

Mission

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Speaker to share vision for women

A *Vision for Women in the Twenty-first Century* is the topic of Theresa Kane, rsm, for the day celebrating Women's Spirituality scheduled for April 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Theresa is an associate professor at Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, NY, teaching the history of religion, the history of women, and is a member of the graduate faculty in Health Leadership.

She is a member of the Sisters of Mercy of the New York region and served as LCWR president in 1979 when she greeted the pope

and asked him to consider women in all ministries of the church.

The day, which is open to all women, is sponsored by the Team for Membership and Association includes registration and coffee at 9:30 a.m. time for input, reflection and prayer from 10 to noon, lunch at 12:15, and input, reflection and prayer from 1 to 3 p.m.

"I am convinced that we are called to be women who are on fire for an ever-deepening spirituality," according to Theresa.

This is the eighteenth year that the team has sponsored Women's Spirituality Day.

People in the News

Sisters Patricia James Sweeney and Catherine Hayes will be among five Cathedral High School alumni honored at its sixth annual awards night, April 1

Award winners are chosen for their contributions to the school and the community.

Patricia, a member of the Class of 1941, a national recognized educator, was principal at Cathedral from 1979 to 1992. She has been principal at other schools and taught at various institutions including Elms College. Patricia has held several offices in the National Catholic Education Association.

Catherine, a member of the Class of 1943, taught business courses at Cathedral for 43 years where she also headed the Business Department. She was responsible for bringing the business department into the Computer Age.

News from Sacred Heart School in Gardner: A graduate who had our late Sr. Joseph Maria Milan in the upper grades and who remembers the great influence she had on him, is giving \$100 a year scholarship for the next five years to be awarded to a student as a citizenship award. He wishes to remain anonymous.

He is also funding a plaque which will be placed on the school's "Wall of Success" to highlight Sister.



Those whose novitiate was spent at Mont Marie know the story of the chapel windows, many do not. See the article by Sister Patricia James on page 4 for the story and reflection on these meditations in stained glass. This window depicts the engagement of Mary and Joseph.

Team Talk

Awardee shares SSJ mission with Scouts

Mary Quinn, ssj, was recently honored as a woman of distinction by the Girl Scouts of the Pioneer Valley. Along with four other women, Mary was recognized at a dinner, March 9 at Chez Josef in Agawam. Women of Distinction are “recognized for the consistent use of their resources and talents ... for the commitment, creative approach, outstanding leadership they have shown and the inspiration they have provided.”

Team Talk this month is Mary’s message to them and us.

“Last year I read a wonderful novel, *The Secret Life of Bees*. The main character is an adolescent girl, Lily, who faces life’s complexities in her search for identity, family and her place in the world. At one point of particular duress, she muses, ‘the hardest thing in earth is choosing what matters.’

It seems to me that Lily’s musing is one we all face, how we choose where to give our energy, our time, our commitment in the midst of very busy lives. The Girl Scout mission speaks eloquently to what ‘matters’ as it states... ‘Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.’

My niece Maggie is a prime example of this mission. Being a Catholic sister, I have no children of my own, but have seven wonderful nephews and one niece. Maggie, who lives in Columbus, Ohio, is eight years old, a Brownie who can hardly wait to become a full-fledged Girl Scout. I thought she would be an excellent source with whom I should consult about her experience.

In Memoriam

Please remember the following in prayer:

Sr. Dorothy Connors
John Medeiros, brother-in-law of Sr. Claudette Samson
Evelyn Pilkington, mother of Sr. Dorothy Pilkington
James Leary, father of Sr. Catherine Leary

When I asked her what she likes about being involved with the Girl Scouts, she said that she gets to do a lot of fun activities, gets patches for some of her activities, has met new friends, and gets first dibs on the Girl Scout cookies!

