

SOCIETY OF HELPERS

VOICES of Hope



TAKING CARE OF GOD'S EARTH
BRINGING HOPE TO THE HUMAN JOURNEY

Vol VI Issue I

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Sr. Jean Kielty, SH

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

Theresa Casillas
Nora Gruenberg
Ramiro Hernandez II
James Jacobsen

CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Brune
Pat Carter
Teruko Onojima
Bretta Ribbing
Joellen Sbrissa, CSJ
Catherine Tighe, SH

EDITORIAL OFFICES

4721 J South Woodlawn Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60615
773.405.9884
www.helpers.org

INQUIRIES/COMMENTS

We are continually looking to improve our publication as well as for topics/themes suggestions for future issues. We encourage you to forward any questions/comments or suggestions.
jeankielty@yahoo.com

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One community in which I lived had a small chapel with very large windows. Each morning, we would assemble at 6:45 for prayer, take our favorite seat and recite the morning office of the Church together.

The words of the psalms became familiar, and the seasonal liturgical themes were inspiring. Years later, we discovered that as we sat in the room and prayed, each of us had become attached to a tree just outside the room window -- indeed, each of us had her favorite tree that she kept watch over.

Each morning, in a subliminal way, we watched and prayed with our tree. We witnessed new life, fullness and growth, maturity and stripping as fall turned into winter. We watched the branches support the new snow and become encrusted in ice only to bear once again the buds of new life in spring. Our trees acted out, in a sturdier more sedate and silent way, the themes of our psalms as well as the ebb and flow of our own lives.

In this issue of "Voices," we ask you to look at your world, specifically your earth as a place deserving of your reverence, care, restraint and appreciation. We ask you to join us in holding as sacred the simple things we so take for granted such as water and vegetation. We ask you to become aware that you are in relationship to this earth and its resources in much the same way as each of us in that little chapel learned that we were bonded with our tree.

It is also coincidental that as I write about our earth and how connected we are to it, I also write in the context of the ebb and flow of our Helper life seasons. As a province of Helpers we have transitioned into a new leadership team so, yes, this is my last note in this space to you.

Indeed our whole Institute looks to new models of leadership in a world that desires greater reverence, deeper care, on-going restraint and significant appreciation for each of us. It's a moment of building a new future for us and we ask you to continue to accompany us as Angie Kolacinski, Jean Kielty and Alicia Gutierrez together invite us to build a strong community for the 21st century.



Scripture and the Psalms are filled with references to God in nature, God's glory, power and gentleness. Nature allows us to see God at work in our world through the rhythm of seasons, the growth and changes of nature. God is here with us in nature through the air we breathe and food we eat. God sustains, nourishes and loves us. This fundamental belief of God's abiding presence in the world around us is part of the reason why we chose to focus on the importance of environment in this issue.

Environment and sustainability are such important topics that they have become cultural buzzwords signaling an awareness of the impact of human activities upon our world. The environmental movement has taken its place on the forefront of international conversation, yet the question remains whether the human race evolving quickly enough to adapt to such rapid changes.

In this issue, we examine the theme of environment and sustainability through a spiritual lens. Our contributors offer a range of reflections, including memories of growing up in post-war Hiroshima, an allegorical tale, an examination of hard facts about finite nature of fresh water and the interconnected nature of us and the world in which we live.

We're pleased to offer an interview with the director of Camp Ondessonk, an organization in southern Illinois dedicated to teaching youth the values of environmental stewardship and spirituality, a look into musician and environmental activist Joyce Rouse's journey of educating listeners as *Earth Mama* and were given permission to reprint Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune's speech, "All In."

Changes have also been happening within our Province, including the transition to a Leadership Group and the launch of The Circle, a community resource for women located in Chicago's south side. Finally, in this issue you will find the continuation of Helpers History, picking up where we left off in California, along with a final farewell to our beloved Sister Stanislaus.

We recognize that this is a critical time, one that could be remembered as a turning point in community history. We have faith in the human spirit. We have faith that the best of humanity will come to make the positive changes needed to successfully adapt and thrive within our environment in ways that will sustain generations to come.





On January 19, 2014, Sister Mary Ellen Moore presided over the U.S. Province's transition from the traditional Provincial leadership into a team model headed by Sister Alicia Gutierrez, Sister Jean Kielty and Sister Angela Kolacinski.

"I feel very positive about the new leadership model," said Sister Mary Ellen, who served twice as the U.S. Provincial, from 1985 to 1995 and from 2008 to 2014. "I am glad we are changing in this direction. I believe most people in leadership do not possess all the qualities for the position. They need to count on others to fill in the blind spots, round out the expertise that is lacking in a certain area, bring in differing points of view thus enlarging and strengthening the leadership reality," she explained. "So I believe the team is a stronger model of leadership. It is not a perfect model, of course, it may have its weaknesses also, but at this time in our history, it is important to move toward a more inclusive and participative form of leadership especially in Church related institutions."

Sister Angela explains that the team leadership model had been under Province-wide discussion for thirty years. "Whereas religious life historically has depended on a unilateral, hierarchical structure, since I 'entered' we have been developing skills in participative, relational decision-making. My own Novice Director, and the Provincial Superiors whom I have known during these years, encouraged and supported me and us in this. I believe in recent years I brought to the table my pastoral experience working on a parish team that engaged those around us in recognizing our/their skills and working on a vision to carry out a mission together."

