in the world through appreciation of diversity, transformation, and healing.

At this time, we feel each of us are asked to pause, reflect, and grapple with the history and legacy that brought us to this historic moment of white domestic terrorists attempting to take over our legislative branch.

As Christians, we cannot ignore the images of the cross and flags bearing Jesus' name that peppered yesterday's scene. We cannot ignore the juxtaposition of the law enforcement response to yesterday's violence at the Capitol versus the violence inflicted on Black Lives Matter protestors in June. We invite all people of good will to reflect on the next steps we must take to repair our democracy, eliminate white privilege, and contribute to the work of building a more perfect union.



by Pat Hunt, CSJA

Continuing our series on how CSJ Associates share our spirituality and how we, too, are "called together for the life of the world," associates were asked to use each of their monogram initials and choose a word or phrase starting with each one to describe how/why it relates to our shared CSJ/CSJA charism.

This month's CSJ ABCs belong to Rome Associate Carol Ann Furgol.

C **CHARITY.** Dear Lord, please let me continue my charitable works for the rest of my life.

A **ALLOW.** Dear Lord, please allow me always to help the less fortunate.

F **FEED.** Dear Lord, please help me to feed the hungry and always help those in need.



Carol Ann Furgol, CSJA

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Crispina and Her Sisters

by Christine Schenk

Discovering reliable information about women in early Christianity is a challenging enterprise.

Most people have never heard of Bitalia, Veneranda, Crispina, Petronella, Leta, Sofia the Deacon, and many others even though their catacomb and tomb art suggests their authority was influential and valued by early Christian communities.

This book explores visual imagery found on burial artifacts of prominent early Christian women. It carefully situates the tomb art within the cultural context of customary Roman commemorations of the dead. Recent scholarship about Roman portrait sarcophagi and the interpretation of early Christian art is also given significant attention.

An in-depth review of women's history in the first four centuries of Christianity provides important context.

Teaching Kids to Care About God's Creation: Reflections, Activities and Prayers for Catechists and Families

by Mary Elizabeth Clark

We all know Pope Francis has issued an urgent call to bring care for the Earth into both our spirituality and our daily actions. But how do we get started, especially with children and families?

Here, Sister Mary Elizabeth Clark responds to Pope Francis call by offering 30 lessons that will engage children, catechists, and families in the good work of keeping our planet livable and sustainable for coming generations. Inspired by passages in *Laudato Si* (On Care for our Common Home), the lessons and practical activities are fun and thought-provoking.

The reflections and prayers in each lesson help connect our practical actions to the gospel and deepen our spiritual sense of our common home. From activities for conserving water to developing a greater awareness of all of God's creation, this book will be a great resource for catechists and families.

LCWR, Other Faith Leaders Speak Out Against Assault on the Capitol

Women religious and faith leaders across the country vigorously condemned the violence visited upon the United States Capitol and members of Congress on January 6.

LCWR issued a statement the next day denouncing the actions, expressing deep concern for the state of the nation and pledging to “take up the challenge to use our energy to repair our democracy and contribute to the work of building a more perfect union.”

Religious congregations across the nation issued similar denunciations of the violence and the lies about the election that fed the insurrection. Many pointed to the racism and white nationalism that stoked the violence and the misuse of Christian symbols by some to justify their cause.

In addition, LCWR executive director Carol Zinn, SSJ, joined 79 Christian faith leaders issuing a four-part appeal to people of faith: *Called to be Peacemakers*.

First, they called religious leaders across the country and across all traditions to condemn the violence of President Trump’s followers and the racism and nationalism that drove it.

Second, these faith leaders called for the immediate resignation or removal of Donald Trump from power believing the president is “fundamentally unfit for



Sister Carol Zinn, SSJ

office and poses an immediate danger to our nation.”

Third, they called the nation to prayer and action. “We believe we are at a turning point in which Christians and people of faith and conscience from all political persuasions must unite in prayer and action to ensure a peaceful transfer of power and commit ourselves to the hard but essential work of repair, healing, racial justice, and reconciliation. This will require a great deal of truth-telling and shared determination to root out a politics fueled by fear, lies, bigotry, and conspiracy theories that undermine truth and the common good.”