I might add that she may be an aspiring entrepreneur as she sold 232 boxes of cookies this year, a bit short of her goal of 300. My friend, Patty, runs a homeless shelter in Springfield, and when Maggie called her about buying cookies, she suggested that Patty could donate a box or two to the women and children at the shelter.

So Maggie and many other young girls are experiencing first hand what it means to develop confidence as they learn new skills, complete activities, cultivate new friendships, and learn to be conscious of those less fortunate than they.

The mission of my religious community, the Sisters of St. Joseph, is to ‘reconcile neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God,’ a mission which has deeply influenced my work as a teacher, a therapist, an administrator, a social justice advocate.

I have learned about courage, confidence, character and connections from my parents, my siblings, and many mentors along the way. I salute the mission of the Girl Scouts and the thousands of young girls and young women who use their gifts to make the world a better place, a world in which it deeply matters what we choose.”

Mission is published monthly by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield as a source of communication within the Congregation. Readers are encouraged to submit articles which should be typed and sent to Mont Marie, Holyoke, MA 01040. E-mail acl@ssjspringfield.com

Ann Lynch, SSJ, editor

Communications Committee: Sisters Angela Deady, Mary E. Harvey, Mary Lou Lacey, Ann Lynch, Elizabeth Matuszek, Paula Misitano, Patricia James Sweeney and Jeanne O’Shea.

Government Committee shares findings

Angela Deady, ssj

One of the first tasks of the Government Committee at the conclusion of a Congregational Chapter is to read and make note of the evaluations submitted by chapter participants. It has been the community's practice to do two sets of evaluations: one at the conclusion of the affairs segment and the second evaluation at the conclusion of the election segment of Chapter.

The members of the Government Committee would like everyone to know that they have been hard at work completing that task! All right! Truth be told, it hasn't been hard work at all! Why? Many of the evaluations, as might be expected, contain similar responses and similar suggestions.

A few common threads from the affairs portion:

Appreciate.... free nights... changing of tables... the prayer... the facilitators, the simple direct process, the journal keeping.

*Suggest....*rethink the time of chapter... fewer days...more ritual...have same facilitators... begin later in the morning, incorporate time for discussion with the Leadership Team...keep the theological reflection process.

And from the final evaluations of March, 2005:

*Appreciate...*discussion with candidates, facilitators, changing of tables, the process.

*Suggest...*shorten time between retreat and elections...shorten chapter...more time for discussion...nominate a team not an individual...rethink time of year...look at criteria for full and supportive members.

The work of Chapter 2005, the journey "to the day when all will be one" stretches ahead of us and is our primary focus even as we begin remote preparation for Chapter 2011.

At each stage in the planning for the next chapter, be assured that the Government will keep everyone informed and part of the process.

SEED Committee gathers in Jamestown



Some members of the SEED Committee gathered in Jamestown, February 4-5, for prayer, work and relaxation. Pictured in the living room are Connie Daub, Irene Comeau, Maureen Charest, Joan Dumais, Irene Mizula, Priscilla Sicard, Roberta Mulcahy, Sally Marsh, Cathy Coyne, Winnie Roulrier and Lorry Villemaire.
Photos by Ann Lynch

In spite of the rain Cathy and Priscilla pruned the butterfly bush.



Each brought a symbol for the prayer table



Joseph inspires devotion from chapel windows

Sr. Patricia James

During the month of March we, Sisters of St. Joseph, increase our prayers and devotion to St. Joseph. We gather at Mont Marie in his honor for a day of shared dialogue, a delicious dinner and conclude with a very special prayer service. Truly tomorrow's events will be "Transformative Experiences" especially because we join in them as part of the larger complete Community. We will end the day together in the Chapel.

Although we are all familiar with our beautiful monastic Mont Marie Chapel, how often have we heard the words of Jean-Jacques Duval, the artist who designed those striking stained glass windows? In explaining the motivation for his work, in 1962, he said, "The goal to be obtained was to create windows that would inspire meditation on the elevated level of the Sisters."