The new model was created by researching academic treatments on leadership, reviewing documents of Vatican II, and studying other provinces who have adopted the leadership group framework in order to calibrate a plan that best suited the needs of the entire Province. Sister Jean explained that the new leadership structure enables the Leadership Group to maintain their ministries full-time while encouraging a collaborative approach. "We want to delegate leadership opportunities so that there is a balance in how we share the responsibilities," she said.

"This is exciting," Sister Licha said of the transition. "The leadership team's first goal is to take the vision and mission of the new structure and make it come alive. We have to take our time to make changes that really last. And it doesn't depend only on us," she said of the necessity to have the entire Province's support in decision-making processes. "It changes the whole mentality."

Sister Jean echoed that sentiment, expressing her vision for the leadership as, "How can we effectively respond to the U.S. Province and to the world around us? I envision that we will be able to collaborate and listen and be open and trusting one another so we can better serve the province."

"I'm a pretty practical person, so I carry with me the confidence that we will learn what we need to learn and go on forward day by day," Sister Angela said. "In the next ten years, I hope the Helpers continue to find ways to support the growth of our mission in the world around us, whether this depends on vowed religious or not. Our suffering world has many challenges, and I find hope in joining with others who believe 'a new world is possible.'"



Mission: To accompany women on their journey by offering a welcoming and nurturing space with opportunities that support, encourage, and empower.

In 2012, the U.S. Province began the process of answering a call to establish a women's community center. Their goal was to create a place to provide resources, support and programming to a population of women "over-burdened with responsibilities and marginalized by institutionalized discrimination and abuse." What began as a response to a calling has become a thriving resource center serving the women of Brighton Park on Chicago's south side.

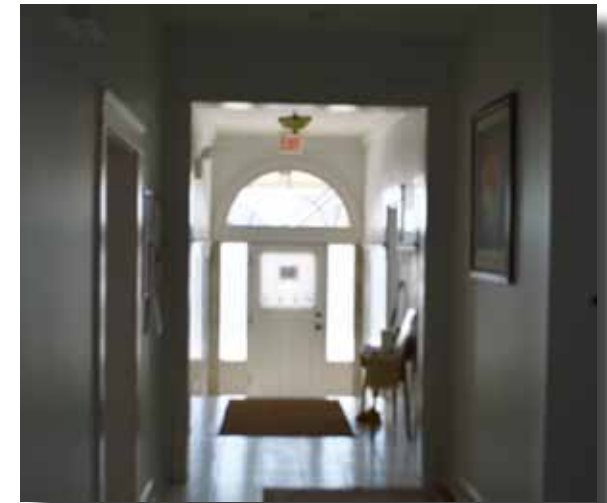
The Helpers chose Brighton Park because the majority of women living in this neighborhood are immigrants of low income, and there are few services available in the area. Director Sister Alicia Gutierrez opened The Circle to give a tour and explain how the Circle's services have impacted the women in the area.

"This building is over one-hundred years old. It was the rectory of St. Agnes Parish, a church that was demolished about 15 years ago. For some reason, they didn't demolish this building. It had been vacant for two years before we bought it. When we came to see it at first, it was run down," Sister Licha explained. "We came with two architects from Architects for Humanity who advised [us on] the space we needed to carry out our services. When they saw it, they said, 'Perfect.'" After the Helpers secured the property, comprehensive remodeling began. "It had to be gutted. New windows, new doors, you name it," she said.



The Helpers moved into the building in June 2013 and held their first open house on July 27th. "When we had the open house, there was just an overwhelming response. When the women came, they were asking, 'When are you going to open this place up? We are waiting for a place like this.'"

Due to the overwhelmingly positive response, Gutierrez and the Helpers worked quickly to immediately begin offering programs. "So I started making calls to my friends - always friends," she said with a smile. "I wanted to see if we could have Zumba maybe twice a month and I have a friend who knows about herbal plants, so we had her walk around the yard to identify the plants that are medicinal - that was one of our first activities. Then we got in touch with Sister Pat because she knows about healing touch. We had someone here for cupcake decorating...and that's how it started. The Circle has its own life. It doesn't depend on Sister Pat, or me or Sister Jean. It's the volunteers. It's the energy that moves the spirit that fills this place."



To the Helpers, The Circle allows them the honor of accompanying women on their journeys and helping them to face the challenges in their lives. Through respect and faith in their strength, their courage, their personal sacrifices and dreams, The Circle aspires to offer support, resources and a space where they become aware of the wisdom that comes from their own life experiences, helping them to recognize and value their inner strength. Building on their strengths, The Circle offers services that contribute to their growth and development in a holistic way: body, mind and spirit.



"When they come, they get a schedule," Sister Alicia said, handing out a paper schedule. "It's all Spanish-speaking women so that is why the schedule is in Spanish." She points out various programs, explaining, "I have a friend that is helping with the classes that has a social work

background. We are coming up with a class that helps [women understand themselves], because the women are busy dealing with their kids and their families and don't have time to focus on themselves. When they come out of these classes we hope that they are feeling stronger or better about themselves."

