Features:

Finding Who You Are; The Hallmark of Religious Life

How Do You Visualize God’s Love?

I Am Impelled by God’s Inclusive Love Because...

I Study to Better Serve My Brothers and Sisters in Christ

They Believe in the Same Things That I Do
enflamed
with the compassion of God, we, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston, women of the Church, rooted in the Gospel, together with our Associates are impelled by the active, inclusive love of God to: deepen our relationship with God and the dear neighbor without distinction; foster prophetic communion; and journey into the future with Sisters of St. Joseph and Associates, throughout the world and with all God’s Creation.

We, Sisters of St. Joseph, are women receptive to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit of Love. Together with our associates we are called to live in right relationship with all creation. We are a community of women whose mission is to realize the prayer of Christ that all may be one. In community and prayerful contemplation, we listen to this Spirit and move always toward profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction.

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In choosing a theme for our Chapter year, “Impelled by the inclusive Love of God,” we could not have anticipated how relevant it would be for this moment in time – a time that is more about exclusion than inclusion, a time which focuses on the prose of life and not the poetry, the poetry which calls us to be people of welcome, hospitality, joy, and love.

Frequently, life goes a bit out of balance due to the fact that, by necessity we live more of it in prose where things are more matter-of-fact, commonplace and often tedious. I believe in the midst of this prosaic living we are impelled to be people who facilitate the re-balancing of the world by contemplating with the poets. Poetry for me is an expression of God’s imaginative grace for our world.

Let us take the poet Rumi’s advice:

Move Into Your House of Joy

If you knew yourself for even one moment, if you could just glimpse your most beautiful face, maybe you wouldn’t slumber so deeply in that house of clay.

Why not move into your house of joy and shine into every crevice! For you are the secret treasure-bearer, and always have been. Didn’t you know?

As Sisters of St. Joseph and Associates, we also root ourselves in the poetic message of the gospel of Jesus – a gospel which calls us to live the new commandment given by Jesus to his disciples in his farewell discourse:

I give you a new commandment:
love one another;
you must love one another just as I have loved you.
It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognize you as my disciples.”

(John 13:34-35)

In our CSJ Constitution we say, “This sharing in the mission of Christ is the source and wellspring of energy which permeates every aspect of our lives.” This year of Chapter is a time for sisters and associates, along with co-partners in ministry, to contemplate communally:

“Given who we are, given our realities at this time, given our willingness to invest in a future we may never see – where do we want to spend our precious resources – our time, our energy, and our lives in the coming years?”

Because! How often do we use this word in conversation? How many memories do children have of adults responding to a question with an emphatic, “Because I said so!”

Our use of “because” as the theme of this issue of the MORE… emerges from a very different space. 2017-2018 is our “Chapter Year” – a time to look back in order to look ahead, a time to consider why we do what we do and consider how we move into the future. The short answer to this question is, “We do what we do because we are impelled by God’s inclusive love.”

Thus, the theme chosen by our congregation for our Chapter Year is “Impelled by God’s Inclusive Love.” In preparing this issue, we invited contributors to reflect on this theme and consider why and how they are impelled by God’s inclusive love.

Because we are women of the Church rooted in the gospel of Christ Jesus, we believe that Chapter is an ecclesial event. We do what we do not just for ourselves but because of so many others with and to whom we minister. In the pages that follow you will see that not only sisters and associates reflect on how they are impelled by God’s inclusive love but also an employee, a student, and a parent of students in one of our ministries.

Our Chapter logo is an abstract image whose design suggests the diversity and oneness that draws us each in different ways yet connects us with ourselves, our neighbors, and our world. You will be receiving this magazine after the completion of our September Chapter weekend and shortly before our October Chapter weekend. We hope you will enter into the reading of this issue with a reflective heart; a heart that seeks the MORE… to which we are all forever called. You, too, are invited to consider the question, “I am impelled by God’s inclusive love because…”
Welcome to the fall issue of the MORE…. This issue’s theme, “Because,” started me thinking about why you, our donors and friends, support our sisters. Here are just a few of the reasons I have heard in my conversation with donors over the years.

I support the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston BECAUSE:

• I was taught by the sisters and appreciate the great education they gave me.
• They taught me values.
• They helped when I was going through a personal crisis.
• My dad was dying and they comforted us and prayed with him.
• They taught my mom how to speak English and helped her get citizenship.
• They have worked in my parish for years.
• My aunt is a Sister of St. Joseph.
• I wanted to give something back to them.
• The world needs them even more now.
• They worked so hard, for little to no pay. They deserve a secure retirement. I want to help.
• I used to be a sister and appreciate their ministry.