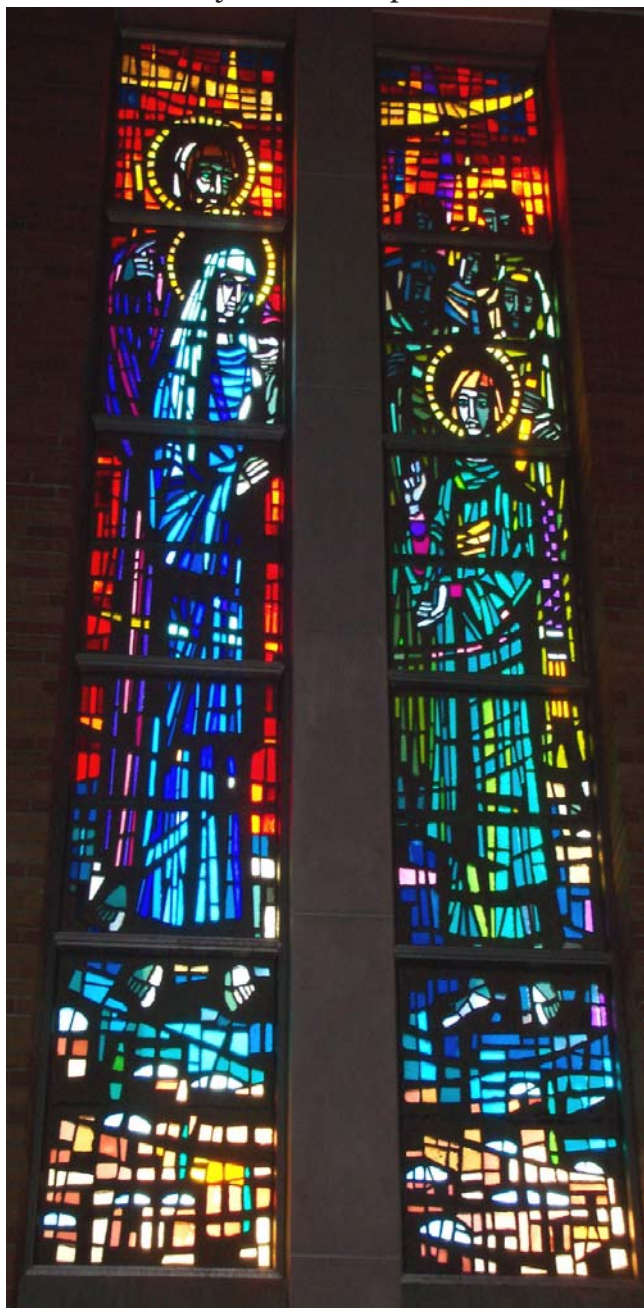
With that thought in mind he deliberately chose the events in the life of the Holy Family. However, to constantly remind us of our patron, he chose for his subjects for the twelve windows six of the most important stages in the life of St. Joseph.

Here, in the startling intensity of colors, he depicts the Marriage of Joseph and Mary, the Nativity of Jesus, the Presentation of the Child in the Temple, the Flight into Egypt, their life in Nazareth, and, finally, Jesus Among the Doctors.

So, as we gaze once again at these windows, let us renew our devotion and gratitude to Joseph, that strong courageous man who listened to the Angelic messengers in marrying Mary; in finding a warm place for the birth of her Child, of protecting them from the madness of a King; who provided gifts at the Presentation in the Temple; who taught Jesus the wonder and the genius of woodworking and lessons of manhood, who accompanied Mary in sadness in the search for their missing son in Jerusalem and

shared in their joyful reunion; who died in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

Let us remember in our prayers to St. Joseph in this his month, this artist from New York who has shown us in his creation of shining glass windows the essence of the Holy Family. Now, 44 years later, may we find anew in them peace and an increase of faith in this Holy Trinity, the foundation of our Community of St. Joseph.