For more information about the Circle's programming,
write to:

the.circle.elcirculo@gmail.com

The Circle/el Círculo
of the Society of Helpers
A Community Resource Center for Women
2648 South Pershing Road
Chicago, Illinois 60632



Water for Life

by Joellen Sbrissa, CSJ



"As a symbol of the Spirit, water points to the bottomless wellspring of the source of life....Scripture is replete with instances where water symbolizes life," writes Theologian Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ. We read in Ezekiel, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you...and a new spirit I will put with you: and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ez 36:25-26). If water is life, what would you do if you did not have water every day to drink, cook, bathe or clean your clothes? What if you did not have this water for life?

Yes, water is indeed precious. Fresh water resources, including lakes and ponds, rivers and streams, reservoirs, wetlands and aquifers or groundwater, only constitute two percent of all the water on Earth. The water we have on earth has existed from the beginning of time and we cannot make more. It is a closed system – a constant quantity. For example, the Great Lakes ecosystem is the largest fresh water ecosystem in the world. The five lakes hold more than 20 percent of the world's surface fresh water, which comes from the glaciers that existed many millions of years ago. According to the Alliance for the Great Lakes, more than 40 million people live and work in the Great Lakes basin and they rely on the lakes for all their fresh water needs including commercial and private fishing, drinking water, cooking, bathing, etc. The U.S. Geological Survey reports that agribusiness is the main use of surface and ground water in the U.S., using about 70 percent of the available fresh water. Industry uses about 22 percent and municipalities and households account for about eight percent.

Can we allow this desecration of God's creation so that corporations can supply us with more fossil fuel to burn? An alternative that cares for the Earth would be to increase production of renewable energy such as wind energy and solar energy.

As corporations search for fossil fuel, they employ a practice called hydraulic fracturing or





fracking. This is a process of drilling sideways deep underground, then injecting fluid at high pressure to fracture shale, releasing gas or oil trapped within. This process uses millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals under great pressure, contaminating water with toxic chemicals, which cannot be removed. Fracking not only contaminates the water but also pollutes the air.

We may have heard in the past about oil pipelines bursting and leaking into rivers as in Alabama and Michigan. The Ogallala Aquifer is one of the

largest sources of fresh water in the world, stretching about 174,000 square miles across all portions of eight states, generally from north to south, including South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. If it is drained, it would take more than 6,000 years to refill naturally. More than 90 percent of the water drawn from the Ogallala Aquifer irrigates crops for agribusiness, but it also supplies drinking water for the area from Nebraska to Texas. The proposed Keystone Pipeline would go through portions of the aquifer, endangering the water in this area if there were ever a leak.

In *The Dream of the Earth*, Thomas Berry tells us:

To learn how to live graciously together would make us worthy of a unique, beautiful, blue planet that evolved in its present splendor over some billions of years, a planet that we should give over to our children with the assurance that this great community of the living will lavish upon them the care that it has bestowed so abundantly upon ourselves.

We now know that all of the universe is connected and unites all that is. We are part of the universe and it is part of us. How do we live this out? The Holy One is in all, in nature, the mountains, the desert, in you and me. We need to care for one another and our gifts of creation.

What you can do:

- Be grateful to our Creator for the gift of the universe and water.
- Be aware of your use of water and conserve.
- Call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to tell your legislators to tell them that you oppose fracking because of what the process is doing to water and the environment.
- Ask your legislators to oppose the Keystone Pipeline because it endangers the aquifer.

Joellen Sbrissa, CSJ, BM, MATM has held several roles in support of socially responsible causes and currently works with the Office of the Peace and Justice, La Grange Center: Social Responsible Investment shareholders advocacy for Congregation for St. Joseph. She is also active in the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, working on immigration issues with Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants, Archdiocese of Chicago, NETWORK, and USCCB Just for Immigrants, Illinois Women Religious Against Human Trafficking, and Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes.



Consequences of Overlooking Environment and Sustainability | by Teruko Onojima



Only 150 years ago, Japan was a country of agricultural people who grew rice, vegetables and other crops. As vegetarians, Japan's people were able maintain a stable supply and storage of food. The country's four-season climate very much contributed to the people's ability to sustain themselves. Environmentally, however, the severity of nature brought heavy rains and big typhoons each year.

And every 50 years, Japan experienced big earthquakes, tsunamis and heavy snows that destroyed everything, killing thousands of victims.

Despite all of that, a stable agricultural supply helped the population grow. In Japan, people try hard to live in harmony with nature. People saw the superpower called god in mountains, in seas and on earth, so people adored these natural places as sacred. During the harvest seasons, people celebrated the good harvests in form of festivals as an offer of thanksgiving to the gods of nature. People also adored the gods of animals that helped humankind as creatures beyond human beings. Animals, plants and human beings were equally respected as living things from the same creator and human beings were never considered superior to other creatures. The mentality that people should control nature did not exist.

With the onset of Japan's economic trade relationship with Western Europe came economic efficiency, which quickly changed Japan's value system. Rational thinking replaced the traditional balance with the protection of nature. Even though Japan's people continued to feel healed by nature, they destroyed it in exchange for their newly-learned economic efficiency. Before, they had lived in community under a common law that never allowed the exploitation of natural resources. They avoided reckless hunting, fishing and mining in order to protect nature for future generations. They took only what they needed and did so with a deep sense of gratitude in receiving the lives



of other creatures in order to subsist. Even now, before we eat meals, we say "Itadakimasu," meaning thanksgivings to the lives of food like animals, plants and fruits. I believe that the deep sense of gratitude to the lives of other living things is no longer.