Finally, they urged people of faith to dismantle the, “institutionalized racism that this COVID pandemic has again revealed, the needed racial reckoning that our criminal justice system has exposed, and the recent violent insurrection at the United States Capitol has made alarmingly clear.”



“There Is Always Light”

by Elise D. García, OP
LCWR President

As our nation transitions to a new administration, with its breath of fresh air, and the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available, I am hanging on to Jeremiah’s promise of a future full of hope.

Last week we had our annual congregational leadership retreat. Instead of gathering in a circle by the fireplace at a retreat center in the snow-covered woods of Michigan, we gathered in the Hollywood Squares of virtual Zoom conferencing, each leader in her own space in different parts of the country. This scene is all too familiar to us, as we circle round the clock to this time last year when we were just learning about a novel virus striking people in an unfamiliar and seemingly remote part of China.

Little did we know that within two months, the virus would steal through the pathways of our global interconnectedness and lockdown the world, utterly shifting our way of leading and being with one another.

At the time, our minds were focused on headlines of “impeachment” – only the third such time in our nation’s history that the House of Representatives would act to remove a sitting US president. Then, two months into living in COVID-19 confinement, when many Americans were spending more time following news events than ever before, we witnessed – in the deliberate killing of George Floyd by a police officer – an emblematic image of the horror, virulence, and impunity of white supremacy that for so long has been tearing at the moral fabric of our nation and destroying Black lives. The stark awareness of living with not one but two deadly viruses became clear, unmasking the complicit ignorance among white people of the ever-present threat of violence and abasement that the virus of white supremacy holds over people of color.



Sister Elise D. Garcia, OP

Just weeks ago, another epic event gripped the nation when an assault on the US Capitol impelled terrified members of Congress and their staffs to run for shelter and ended the lives of five people, causing countless more injuries. The insurrection against our democracy, led by white supremacists and anti-Semitic extremists, aimed to stop the lawful ratification of the results of the presidential election. It revealed, as Rev. Bryan Massingale wrote that day, “the clear declaration that many white people would rather live in a white dictatorship than in a multiracial democracy.” The assault led to the second impeachment ever of a US president — for inciting the insurrection.

These epochal events have challenged us all. As leaders of US congregations of women religious, we have done everything in our power to keep our sisters and co-workers safe against the coronavirus. We have guided our communities through episodes of COVID illness and death. We have taken on the role of liturgical leaders when our sacramental ministers have been

unable to preside, holding spiritual communion with our members. We have carried on with the already-challenging work of leading our congregations through the seismic demographic changes of our times: safeguarding the legacy of ministries, stewarding the transfer of buildings and land, forging new collaborations with others for the sake of the mission, inviting new members, engaging in conversations about the emerging future of religious life. Many of us have extended our terms in office, as chapters are unable to take place due to the virus. We also have endured personal loss as team members, family, or dear friends have suffered illness or died, sharpening the heartache and weight of these times.

And we have been faithful to our values: issuing public statements, redoubling anti-racism work, acting to mitigate climate change, addressing dire economic and social needs, and otherwise engaging in these consequential times as religious leaders, responding to the moral exigencies of our day.

This moment in history will long be remembered; the magnitude of its compounding challenges is breathtaking. We are the ones called to lead our congregations through it — and, somehow, to find ways to shine light on God’s abiding presence among us, and promise of new life.

As a new chapter in American history begins to be written, may the words of poet Amanda Gorman uplift us: “There is always light, if only we are brave enough to see it, if only we are brave enough to be it.

As Pandemic Rages, UISG Gives Emergency Funds to Sisters’ Projects Worldwide

by Chris Herlinger, GSR

With the world eyeing the first anniversary of the start of a global pandemic that has affected more than 100 million people and killed more than 2 million, the head of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), the global organization representing approximately 600,000 sisters, says the group is poised to continue distributing funds for micro-projects in 2021 given ongoing needs.