The Holy Family Window

Pastoral Ministry embraces 'dear neighbor'

Paula Misitano, ssj

In our Constitution, we write... "In the following of Christ, we dedicate ourselves to the service of the neighbor...." For the group of women who designate Pastoral Ministry as their primary ministry, this phrase is practiced daily.

Their years in the ministry extend from four years to 25 years. Their geographic boundaries know no limit as they can be found from Vermont to Rhode Island, from the Berkshires to Attleboro, from Mont Marie to Africa. They serve on committees, on Diocesan boards and parish teams. They work with co-ministers in Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens, and help coordinate volunteers who serve God's people.

As varied as the daily work their ministry encompasses, these women minister to the sick, journey with families in times of sorrow and times of joy, prepare and conduct prayer services, coordinate parish activities, lead sacramental instruction and preparation, and participate in parish life through a variety of services.

Like our early Sisters, pastoral ministers "go out" to the neighbor through a home or hospital visit, through their presence at wakes and funerals, through visits to families in times of need, and through their presence in bringing the Eucharist, especially to the elderly. Many ministers are former teachers and some continue to formally teach in Religious Education programs and informally through their presence.

What brought these women to embrace this ministry? In their words, they replied... "having a concern for the elderly and the aging process..., keeping involved with people's needs..., being a supportive presence and walking with people as they journey home to God..., interacting with people at significant times in their lives..., ministering in a hands-on ministry to others.."

In ministering daily to others, the Pastoral Ministers also find themselves being ministered to as they cited significant blessings they received. Their responses noted...

"the joy of having someone return to the Church after several years away..., sharing in a sacred trust where people share very intimate parts of their lives..., being the recipient of the wit and wisdom, faith and fortitude of our elders..., greeting people at the Church door and affirming their membership and presence..., experiencing the comfort and gratitude of the elderly when I have the pleasure and privilege of bringing the Eucharist to them..., the one-on-one sacred encounters where the elders teach me that 'in life, the sun setting is no less beautiful than the sun rising'."

In their work, no duty they perform is considered "extraordinary." Responding to the needs of the "dear neighbor" through their chosen ministry leads them down many avenues, wearing many hats. They are listeners and counselors, teachers and learners. A single day might encompass walking with people who grieve and rejoicing with people who celebrate.

Their hours in a hospital may first bring them to the bedside of a cancer patient and later on to the side of a mother and her newborn child. They are a support to those in need and draw their support from those to whom they minister. They can walk the halls of a nursing home and become a part of the dying process of a resident and prayer partners with the family.

Whether they labor in a parish, nursing facility, retirement community, or medical center, our community parish ministers represent all of us as they minister in a variety of ways, to a variety of people, sharing a variety of gifts. For all these women who bear the title Pastoral Minister, but are so much more, we are grateful.

It should be noted that the material for this article comes directly from a number of parish ministers responding to specific questions. Citing by name all those who responded and contributed to the article would be impossible and run the risk of overlooking someone. However, the material is taken from their responses, the quotes their words.



**SEED Focus
2006**

**Sustainability
in Daily Living**

SEED looks at practical actions of daily life

Cathy Coyne, ssj

“Sustainability in Daily Living” will be the focus for the SEED Committee in the upcoming year. We have composed the following statement to connect our community mission with a sustainable lifestyle.

The root of our commitment to live sustainably grows from our charism “that all may be one” as well as our commitment to work toward a world of peace grounded in justice. By living sustainably we walk gently on Earth and commit ourselves to be in right relationship with self, others and all of creation.



Our focus board, which is displayed in the front foyer for a few weeks, illustrates the interconnected relationship with the beauty of the Mont, the natural elements and quotes from various sources. One example of this correlation is:

Air: Enclosed Courtyards, Grounds, Jubilee Porch

“In you we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17: 28

During the course of this year we hope to further develop the idea of sustainability and our daily life. More practical actions to build upon a sustainable way of living will be bought out in future *Mission* articles and displays.