In the past 150 years, after replacing of the worshipping the spirit of nature, we've exploited nature and became arrogant by trying to control it. The consequences of this destruction can be seen in the mountains and seas that suffer the same as people.



The earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011, showed us very clearly the arrogance of human beings. In Japan, big quakes and tsunamis surely come once in 50 to 60 years. But this time, we experienced the smallness of human beings before the reality of a natural disaster beyond our expectations. That was not all, however. There was also the man-made calamity that happened in Fukushima, which brought national awareness to the false claim that nuclear power plants were safe.

In Genesis, there is a story of creation where God says that He has created everything as His masterpiece. Every creature is very good and God leaves every creature to man and woman. Humankind is a manager to collaborate with God and all creatures are equal, so human beings cannot have special rights to use all the creatures for their selfish purposes. Human beings are given the mission to manage God's earth beyond time and space. Creatures are not only for the use of people in the present but also for future generations, for the people of rich and poor countries alike. We cannot hand over the earth full of nuclear waste to the people of the future. At this moment, we feel keenly that we have to live through this precious lesson from Fukushima by changing our understanding of a sustainable environment.

Sister Teruko Onojima was born in Taiwan during the Second World War. Her family moved to the City of Ashes, Hiroshima, six months after the atomic bomb. When one of her classmates, Sadako Sasaki, died of leukemia at 13 years old, the event left a deep impression regarding the violent, ever-lasting power of nuclear radiation. She lived with many "Hibakusha," victims of the atomic bomb and in solidarity with the people of Hiroshima, who built Peace City with the message of No More Hiroshima and No More War. She made her first vows with the Society of Helpers in 1970 and worked in the Philippines as a missionary for 10 years, both during the Marcos regime and after. She currently works at the Memorial Cathedral for World Peace in Hiroshima, where she has served as a member of the pastoral team for 21 years.

Love Your Neighbor as Your Very Self: The Body of the Christ

by Pat Carter



Last August, I was walking along Jackson Lake in the Great Tetons when I suddenly realized that every grain of sand, every rock, every bird, squirrel, piece of driftwood, flowering plant, as well as myself, had a story of its very own. This sacred story that began at that first flaring forth — the first, “Let there be...” spoken by the Divine that brought the cosmos into existence. While I might trace my existence to the first moment when I was conceived, the reality is that every atom of my body can be traced back to that first creative act. I am stardust. The atoms in my body were once part of seas, air, water, trees, rocks, insects, birds, mammals, other humans. Every time I take a breath, I am interacting with the cosmos breathing in the molecules of air and breathing out other molecules.

But, this is not simply a physical connection — a recycling of atoms. There is a divine energy that permeates the cosmos. The Genesis story of creation tells us that everything created is a result of God’s creative energy. The Word becomes enfleshed from that first flaring forth and so each particle carries within it a Spark of the Divine — Love. We are not only connected to the cosmos by matter but also by love energy. Some call this the Body of the Christ.

John’s Gospel tells us, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was

with God, and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being.” (John 1: 1-3 Common English Bible Translation) In these lines John reiterates Jesus’ message that we are one with the Divine



One. That Incarnation, the enfleshment of the Word, began at the beginning of the cosmos. This realization causes a paradigm shift in our thinking. It moves from dualities of sacred-profane, spiritual-material to an awareness of all as sacred and that the spiritual and material realms are simply different expressions of the One.

In his 1973 article, “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement” (Inquiry 16: 95-100), Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess coined the phrase “deep ecology.” For example, judgments on whether an animal has an eternal soul, whether it uses reason or whether it has consciousness have all been used to justify the ranking of the human animal as superior to other animals.”

*In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.*

From the spiritual perspective, deep ecology tells us that the human species is a part of the Earth, not separate from it, and as such human existence is dependent on the diverse organisms within the natural world each playing a unique and sacred role in the natural economy of the biosphere. Instead of seeing human life as the apex of creation, it calls us to recognize that human existence is made possible and sustained by the harmonious balance of interdependent relationships between these non-human organisms. In the words of Chief Seattle, “In his letter to Franklin Pierce, Chief Seattle of the Suwamish tribe states, “Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it.”

Chief Seattle’s words reflect the world view of many indigenous peoples. These cultures which have continued to live close to the Earth tend to more easily see the interconnectedness and oneness of the Cosmos. They live in and honor the presence of the Great Spirit in each one. They understand that the more we expand our sense of self to identify with “others” (people, animals, ecosystems), the more we realize our true selves.

Vandana Shiva, an Indian environmental activist and author states, “The

food that we eat, the food that nourishes us, is a gift from the earth, from the sun, from the millions of years of evolution.... When we forget the earth from where we receive our food, food becomes non-sustainable. Food is life. Food is not just our vital need: it



is the web of life." The truth of these words can be seen in the U.S. food industry where food is a commodity in which profit rather than sustainability and care for the earth is the motivating force.

As we begin to make this shift from an anthropomorphic world view to an ecocentric one, Jesus' words take on a different meaning. "The most important [commandment] is Israel, listen! Our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, You will love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31 Common English Bible)

"Loving your neighbor as yourself" has often been interpreted as meaning that we should treat others as we would like to be treated. But, a more profound meaning would be to love others as if they were part of your very being — because they are. And, if our world view expands to include all the cosmos as our neighbor, then this commandment takes on an entirely new significance. It changes how we look at every being and our very selves. We are drawn more deeply into the realization that all is part of the Body of the Christ, from the first flaring forth into the promised fulfillment. We realize that this Body of the Christ is an evolutionary process in which we are all participants. There are no bystanders. Even to do nothing is a participation because it affects the whole.