Whatever your “because,” thank you! We are grateful and humbled by your support! Your caring gifts enable our sisters to continue ministry well beyond retirement years and help support our sisters in need of care.

Following our fall tradition, we are again honoring our donors by publishing online our list of supporters. You may view this list by visiting our website www.csjboston.org. Without the love and support of these generous folks, our sisters would be more limited in these opportunities to serve the “dear neighbor.”

Thank you and God bless!

Carol Mack
Director of Mission Advancement
Why do those who work for justice do what they do, against multiple injustices and seemingly insurmountable obstacles? Whether consciously or not, the realization that God’s inclusive love embraces all creatures impels us to imitate this inclusive love as we “stand with the poor in the struggle for justice, incarnating hope…” (CSJ Constitution, Spirit & Purpose 8.)

As Justice Promoter, I work in collaboration with numerous individuals and groups, but especially through my Advisory Board. Each member’s commitment to justice and peace, and their varied backgrounds and experiences in the work for justice, support me in my ministry as Justice Promoter. They introduce themselves in the following sections.

Mark Potter, Ph.D.

I accepted the invitation to be a member of the Justice & Peace Advisory Board because I want my children and students to grow up in a world that more closely resembles the Kingdom of God. In my previous job, I was an advocate for justice and peace with the Jesuits on the West Coast. Now, as a religion teacher at Newton Country Day School, I want to make sure I maintain a strong connection with local efforts to put Catholic social teaching in action. I welcomed Sr. Betty Cawley’s invitation to join the CSJ’s board because I deeply admire the congregation’s commitments to building community, fostering compassion, and contributing to the creation of a world that more closely reflects the active and ongoing love of God.

Maryann Enright, CSJ

Saying YES to the invitation to join the J&P Advisory Board was an easy response. Although I have cared for the earth as a community gardener for many years, I was yearning for wisdom around a number of food and health issues. Doing this with other seekers fits well. Our role is clear: we are advisory and share ways to support and enhance the work of the Justice Promoter.

We are discussing issues that fit my passion, including a major issue in our country: FOOD WASTE and its impact on climate issues. Participating on this Board has offered me access to kindred spirits, each of whom is connected to larger communities. Together, we can be a stronger influence with our constituencies and others.

Colleen King, CSJA

I accepted the invitation to be a member of the J&P Advisory Board because I hoped to bring attention to social justice issues that need our support. My primary interest is food security. I have been a volunteer at St. Bridget’s Food Pantry in Framingham for five years. We welcome immigrants, seniors, disabled adults, and families each week and provide much needed food and friendship. I advocate for sustainable food sources and higher quality nutritional products. I’m strongly opposed to factory farming and feel united with all who are made to suffer at the hands of corporate greed – God’s most vulnerable and least powerful people, God’s helpless and mistreated creatures, and God’s beautiful rivers, lakes and forests.
Helen Thomas Colbert, CSJ

I accepted the invitation to be a member of the Justice & Peace Advisory Board because:

- My ministries in New Mexico, Alabama, and Mississippi, visiting at Norfolk Prison, tutoring in The Literacy Connection and volunteering at Bakhita House have changed how I live and look at life.
- Living in the South and Southwest, experiencing firsthand the prison system, watching the struggle of a young man to learn English, and embracing the horror of human trafficking challenge me to work to bring about change and to make a difference.

The Justice and Peace Advisory Board provides me with the opportunity to work in a new way to advocate for justice and to help promote peace.

Peggy Comfrey, CSJ

Action for justice has been a core element of my religious commitment and ministry since the beginning.

Teaching at Cathedral High in the '70s led me to awareness of the systemic causes of poverty in which many families were living. I became involved with NETWORK as a way to take concrete action on issues, together with women religious across the country. I have worked in other social ministries over the years and am currently at Project Hope in Roxbury “where families move up and out of poverty.” The Office of Justice and Peace is a conduit for information and suggestions for action on key social issues, enabling us to live out our call to “act justly.” I am happy to bring my experience to that work.