Budget process calls for responses for poor

Roberta Mulcahy, ssj

Last month this column suggested the “how to” of writing a letter to our representatives in Government. This month Bread for the World and many other justice organizations give us ample material for such letters.

The President’s proposed national budget for 2007 falls far short of promises made last year to the world’s poorest people. *\$5 billion increase in assistance programs is needed for long-term poverty reduction.* In a Guide to the Federal Budget Process five steps are outlined:

Step 1. The President proposes a budget (The first Monday of February)

Step 2. Congress passes a budget resolution (March-May)

Step 3. Appropriations Committees

Propose Annual Funding levels (April-September)

Step 4. The House and the Senate each pass their appropriations bills (Summer-Fall)

Step 5. Congress approves all appropriations bills (Fall)

Each step of this process involves many negotiations, lobbying tactics and changes. At every step of the process we and other constituents can make a difference. If you would like an extra and pertinent point for your letters, e-mails and calls, please mention our government’s commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and the need to fulfill that commitment to the global community.

Let us urge our members of Congress to make the crisis of hunger, poverty and disease a priority in budget decisions!

What do all these letters mean?

Roberta Mulcahy, ssj

What do these Acronyms mean?

Last week an e-mail from one of our sisters posed a question about ways to make Socially Responsible Investment choices for an organization where she acts as Executive Director.

In researching her question some principles we use in our own SRI work were found. This research suggested that even a familiarity with this work doesn’t guarantee an immediate recall of terms! The purpose of this article is to bring a few acronyms used in SRI work to “life” by mentioning some of the principles and codes of conduct that are part of our financial policy and philosophy.

The USCCB Investments principles are the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops guidelines for investing responsibly for all life issues.

The CERES principle is the Coalition of Environmentally Responsible Economics. This is a code of conduct guiding corporations

toward greater responsibility on environmental performance.