It also changes our understanding of the Passion of the Christ. No longer is this a single event that happened 2000 years ago. It is a part of today's reality

that we are reminded of every time we watch the news. Sufi mystic, Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, is quoted as saying, "The world is part of our own self, and we are part of its suffering wholeness. Until we go to the root of our image of separateness, there can be no healing."

So our daily call is to enter more deeply into this reality of our Oneness and make daily choices animated by love-energy. "Love alone is capable of uniting living beings in such a way as to complete and fulfill them, for it alone takes them and joins them by what is deepest in themselves." Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Patricia (Pat) Carter resides in St. Louis where she serves as a part-time Pastoral Associate at St. Cronan's Parish and part-time Communications Associate for the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. Through her participation in Christian Life Community and the Bridges (19th Annotation) Program she is rooted in Ignatian Spirituality. She is a spiritual director, and has given retreats, talks and workshops mainly focusing on the Spiritual Exercises through the lens of the new cosmology.



Camp Ondessonk



Camping and the outdoors have been a part of my life since before I could remember. While growing up, some of the greatest memories I have are from when I was on some journey through the woods, either to find that perfect camping spot or just taking a hike through a nature preserve. Every summer was filled with these fun excursions. Naturally, when I was old enough to go off to camp for a week, I couldn't wait!

One summer, a counselor came to our school from a Catholic camp to talk about their summer program. My sister — being two years older than I am — had attended this camp and told me about all the wonders of this awesome place. From crawling through muddy caves to camp staples like archery, riflery and even tying knots (I thought I was a pretty good knot tier at the time). When it was my turn to go I was ready.

The Camp was called Ondessonk and it lived up to the adventures my sister had put into my head. With a huge old bridge that spans across a lake, cabins up in trees, giant rocks, caves, and gullies formed thousands of years ago - Camp Ondessonk had

plenty to satiate my curiosity of the great outdoors. Even though I'm too old to be a camper, I still go down and visit Ondessonk as often as I can. During my last visit, I spoke with Executive Director Dan King, who had been one of my counselors. To see him as the director, I knew that the camp was in good hands.

Dan started as a camper in 1981, joined the staff in 1987 and worked every summer until 1994. After a brief hiatus, he came back and is now Camp Executive Director. I wanted to talk about the future of Ondessonk and the things in place that will further the spirit of the Camp experience. Here is the conversation we had on New Year's Day morning, 2014.

James: Can you tell me about what Ondessonk has been doing to preserve the spirit of Camp and its campers for the future?

Dan: Ondessonk takes pride in the way it creates an environmental ethic in the kids and adults it serves. We find that going back to basics we



by James Jacobsen

start to appreciate what we have. Ondessonk is pretty rustic in the way that there is no running water in every room of the housecabins and no electronic devices distracting us. By having this land open to the campers, we are letting them establish their own little meaning of environmental ethic in a natural and spontaneous way.

James: I understand that there is a counselor training program in place?

Dan: Yes, it is set up for the campers that want to further their camp experience by becoming CIT's (counselors in training). At 15 years of age you kids have the opportunity to get away from the fast pace of home life for the two or three weeks of the summer and to learn skills that they can use for life use for the rest of their lives. In terms of encouraging an environmental ethic, one of my favorite things about this program is a component that allows each CIT to establish his or her own personal place in the forest. Ondessonk. During the summer each session we schedule numerous times for each



CIT to return to their special place we allow a window of time for the CIT to go explore the camp and find a place that is theirs to connect with campGod's creation.

James: What is in place now that helps with environmental sustainability?

Dan: Everyday things are in place such as recycling of metals, paper, and plastic. We try to get the kids involved by quietly being setting an examples. You see a piece of trash you pick it up. The kids do that because they see our staff do that.

James: There is something going on right now in this region that has been causing a stir lately. It is the implementation of fracking. (The process of drilling deep into the earth to inject highly pressurized water to fracture the shale rock to release natural gas inside.)

Dan: It has been kind of a hot button topic that has the potential to greatly impact our local areas and affects how we get natural energy. We understand the nation's need to find ways to meet consumer demand, but

the possibility of adversely impacting the environmental quality of this area with this type of land use hits close to home. We need our natural resources and our natural gas. At this point we are trying to stay informed about the topic. but in no way are advocating for or acting against it.

James: What is a possible side effect of this process?

Dan: One of the issues most concerning to us is the potential for this particular type of energy extraction to threaten the local water supplies. They may be affected by these practices. Our view is that our community should be very, very cautious in allowing that sort of land use. Like many landowners in this area, we need to be apolitical as possible. We were approached by companies interested in securing drilling leases. We declined. Some of our neighbors declined as well. Some, however, exercised their rights as landowners and have chosen to sign leases. Because this is such a polarizing issue, and for other reasons, Camp Ondessonk, as an organization, has maintained a neutral stance in public forums. In a sense, however, Camp Ondessonk has played a large role in fracking resistance efforts. What I find comforting is, if you go to local events that have been organized, so many



of the people there that are standing up to this intrusion have ties to Camp Ondessonk. They are campers that have grown into adults and have an appreciation for the area that they learned while attending camp.