Kate Fahey

I grew up in Massachusetts, committed to civic engagement, activism, community development and inclusion. As an undergraduate in Social Thought and Political Economy, I interned with Womankind Worldwide, a London organization supporting grassroots initiatives for women’s empowerment.

Following graduation I assisted with community development in Ghana, and studied yoga, meditation and peace in India. For the past five years, as a Director at Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), I supervised case management, inclusive community building and program development, with a particular focus on food security and housing/homelessness. Currently I am pursuing a graduate degree in Conflict Resolution and Coexistence at the Heller School at Brandeis University.

I accepted the invitation to join the J&P Advisory Board because I feel strongly about the role and impact of the Sisters of St. Joseph within the Allston-Brighton community and am especially impressed and encouraged by their long-term commitment to peace and social justice.

Betty Cawley, CSJ, with some members of our Justice & Peace Advisory Board
Finding Who You Are; The Hallmark of Religious Life

By Mary Black, CSJ

All life, including religious, is about finding who you are. Religious life has enabled me to do this. I grew up in a small town where my family was fifth generation. My mother was a teacher in the town and my father ran for political office. I belonged to the town and the people and never felt like an outsider.

Even though I didn’t know any sisters and attended public school, we were part of a Catholic atmosphere. My uncle, a priest, subscribed to the newsletter of the Blessed Sacrament Sisters. I was impressed by what they were doing and thought, “This is what I’d like to do with my life!” I didn’t know there was a difference in communities. We lived near Framingham and the CSJs were in charge of our CCD so they became the logical choice.

When I entered, I knew nothing about the “culture” of religious life. Years later, a sister in my group commented, “It was like you were from Mars!” I felt like a fish out of water but also felt I was where I belonged. I knew I was going to grow into this and was going to love it.

Mary (far left) at eight years old with neighborhood friends digging for worms to go fishing in Charles River.
Although I never wanted to be a teacher, I discovered I loved working with kids and found untapped talents. I was at home. After teaching at Walnut Park Country Day School for Boys and St. Theresa’s, West Roxbury, I went to Cathedral High School.

Cathedral became the story of my life. My first night there, a group of us stood on the roof watching the Orange Line go by and I said, “This is my place.” Cathedral changed my life and my attitude. I became aware of injustices and how our government contributed to these.

“People thought I worked miracles but all I did was get the kids to go to school.”

Although I taught at other schools, studied at Catholic University, Weston School of Theology, and language school in Bolivia, I kept circling back to Cathedral and eventually lived in the projects. I wanted to do something new but didn’t know what. After volunteering at a home for battered women, I learned about a job in drop-out prevention for Latino kids in the Boston Public Schools. I visited five schools each week, wrote reports, and visited homes. People thought I worked miracles but all I did was get the kids to go to school. The projects became another small town. I’d walk around at night and knew everybody.

When Sister Roberta Marie asked me to be Novice Director, I was knocked off my feet and told her, “I have no theological background.” She responded, “You can get that but you can’t get the experience you have in working in peace and justice work.”

When I left Cathedral, they asked if I would continue to work with their fundraising events. In addition to volunteering with trafficked women at the newly established safe house and at the Charles River Food Pantry, I worked one day a week in our CSJ Advancement Office. When we were preparing to celebrate the 140th, I didn’t join the committee at first but was asked just to come and talk with the group. This began my involvement with our “Living the Dream Dinner” committee.

Why am I committed to raising money? Because it’s going to people in need and supports our retired sisters who do all kinds of unpaid volunteer work. These volunteer ministries need financial support in order for our sisters to minister with disadvantaged people. I do it because I know the money goes to places where people would not otherwise receive needed services.

My whole aim has been to serve underprivileged people. That’s what impressed me about the Blessed Sacrament Sisters. That’s what I found at Cathedral and why I stayed at Cathedral. I never would have discovered this part of myself had I not entered the community. Being a Sister of St. Joseph has developed the whole person that I am both in terms of spirituality and social justice. It’s become the hallmark of my religious life. 🙏

...standing for non-violence at a Motherhouse peace vigil

...greeting guests at Donor Appreciation Day.
When asked to design the 2017-2018 Chapter logo, I realized the theme, “Impelled by God’s Inclusive Love,” was going to be difficult to visualize. How do you visualize God’s love? How large is inclusive love?

What does it mean to be impelled by love – by God’s love? Impelled implies motion, movement, going where we have not been. And isn’t this where Chapter 2017-2018 is drawing us – sisters, associates, and partners in ministry – each in different ways yet connected? There is diversity and oneness. That is our hope for ourselves, for our neighbors, for our world.