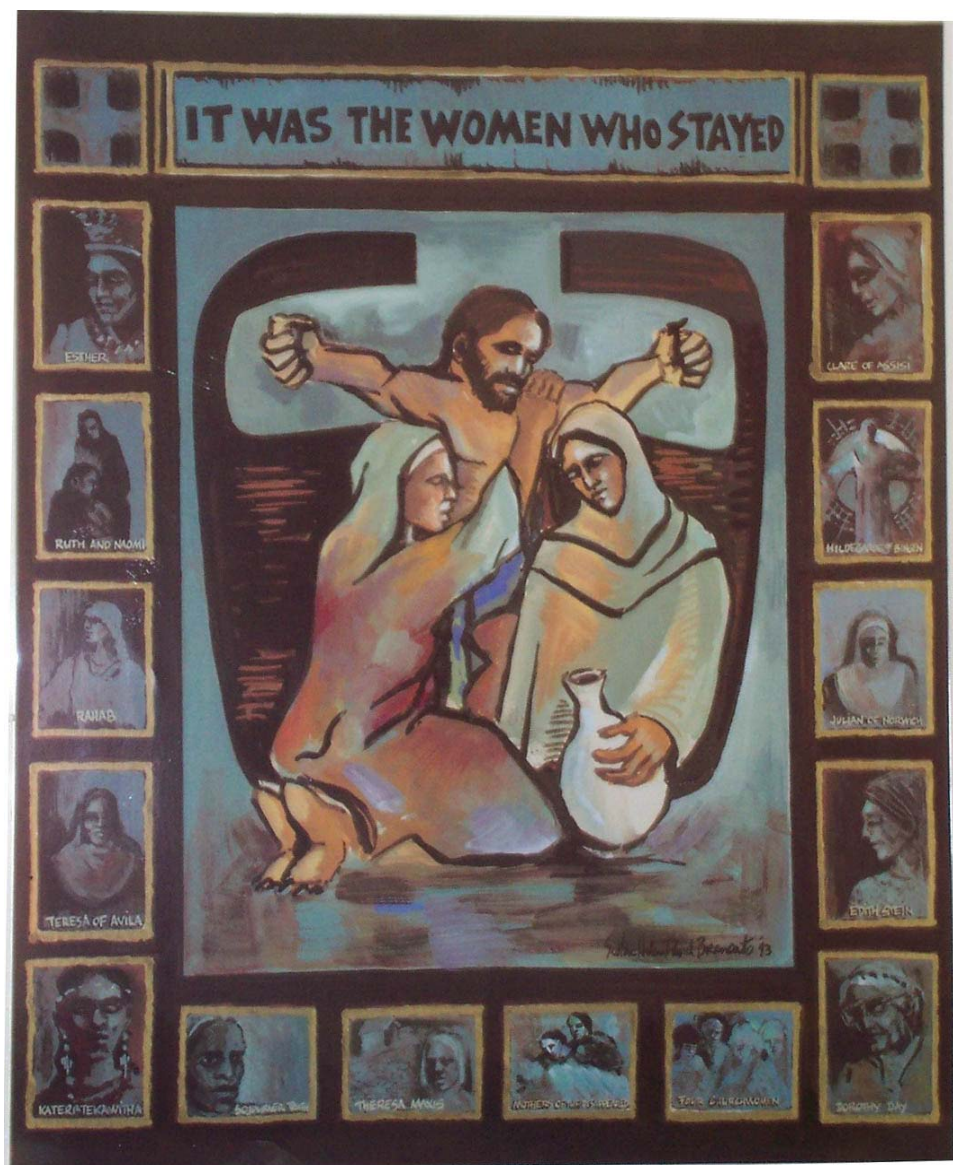
The GCR principle is the Global Corporate Responsibility benchmark for measuring business performance. The long-term goal of this document is to transform the way corporations relate to people, communities and the environment.

The SA8000 principle is the Social Accountability initiative that addresses child labor, compensation, discrimination and all other aspects of workers’ rights.

The MSC principle is the Maquiladora Standards of Conduct for Mexico and Central America. This code addresses the exploitation of workers in factories that assemble parts for U.S. companies.

There are many more principles and codes of conduct that help us in our concern for investing with a justice agenda both globally and locally. All of the above information may be further researched on the web.

Thanks, Jean, for inspiring the theme for this article!



About six years ago Sisters Eleanor Spring and Shirley Campbell attended a workshop for Sisters who are entrepreneurs. They purchased this poster created by Sr. Helen David Brancati '93 and hung it in the office at Weston.

Pictured as women who stayed are Esther, Ruth and Naomi, Rahab, Teresa of Avila, Kateri Tekawitha, Sojourner Truth, Teresa Maxis, Mothers of the Disappeared, Four Church Women, Dorothy Day, Edith Stein, Julian of Norwich, Hildegarde of Bingen, Clare of Assisi.

The picture haunted me so I continue to reflect ...

It was the women who stayed: A Lenten Reflection

These women stayed where all hope seemed gone. Where am I being called to be a woman who stays this Lenten Season?

All of creation reflects the glory of the Creator. The cries of all threatened life signal the violation of the Creator's beloved creation. How and where am I hearing the cry of the poor?

Eckhart Tolle notes, "The ultimate truth of who you are is not I am this or that, but that I am." Can I sense the I that I am at this present moment? Can I stay with this?

What seeds am I called to plant in this time of springing forth? How will I stay with them?

The closing sentence of the introduction to *Springtime of the Soul*, the Lenten booklet from the Sisters of St. Joseph of La Grange reads: "At the end of this Lenten season, may we experience a change from the ordinary and recognize the Risen Christ as spring bursts into full bloom and Easter happens again." Where do I need to stand to have this happen?

Ann Lynch, ssj