James: It sure is a good example of how Ondessonk has instilled an environmental ethic in the campers that they use to this day, in and outside of camp life. Thank You!

I am so grateful for the many memories and life lessons that have come from my weeks spent at that camp-lessons about the preservation of not only the environment but also the preservation of myself and the spirituality that comes with it. I wouldn't be the person I am today without Camp Ondessonk.

Visit Camp Ondessonk
www.ondessonk.com.

HEEPWAH!

The Earth and Everything on It

by Catherine Tighe, SH

The earth and everything on it – the world and all who live in it – belong to our God.

(Ps. 24)



Some years ago, there was a children's song written by James Thiem, the words of which I have forgotten, except for one line which comes back to me frequently, "Take care to wonder at the world through which you wander." This world that God has given us is so magnificent, so spectacular, the marvel is that we are not in a constant state of awe.

God, who is indeed the proprietor of the universe, has chosen to share that ownership with us humans. Our mandate to take responsibility for the care of the earth puts us in a unique position of being in a partnership with God. So, it is important to ask ourselves, what kind of partner am I? Am I caring for the planet as God would expect? What am I doing to ensure those who come after me will have the resources they need?

We are witnessing tremendous changes in our climate, which scientists tell us will only increase unless we make some necessary modifications in our lifestyle. Yet, we continue to pollute the air, the water, and the earth with chemicals and the never ending quest for oil. Most of us are not in a position to control what our government or large corporations decide to appropriate and exploit for various reasons. But, it becomes a moral issue when little or no consideration is given to the future or to its effect on people's well-being when destructive practices are used for the sake of profits.

It is difficult to know how we can influence the changes that must be made. Since each of us has been entrusted with the care of God's work, we can take responsibility in our little corner of the world by the manner in which we live, including our use of material goods, by recycling and making our carbon footprint as small as possible. It is essential to keep ourselves updated on what is happening. In particular, we need to be aware that it is the poorest areas, where the people are most vulnerable, that are in the most danger.

Born in New Jersey, Sister Catherine Tighe entered the Helpers in 1955. She lived and worked most of her life in the midwest, working primarily in parish ministry until the last number of years when she worked with senior sisters. Sister Catherine is very concerned with our changing climate and would like to see more emphasis on the consequences of the warming earth and how it will effect all life, not just human.

Advance in Age

by Bretta Ribbing



Advancing in age, the woman often thanked her creator for length of days and generous graces upon Planet Earth. If her life's journey had been this grand, what glory awaited her eternal destination? While pondering the question, a remarkable experience transported her...

She envisioned what seemed to be the hour of her death. Perhaps a dream? A premonition? Father-God received her with a loving embrace and gestured for her to sit.

"Do you cherish Mother Earth?"

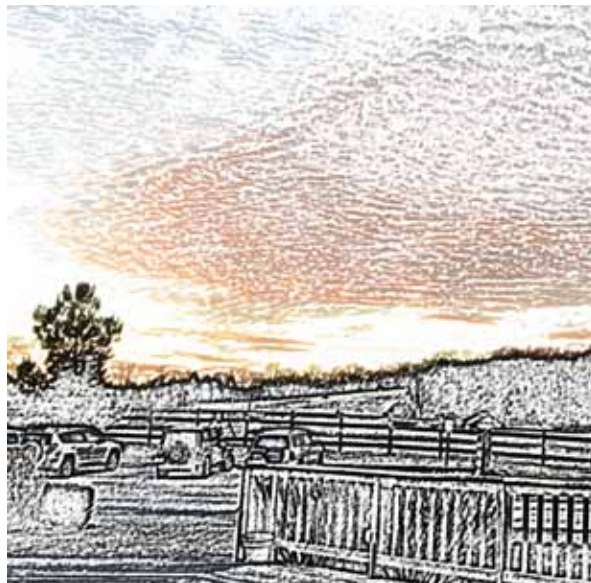
While thinking it a curious first question, she nonetheless answered affirmatively, strongly urged to sing a favorite anthem depicting beautiful spacious skies, amber waves of grain, purple mountain majesties across fruited plains—all crowned with brotherhood, sea to shining sea. Yes, she was a daughter of America's heartland wherein she had lived fourscore plus one-half more years of four seasons. In them, she had found the glory of God, the very cycle of life unfolded. Beautiful Earth to which Father-God had sent His beloved son to be one of us, redeem us, and lead us homeward to heaven.

"Did you have a garden?"

The elder laughed to recall a childhood memory: converting her old sandbox into a garden box—planting seeds that produced a colorful mixed floral bed. "I experienced such joy, I cried. It was the first of many happy gardens."

"And did you plant trees?"

She described the bank of tall pine trees encircling her home. "All of them once balled Christmas trees. They gave home to birds, shelter to



critters, shade in summer, a wall to winter winds. I always find your presence in those pines, your voice in their soft sighing. Also several mighty oaks, what miracles from tiny acorns."

"You mentioned earth-joys. Tell me your earth-sorrows."

"Poverty. Starvation. Homelessness. Violence. Man's inhumanity to man. Wars with bombing, toxic poisons, ethnic cleansing, maiming, deaths. Forest fires due to man's carelessness. Landscapes destroyed by man's greed. Toxic pollution to air, land, waterways due to man's ignorance. Animal extinction due to man's disregard. Our freewill and poor choices harm planet and people."