We have this dream because all are embraced by God’s inclusive love. Inclusive involves everyone, everything, our world and its people. The motion needed to be free. It needed to be able to float, to move, and be open to all – not a closed circle.

The design that began to emerge was an open hand. The smallest of the three shapes suggests individuality, room for growth, change. The curved shapes hint at openness, diversity, individuality, growth, connectedness, change. The golden orange reflects the colors of our 140th celebration of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Boston; past and future are connected. The purple and orange tones complement each other suggesting that, while change is occurring, there are connections. There is room for growth, for change...because we are impelled by God’s inclusive love.

Chapter Prayer

God of mercy and compassion, lover of us all be with us. Help us to be attentive to your presence as we gather and discern. Your inclusive love is boundless, it stretches our minds and is beyond imagination. You know us through and through, you know our gifts and goodness, our fears and frailties and our hidden hopes.

Open our eyes to see things anew, Open our ears to hear the cries of the poor, Open our hearts to the needs of our broken world. Nudge us to discern with realism and openness. Compel us to respond with creativity and courage, with generosity and love.

Rekindle in us the desire to love as we have been loved and guide us as we make decisions for an unknown future.

Prayer: Rosemary Mulvihill, CSJ

Ann Grady, CSJ, stands next to one of her tapestries.
Sisters have done this for centuries but, as the needs of our world evolve, so does the process of General Chapters. During 2017-2018, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston and associates will gather for Chapter Weekends in September, October, February, and March. Each time we prepare for a General Chapter, we select a theme. Through prayer, discussion, and listening the theme that has emerged for our 2017-2018 Chapter is “Impelled by God’s inclusive Love.”

The entire General Chapter process is a time of communal discernment and decision making that emerges from communal and personal prayer, contemplative listening, and conversation. We gather in the name of Christ Jesus, impelled by God’s inclusive Love, and confident that the Holy Spirit breathes with and within us.

We call the September and October weekends “Chapter of Affairs.” This is a time for sisters and associates to be together in community; a time for discerning the needs of our times; and a time for evaluating the life of the Congregation in the light of these calls.

The February and March weekends are called “Chapter of Elections.” As we consider that to which God is calling us at this time in the life of our Congregation, our Church, and our world, we ask one another who among us might the Holy Spirit be inviting to lead us in implementing these calls. And so, the Chapter of Elections leads to identifying a new leadership team.

Sisters who commit to full participation in all Chapter weekends are eligible to be voting participants during the General Chapter. For the 2017-2018 Chapter, 110 sisters have committed to this form of participation. Other sisters and associates will be present as consulting participants. Sisters and associates who, for reasons of health, distance, or personal commitments, cannot be present have committed to be supporting participants through prayer, dialogue, and implementation of Chapter decisions.

As women of the Church and rooted in the Gospel, we realize we are part of an ever-widening circle of relationships. We count on the prayers of all sisters, associates, partners in ministry, family, friends, benefactors, and our “dear neighbors” near and far. As we enter into this Spirit-led year, we invite you to join with us in our Chapter Prayer.
I Am Impelled by God’s Inclusive Love Because...

Carol Fitzsimmons, CSJ

I never set out to be a spiritual director. God has brought me to this sacred ministry which is a gift. What is life-giving for me is the personal/relational aspect in the context of what is most meaningful/significant in life.

Spiritual Direction and Directed Retreats are fundamental ministries in the Church. They help a person awaken to the contemplative stance that is natural to every person. Both ministries invite one to contemplate one’s whole life and see that God’s self is in ALL of it – the brokenness and splendor.

Retreats provide an atmosphere of silence to listen to what is deepest and most real within us, that which is uniquely personal, and to discover the fingerprint of God. Spiritual Direction is a relationship that helps people notice, reflect, and name experiences that reveal a God who comes disguised as my life.

In listening to what is deepest in us, we slowly let go of controlling every aspect of our lives and are impelled by the Love of God to choose with more freedom.