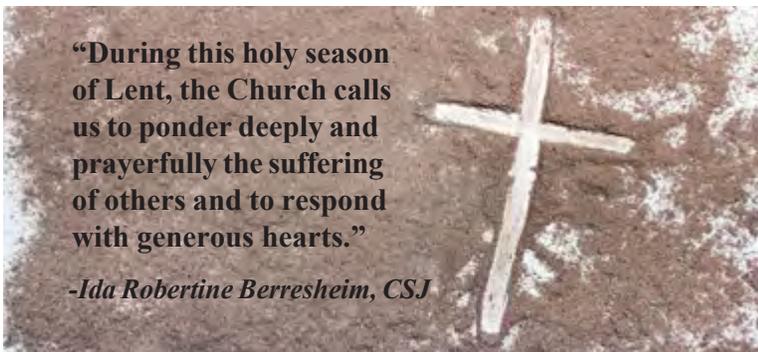
UISG continues to distribute more than \$1.8 million from foundations and donors, including about \$600,000 from congregations, for pandemic-related emergency projects in the last year, said Loreto Sr. Patricia Murray, UISG’s executive secretary.

In the days ahead, Murray said, “There will be a need for financial support for new micro-projects, so that people will be helped to rebuild their lives.”

“With a renewed sense of community we can hopefully reach out to those most in need. Sisters will be there among the people working and helping to create new ways of living in true love and solidarity,” Murray wrote in an email to Global Sisters Report following interviews about the pandemic response with GSR staff in late 2020.

UISG is not the source of the funds, but the distributor. This is a new initiative and role for the Rome-based umbrella organization and one that is limited only to the pandemic response, Murray said.

“At a time of pandemic,” Murray said in December, “funds are such a great need and a great support to congregations that we feel blessed that people have been so generous — religious congregations of women and also funders who work with sisters and know their capacity to make the little they get go a long way.



One Father's Heart to Another: Where Did You First Learn of Joseph?

by MaryAnn Dignazio-Louison

I recall a few childhood memories: walking to St. Joseph's Church in Amsterdam, NY with my father while he tipped his hat as we passed the front of the church. We walked to St. Joseph School where my brother was a student while I longed for the days when I would be called the same. Sometimes, Sister Layinnesa, OSF, would be sweeping off the front porch of the convent. She waved hello and often would bring us two chocolate chip cookies from her batch of the day. She would use them when students who forgot their lunches would knock on the convent door for a brown bag lunch. I'm sure the sisters had a treat for their lunches as well. There were also the weekly trips to Woolworth's made with my parents to purchase the figures that would go into the Christmas stable. I still have the good, old plastic Joseph from that scene.

As I moved on to high school at St. Mary's Institute and Bishop Scully High School, I met the Sisters of the St. Joseph as teachers. I knew of them previously from St. Mary's Hospital (aka, St. Mary's Healthcare now). As a six-year-old frightened tonsillectomy patient, I remember Sister Mary Frederick stopping at my bedside to say hello and to let me know that vanilla ice cream would be on my supper tray. It was! Years later, my mother was a hospital patient. I remember a sister with a benevolent face in a white habit, stopping to say hello. She introduced herself as Sister Valerie John (aka, Sister Rita Jean DuBrey now). I have never forgot those encounters.

I also have a memory of a prayer said after Vespers that called upon Divine Providence (and I think St. Joseph) to help sell the property at 747 Madison Avenue. Was this a precursor to the popularity of burying a St. Joseph statue to help sell a house? Years later, a then co-worker said that she buried a statue and the next day the house was sold!

What does all this have to do with Pope Francis and his Apostolic Letter, *Patris Corde (With a Father's Heart)* to proclaim a year of Saint Joseph?

It was my early experiences with the people that I mentioned that put together an image of who Saint Joseph was for me. These people that I mentioned were my artists to create a canvas of a picture of St. Joseph. I'm certain that you have such people in your life, too.

Joseph, quiet and just. The people named Joseph in my family seemed to have those traits: my paternal grandfather (Giuseppe); my uncle Joe; my cousin, Joe; my brother, Joe; names that I knew because of St. Joseph. These were the people who put together very early images for me.

The Vatican News website notes that: "The Holy Father wrote *Patris Corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of "ordinary" people who though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph," the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence," who nonetheless played "an incomparable role in the history of salvation."

St. Joseph was artistically designed by some of the ordinary people whose stories have been part of my story.