"What will right these wrongs?" Father-God asked with concern.

"Education," the elder surmised, "with heart. If we learn from our mistakes and love, if we assume responsibility for our actions, we move toward earth stewardship. Many are the planet's mysteries yet to unfold. Answers will reward education and sensitive stewardship."

"Talk to me about your possessions," continued Father-God. *"Do you own them or do they own you? Do they benefit or burden Mother Earth?"*

The elder momentarily sat frozen, speechless, humbled—a personal problem pierced. "Father-God, many of us have an excess of worldly goods. They can own us and burden our pilgrim path to you. I don't need to own more, save more. I need to apply my saving tendencies toward saving Mother Earth!" Father-God applauded. Somewhere ringing sounds interrupted their exchange. "The phone? Who on earth---?"

Exactly! Now jarred to reality, she was not dead but very grounded on terra firma. The elder smiled after a brief phone conversation. It had been heaven sent she believed, giving her new purpose. The caller, principal of her parish





elementary school, extended an invitation. Preparations for annual Earth Day were formulating. Would she participate with other seniors in student dialogues regarding love for Mother Earth: responsible stewardship, long-life lessons through earth living, preservation, rewards, practical environmental tips? There would be classroom exchanges, and weather permitting,

nature walks to identify trees and plants. And garden boxes to seed.

The elder thanked Father-God for their one-on-one. She hoped to weave some of their session into Earth Day.

From elders to youngsters: bookend generations. She had observed them comfortable together: the elders seasoned by life; the youngsters treading with caution. She believed they could release the best in each other.

She anticipated a young voice requesting her secret to long life. It was a favorite question! "Daily doses of Vitamin N—you know, Vitamin Nature! Fresh air. Exercise. Seasonal sports. Love nature! Learn to identify its gifts. Visit zoos, parks, botanical gardens. Support them. Protect them. One day your grandchildren and theirs will thank you."

In the foyer of the elder's home hung a bucolic picture. Its calligraphy the sage insight of St. Hildegard of Bingen OSB (1078-1179): Glance at the sun. See the moon and stars. Gaze at the beauty of earth's greenings. Now think what delight God gives to humankind with all these things...all nature at our disposal. We are to work with it. For without it we cannot survive.

"I'll donate this to the school on Earth Day," promised the elder to herself, pleased with her inspiration, most pleased with the legacy of saintly advice to new generations. Slowly rereading the prophecy, she could only add--- "Amen."

Bretta Ribbing's affiliation with the Society of Helpers spans almost three score years beginning with high school and a summer school of Catholic Action, Chicago. Membership in the Order followed from 1957-1968. Now, she and her husband enjoy mutual retirement: Don from 45 years of teaching; Bretta from 36 years of nursing. Two sons and families on opposite coasts of America the Beautiful welcome their visits. The grandparents anticipate a trip eastward with the birth of a third grandchild in June 2014.

Michael Brune is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club. This article was adapted from a keynote address that he gave in October at the Power Shift conference in Pittsburgh. Sister Dolores Blahaus read it in Sierra Magazine and thought the piece would be a natural fit for this issue of Voices of Hope. Our editorial team agreed, and with Sierra Club's permission, we are pleased to present it to our readers

Lately I've been asking people, "Do you think we'll be able to cut carbon emissions enough over the next couple of decades to stop runaway climate change?" A lot of them say no. I don't agree with them, but I understand why they feel that way. When it comes to the climate, there's plenty of reason to be consumed by doubt and fear and resignation. The more you open your eyes to what's going on, the harder it is to have faith in humanity's ability to respond to this crisis. Almost every day, we hear more news from more scientists about the dark and depressing reality of climate change. And the near future is going to be even more depressing—we're going to be

confronted by more and more evidence that the climate is destabilizing at a scale and a pace that we're not prepared for.

On top of that, we're seeing weekly real-world manifestations of climate disruption: fires and droughts and storms and rising seas. And when you add on Congress's basic ineptitude and dysfunction and our society's inability to have a rational discourse, it almost makes you want to head for the hills. Go buy some guns. Dig a moat around your house. Learn how to throw knives long distances and make squirrel dinners.

At the same time, we're creating a different kind of tipping point where hope about climate change



*If we
commit to it,
America's electrical
grid will be free
of fossil fuels
by the year 2030.
That's only
16 years away
and it's a fix
that will
last forever.
But first
we have to
kill off
some zombies.*

is no longer merely faith-based. Because everywhere I turn, I also see that there are legitimate reasons for optimism—cautious, informed, guarded optimism—about our ability to meet this challenge.

The signs are worldwide. You look overseas and see that Denmark now gets more than 25 percent of its electricity from wind; by the end of this decade, it plans to be at 50 percent. Portugal is already over 50 percent. Here in the States, Iowans now get one-fourth of their electricity from wind. California is pushing to get at least a third of its electricity from renewables by 2020, and most people think it will be closer to 40 percent. Nationwide, wind turbines have an electricity generating capacity equivalent to 60 large nuclear reactors. So this is not hippy talk anymore. This is not just a farm in Mendocino that happens to be off the grid. These are large countries and big states getting huge percentages of their power from clean energy sources.