Karen Kane-Yee

As an employee with the Sisters of Saint Joseph, it is a joy to contribute to a mission whose every undertaking and action embodies embracing and including everyone as an important member of one great human family. The Sisters’ conceptualization of others, even strangers, as the “dear neighbor” instantly changes the dynamic of encounter with a stranger, from being “other” to pulling them into our orbit of relationship and also to say they are beloved, deserving of respect, compassion, and care. This exemplification of the amazing inclusive love of God contained in every encounter, transforming every relationship, is what impels me to be with others in every interaction as part of God’s great work. This theme, threaded throughout the lives, work, and writings of the sisters, has surfaced as the most grounding and meaningful in my life. In every pathway on which I have found myself – from childhood at Our Lady of Lourdes School to adulthood working in the Mission Advancement Office, it impels me to see everyone I encounter in the context of God’s inclusive love.

Mary Gaudet, CSJA

Early on, as my dear parents taught us about God’s love for us, we also learned that caring for and sharing with others was how we grew as loving children of God. Our house was always an all-inclusive house where everybody was welcome.

For as long as I can remember, I have been blessed with boundless energy and a sharing heart. Each chapter of my adult life has included a different type of service to others. Becoming an associate has greatly broadened me in so many ways, especially in trying to live out of the awareness of God’s gifts and God’s presence in others.
Sarah Barrett, CSJA

As a CSJ Associate, Trustee of the Jackson-Walnut Park Board, and retired Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs of Regis College, an abundance of reflections emerge as I consider how I am “impelled by God’s inclusive love.” I believe that it is going where life leads us, reaching out to the “dear neighbor” and sharing in times of joy and sorrow, love and grief in supportive, ever-widening circles – the “Magis” with a spirit of excellence tempered by gentleness, peace, and joy!

I am impelled by God’s love – the God who first loved me into being and who, in turn, draws me to live our CSJ charism of unity and reconciliation by connecting neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God. I do this in ordinary ways – by paying close attention, listening deeply, reflecting, and responding to what God is doing now in me and in others whether associates, CSJs, family, neighbors, faith community, strangers, or partners in ministry. Everyone and everything is interconnected. May we continue finding the Holy Spirit in the gentle, whispering breeze, going with open hearts and minds into the future where God is calling to us, asking with Mary Oliver, “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

Tim McDonald

The women in my life have always strengthened my relationship with God. From an early age, my mother brought me to the daily Mass at Saint Ann Church, Wollaston. As I grew older and became an altar server, I continued attending daily Mass on school vacations and summer breaks. My relationship with my wife, Nancy, has also taught me about God’s love. Throughout our 25-year marriage, we have shared joyful events and some difficult challenges. Always, Nancy and I have relied on God’s unending grace and love. Watching my two older daughters attend and graduate from Fontbonne Academy and looking forward with anticipation as my youngest daughter starts her FBA journey, I have seen God’s love in action. This is a direct result of the abiding love and guidance of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Fontbonne, as a result of its close connection to the CSJ community, is a daily manifestation of the inclusive love of God. Every member of the FBA community is made to feel welcome, included and surrounded by love – the love of this community specifically and the expansive love of God. In every interaction at Fontbonne I experience this gift and, in turn, am impelled to carry this love forward and share it with everyone I meet.

– FBA Parent ’13, ’17, ’21

Maeve McDonald

As an alumna of Fontbonne Academy, I am impelled by God’s inclusive love because my education was driven by the calling and mission to live a life of love and unity. In this way, I learned what it means to “serve the dear neighbor without distinction” and in doing so, engage myself in “ever widening circles of love.” At Fontbonne, we understand that we are impelled to be God’s eyes, ears, and hands on earth. This imperative stretches into all that we do. Whether making sure that no one is sitting alone at lunch or supporting someone who is struggling, as Fontbonne women we want all to feel included and loved. Jesus gave us the perfect example of love and it is our job as his disciples to carry this love to all places and all the people we meet. As a Fontbonne woman, I am impelled by God’s inclusive love because of all the ways that it was demonstrated to me during my years as a student. This force will forever be a part of who I am and want to be.

– FBA Alumna ’17
Reflecting on the source of inspiration for my ministries, I have realized that the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario, played a key role in shaping my understanding of service. At the age of twelve, I learned from their example and teaching that the best way to serve God is to serve the dear neighbor. Today, as a CSJ Associate impelled by God’s inclusive love, I strive to live this message, remembering always: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart…” Col. 3, 23.