St. Joseph, that quiet, just man as I was told. Pope Francis calls him accepting as he stood with Mary "unconditionally" in a world that would have disposed her because of her condition. He "confronted reality with open eyes and accepted responsibility for it." Certainly, such a quality is sorely needed in this world today.

Pope Francis places the person of St. Joseph in the context of the issues of society that concern us now. He uses the qualities that we once learned were the nature of St. Joseph and puts them into the context of today and what the world now looks like.

The importance of seeing with eyes wide open can bring us to new perspectives. Pope Francis does this in this letter and in this year of St. Joseph. Ordinary people do that.

Today, as I write this, I think of Amanda Gorman and the poem she delivered at the Inaugural. I thought of St. Joseph when she used a new way of looking at quiet and justice: "We've learned that quiet isn't always peace and the norms and notions of what *just* is isn't always justice." Since I had been reflecting on Joseph the quiet, just man these words gave me a context of today that was not in my context of then. I wonder what St. Joseph is thinking now. Maybe, even then, quiet was not a peaceful quiet for Joseph; especially as he woke from a sleeping Joseph dream to a Joseph on the move with Mary and their baby to a land of unknown.

How do we view justice...just is...? What is peaceful quiet or quiet but not peaceful?

Come, enter into this year of Joseph. Explore not only what Pope Francis gives us to ponder in his Apostolic Letter, but what our congregation calls us to as well. Pray along with the prayer at the conclusion of Pope Francis letter: "Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage and defend us from every evil. Amen."

Remember, we do not ask without the call to action. May each of be that grace, mercy, and courage to one another! May we be aware of evil and displace it with good!

Shirley Ann Lee O'Neil, CSJA
1935 ~ 2021

Shirley Ann O'Neil, 85, passed away on January 10, 2021 in Troy, New York. She was born July 6, 1935 in Troy, New York, the only child to her late parents, Millard and Alma (Smith) Lee.

Shirley was a graduate of Catholic Central High School (1954) and received a bachelor's in education from The College of Saint Rose. Shirley had a long teaching career with the Lansingburgh School District and retired after 35 years of service.

She had maintained close contact with her network of friends and associates from her time as an educator as well as many other lifelong friends. She valued her relationship with the Sisters of Saint Joseph and was honored in her role with the Albany Diocese Pastoral Center Committee.

Shirley was a people person and always had a point of view to be shared. She enjoyed reading, traveling, shopping, swimming and, of course, having her hair and nails done.

Shirley is survived by her beloved husband, Donald F. O'Neil. They had a beautiful 58 years of marriage, enjoying their retirement years with friends and



Shirley Lee O'Neil, CSJA

family, including recent years in Zephyrhills, FL. They returned to NY, settling in Ballston Spa.

Shirley was proud of and cherished her entire family, especially her children: Maureen (Davis) and husband, Peter; Mark and his wife, Wendy; Matthew and his wife, Donna; and Megan (Duncan) and her husband, Mark. She was blessed with and loved by 8 grandchildren: Nicholas, Rachel, Taylor, Christopher, Rebecca, Riley, Robert and Scott. She is also survived by her sister-in-law, Nancy Jette, and many relatives, especially the extended Smith Family.

In addition to her parents, Shirley was preceded in death by her son, Michael Patrick O'Neil; and her brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Thomas and Sally O'Neil.

The family will hold a Memorial Service at a date TBD in the summer of 2021.

**Rest in Peace, Fr. Jim,
and Thanks for the Rolls!**

M^{sgr.} James Kennedy, a priest of the Diocese of Syracuse for more than 65 years, died December 31 at age 91. Fr. Jim, the brother of our Sister Rita Ann Kennedy (RIP) as well as three brothers and two other sisters, was also a retired lieutenant colonel in the Army.

During his 25 years as pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in North Syracuse. Fr. Jim made rolls for all the Lenten fish fries. Parishioners estimate that he made 39,957 rolls!