Today, my ministries involve working to support, educate, and empower members of immigrant communities as they strive to learn English, adapt to a new culture, and embrace the challenges of life here in the United States. Current ministries include my work at St. Joseph Parish, Lynn, where I am a member of the board and faculty at St. Joseph Youth Center. In 2017 we offered a summer program at the Youth Center, and will continue with after-school activities in the fall. In addition, I am the coordinator of the Parents’ Formation School, Escuela de Padres Sagrada Familia, at St. Joseph Parish.

Another key ministry is my work with the Latina Center MARIA (Mujer/Madre-Autentica-Restaurada-Inteligente-Amorosa). Why? Because three years ago my spiritual director suggested that I begin a Women’s Ministry. He noted, “There are many women suffering…they are not able to attend therapy sessions because of language barriers…” After praying and listening to God for two years, I decided to embrace this challenge — to evangelize at the periphery as Pope Francis has urged. Thus, Latina Center MARIA opened with a Mothers’ Day celebration on May 10, 2016! The Center now offers meetings, workshops, and conferences where women share our stories, support each other, and receive practical information regarding health, employment, housing and education.

Each person who has immigrated to the United States has a unique story to tell — a story of challenges and fears, of hope and dreams; a story of how difficult it is to learn a new language, and to integrate into an unfamiliar society and culture. This is a part of my story, and I thank God for giving me energy in difficult times, and for providing opportunities for me to pursue my own education.

“I don’t collect university degrees to decorate my walls. I study to better serve my brothers and sisters in Christ.”

“Ito no colecciono títulos universitarios para lucirlos en mi pared…estudio mucho para servir mejor a mis hermanos y hermanas en Cristo…”

It is the mothers who pay special attention to the education and behavior of their children…that is why it is super important to offer them the tools they need to do that work with success.

As I always say, “I don’t collect university degrees to decorate my walls. I study to better serve my brothers and sisters in Christ.” Moving into the future, impelled by God’s inclusive love, I envision an expanding ministry — a ministry of hope: working to empower women through education, and offering tools they need as they guide their children to become the honest, hardworking citizens that society needs.
Guests enjoy the Latina Center MARIA gala fundraising event, *Mother and Leader 2017*, held on May 12 in West Roxbury. Executive director and founder Magalie Rowe, CSJA, explains: "In addition to honoring Mothers during our 2017 celebration, we are going to recognize twelve Latina women in the following categories: Community Leader, Outstanding Professional, Young Latinas, Successful Entrepreneurs, Latinas in Politics, and Exemplary Teachers."


Course-workshop *Active Parents Today*, given at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston. Facilitator: Magalie Rowe, CSJA. “A son, a daughter is a gift God has given you... Are you prepared to give him or her a Christian and human formation?”

Curso-Taller Padres Activos de Hoy - Catedral de la Santa Cruz, Boston. Facilitador: Magalie Rowe, CSJA. “Un hijo, una hija es un regalo que Dios le ha dado... Esta preparado para darle una formation Cristiana y humana?”

Magalie Rowe, CSJA, celebrates at the ceremony and sending-forth Mass after receiving her Master’s Degree from Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. “Thank you to the sisters of my community, the Sisters of St. Joseph, and to the women of the Latina Center MARIA for being present on such an important occasion.”

Magalie Rowe, CSJA: La Ceremonia y Misa de Envío de los graduados de la Maestría de la Facultad de Teología y Ministerio, Boston College. “Gracias a las hermanas de mi comunidad, Sisters of St. Joseph, y a las mujeres del Centro de Latinas MARIA por estar presente en tan importante ocasión.”

Latina Center MARIA: “It is worrying that there is no pastoral care for immigrant Latina women who do not speak English. That is why I have created Latina Center MARIA...”

Centro de Latinas MARIA: “Es preocupante que no haya una pastoral para mujeres Latinas inmigrantes que no hablan inglés. Por eso es que creí importante crear esta Centro de Latinas MARIA...”
Because...

Because we extend help hope love – and act the MORE relationships grow.

Because – just – because charism totally grasps us, new life emerges.

Because we believe, connections – relationships frequently happen.

Because our God is – creation happens all ’round us and everyone.
In her newly published book, *Anything of Which a Woman Is Capable*, Mary McGlone, CSJ, acquaints us with dozens of spirit-filled, but very human, women who faced unimaginable challenges as they crisscrossed North America with courage and creativity for the sole purpose of serving the “dear neighbor” wherever needed. This first volume of the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the United States capsulizes significant moments, thoughts, patterns, threads, and facts [when these are available] into a remarkable journey marked by clarity and vision. Even amid the blurry or often non-existent criteria of our early years, the women who shaped our history come alive as their stories unfold. Where precise documentation is scanty, Mary fills in the spaces with plausible assumptions that entice the reader to connect past, present, and future into an evolving vision of what is to come.