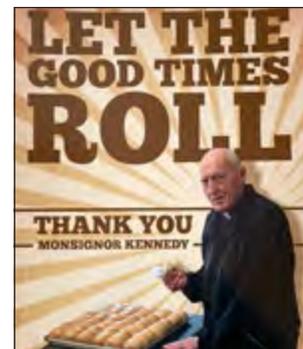
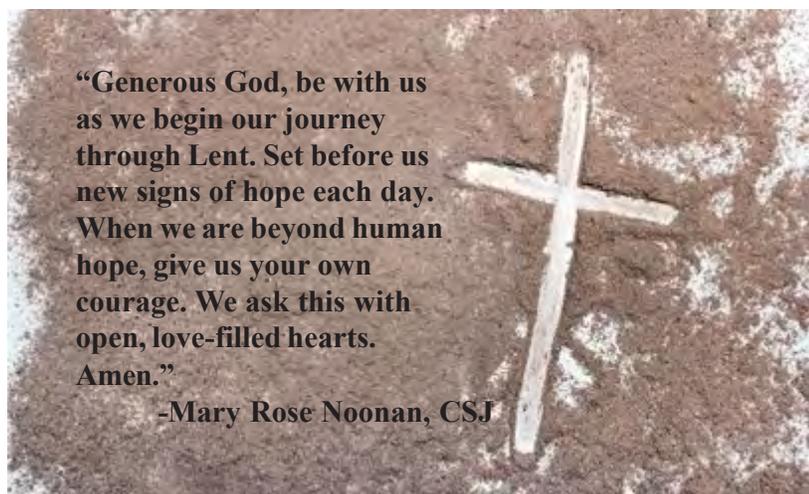
Thanks to Sister Rosaire Anne DeMare, a friend of Fr. Jim, who sent in his recipe! (See below!) Rest in peace, Fr. Jim!

Ingredients

5 -1/2s to 6-1/2 C. Flour
2 pkgs. Fleischmann's active dry yeast
2 T.s Sugar
1 T. Salt
2 -1/4s C. Hot tap water

Directions

Mix yeast with 2 C. flour, sugar & salt. Add tap water all at once. Best 2 min. until thick and elastic. Add 1 C. flour. Beat 1 min. Stir in remaining flour, soft dough, doesn't cling to sides. Put on table, knead 5-10 min. Cover and let rise 20 min. Punch down dough, divide in half, make 2 loaves. Cover loosely with waxed paper. Refrigerate from 2-24 hrs. Bake at 400° for 30-40 min. Makes 2 loaves. NOTE: Can be shaped into large dinner rolls.



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The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.
– Helen Keller

Happy Valentine's Day!

Thanks so much to **CSJ Associate Regina Cassetta** who sent us the following special memorial which was published recently in both *The Amsterdam Recorder* and *The Schenectady Gazette*:

In Loving Memory of Sister Mary Theresa [Murphy]

who, as an administrator of St. Mary's Hospital, laid the groundwork for what is now known as Addiction Services. Many people who suffered from problems with alcohol and drug abuse and their families now enjoy a happy, joyous and free lifestyle.

Thank you, Sister.
James Pepe
Boca Raton, FL

PRAYERS PLEASE APP TO BE RETIRED MARCH 31; MINISTRY CONTINUES!

In the fall of 2010, the communication directors of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet throughout the United States collaborated to plan, develop and implement a new ministry to accept virtual prayer requests from anywhere in the world: Prayers Please.

At the time, they created a free prayer request app to take advantage of emerging technology to meet the need for a quick and easy way for people on the go to request prayers from the sisters. More than a decade later, the need for prayer remains the same, but technology has evolved. With the ease of accessing mobile-friendly websites, the communicators have concluded that the app is no longer necessary to continue the Prayers Please ministry. We will be retiring the app as of March 31.

Of course, the ministry continues! We always accept prayer requests through our website at: <https://csjcarondelet.org/we-pray-for-you/>

We thank the John, Marie and Joseph Whalen Foundation, Inc. for their support of the Prayers Please app, the talented web developers who kept it functioning over the years, and our communicators for keeping the ministry active.



prayer app artwork © by Marion C. Honors, CSJ

ASH WEDNESDAY

**"Even now, says the LORD,
return to me with your whole heart,
with fasting, and weeping,
and mourning;
Rend your hearts, not your
garments, and return
to the LORD, your God."**

–Joel 2:12-13