As the volume unfolds, fascinating stories about independent foundations of Sisters of St. Joseph weaving their way across the United States and Canada hold the reader’s attention. The influence of an intermittent flow of “missionary” sisters who came from a group of Sisters of St. Joseph in Moutiers, France, and the varied immigrant roots of new vocations sheds light on the challenging ethnic and cultural diversity of our early years. The ease with which sisters moved from one founding congregation to another witnesses to the manner in which these pioneer women nurtured strong mutual bonds in a time when high speed travel, electronic communication, and social media were non-existent.

It's a complicated story – this web of movement, action, and growth. But it is our story, woven through the subtly nuanced language of congregations’ varied constitutions. It is our story, embedded in questions about the interplay of bishops’ priorities and desires of sisters as they sought to further our mission and spirit. It is our story, of dedication to the poor, of going where the needs are with creative responses to challenging situations, of being human instruments of God’s grace who are sometimes disappointed but far from defeated.

The reader comes away with a keen awareness of how our CSSJ dedication to the “dear neighbor” has served us well. It is this dedication that, for centuries, has impelled Sisters of St. Joseph to do anything of which a woman is capable. Their ministries emerged due to the circumstances in which they found themselves as much by advanced planning or professional preparation or lack thereof.

*Anything of Which a Woman Is Capable* is Volume 1 of the story of multiple congregations of St. Joseph with one Spirit, of congregations founded in response to local needs, often by unconventional leaders or small groups who would never have guessed where the Spirit and circumstances would lead them.

We are with them on the stagecoach, on horseback, or on the train as they travel the country responding to needs of a growing nation inspired by a vision that could not be confined to limits of place or specific ministry. We can’t predict the future – and neither could they. Volume 1 ends with 1912 and leaves the reader hungering for more. Volume 2 awaits… 📚
They Believe in the Same Things That I Do

By Carol Mack

I caught up with Debbie Stande as she was working hard to “close out the year” preparing for the auditors. As a matter of fact, to get a photo of Debbie we had to remove the boxes of financial records and stacks of spreadsheets that obscured her! Debbie is the Controller of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston. She is celebrating her 25th year with us. Her busy office manages the financial transactions of all the CSJ congregational and sponsored ministries. A huge job! What has kept her here for 25 years? Debbie said: “I feel that I am doing good here, not just working for a paycheck. I enjoy working with the sisters and the community of lay employees that support them.”

Not only has Debbie dedicated her working life to the sisters, she also supports the sisters as a donor. When I asked her why, she explained that “I donate to the Sisters because they believe in the same things that I do – caring for all people where there is need, without distinction. Though their numbers are diminishing, the need is still there and sisters are still working to meet it.” She further explained, “These Sisters worked for years for minimum stipends. Without our support now, they would not be able to make ends meet in retirement.” I asked her to choose one example of a ministry that particularly connects with her. She cited Bethany Hill Place in Framingham, Massachusetts, which is a living and learning community of neighbors that provides independent, affordable housing and educational opportunities within a climate of respect, inclusion, and acceptance.

Debbie’s long relationship with the Sisters began as she applied for a certificate program at Aquinas Jr. College established and staffed by the CSJs initially. She is grateful to Marian Batho, CSJ, for starting her on her academic journey by giving her the confidence to pursue a 2 year degree instead. She was further inspired to pursue a career in finance by her accounting instructor, Katherine Magno, CSJ. After graduating from Aquinas, she was hired by Bob Belléy as bookkeeper for the sisters, and helped to build the Finance Office as she acquired experience and both Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees.

When Debbie isn’t crunching numbers, helping others understand a financial document, or reviewing spreadsheets, she enjoys her home by the beach, her family – including grandchildren, Maine, and camping.
hoosing our cards is a generous way of celebrating the lives of relatives and friends. Throughout the year, those you honor with a card are remembered in prayer by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston and Associates.

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To make a donation online, visit www.csjboston.org and find the “make a gift” box. The cards here are a representative sample. More designs are available at: www.csjboston.org/join-our-mission/donate-now/memorial-and-all-occasion-card-programs/

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