And here's where the tipping point happens: As the clean energy marketplace expands, prices continue to plummet. When it comes to the cost of power, renewable energy sources are going head-to-head with fossil fuels. The cost of wind energy fell tenfold between 1980 and 2000, and the price of a solar panel has dropped by more than 80 percent in five years. In sunny places like California and New Mexico, the cost of solar power is already competitive with that of fossil fuels, and it's expected to be cheaper nationwide by 2020. In Colorado, executives at Xcel Energy, which delivers power to about two-thirds of the population, plan to triple the amount of solar that's coming on line. And when they talk about why, their quotes are remarkable. They're not saying, "We're doing this because of environmental or litigious reasons." They're saying, "We're doing it because it's cost-effective and

economical.

All of this is just as self-reinforcing and self-replicating as climate destabilization. And it will only accelerate.

So we're in the middle of a collision between good news and bad. Clean energy growth is irrefutable. Sadly, so is the reality of extreme weather brought on by a destabilizing climate. However, most media coverage of climate and energy issues accentuates the negative, accurately reporting the tragic manifestations while also emphasizing climate denialism. This, in turn, creates a pessimism that's contagious and debilitating. It suppresses our enthusiasm, stifles our imagination, and limits our ability as individuals, as institutions, as a society, to think of big ideas—to be confident, to be ambitious, to be passionate about solutions. We need an end to this kind of pessimism.

And we need to be very clear about what it is that we're fighting for: a 100 percent clean energy economy. Today, the Sierra Club needs to do for clean energy solutions what John Muir did for wilderness exploration and getting people into the outdoors. We need to bring our passion and our muscle and our intellect to bear and accelerate the clean energy rev-



olution; drive oil, gas, and coal companies off our priceless public lands; and secure a carbon-free power sector by 2030.

Sixteen years from now, every time you turn on a light or power up your computer, every bit of that electricity should come from carbon-free sources. Soon after that, solar and wind will displace nuclear as well, at which point we'll be getting 100 percent of our electricity from renewable sources. We should also be able to cut transportation oil use in half by 2030, and then cut it in half again a decade later. To be fair, this is the outside edge of what most engineers and energy experts believe is achievable, but it's also at the minimum edge of what scientists say is absolutely necessary to stabilize our planet.

So let's go all in. Let's act as voters, as citizens, as consumers, as investors, as neighbors, to push for a world powered by clean energy. Let's integrate this ambition into all aspects of our lives. Let's make sure that the solar panels on homes and churches don't just power an interconnected local grid but also power our cars and buses. Let's make sure that, as consumers and investors, we support those companies that are moving toward a 100 percent clean energy vision and punish those companies that are holding us back. And through crowd funding and other sources, let's put our money to work to accelerate the pace at which clean energy displaces fossil fuels.

Other generations have taken on great challenges. They've defeated fascism in Europe. They've put a man on the moon. But we have an opportunity to accomplish something even bigger. We could be the generation that finds a way for society to power itself sustainably and cleanly, forever. Let me repeat that: *forever*. We have an opportunity to create a prosperous society that forevermore gets all of its power from sources that are safe and secure and sustainable. What an amazing accomplishment, and it's actually within our grasp.

We can do this within the next generation. My one-year-old daughter will grow up during the era when we finally get rid of fuels that make us sick. By the time she's 19, she'll say, "You used to poison your water just to turn on your computer? You used to give people asthma and risk their lives just to make sure that your lightbulbs got lit?" It'll seem nuts to her. Just as it seems nuts now that there was ever a time when people who were different colors couldn't sit down and have lunch together, or when women weren't allowed to vote.

And all of this can happen with the technology that we have right now, in our lifetime, while we're here.

David Brower once said that in environmentalism there are no permanent victories; there are only permanent defeats. He was probably talking about Glen Canyon Dam, but



his point had wider implications, and he was mostly correct. When you convert an ancient forest into two-by-fours and toilet paper, that's a defeat that lasts forever—or at least for a really, really long time.

Brower is one of my heroes, but his idea of permanent defeat doesn't apply to clean energy. Because when the growth of cheap solar electricity shuts down a coal-fired power plant, it's the victory that's permanent. Once we put fossil fuels in our rear-view mirror, we are never going back. I'm never going to take the solar panels off my house. I'm never going to say, "I want a car that pollutes more."

And if Brower were alive, I'd tell him that once we genuinely get to a place where all of our energy is coming from renewable sources, we are going to not only displace oil, gas, coal, and nuclear but also take down those hydroelectric dams. Even Glen Canyon Dam will come down. In our lifetime.

But first we have to get over the fear that we're not up to the challenge. Sometimes we environmentalists embrace our underdog role too much. For too long, we've attached our identity to being outmatched by our opponents. We almost revel in the Koch brothers and ExxonMobil and this greedy shadow that they cast over America. People talk about

the coal companies and the gas companies as though they're invincible, but they're not. They're dangerous, they're reckless, and they're often criminal, but their influence is overblown. They're like zombies—they don't know they're already dead.

For every Koch brother, we've got a Tom Steyer or a Jeremy Grantham or a Michael Bloomberg—billionaires who stand beside us. For every dollar earned by Exxon, we have a consumer who cares about clean energy—conservatives, liberals, people in red states and blue states and rural areas and urban areas. We're more powerful than we think, we're more numerous than we think, and we're more successful than we think. We are already winning.

There's no question that the 21st-century economy will be dominated by clean energy. Every day, we take another bite out of the market share of both the coal and the gas industries. We have them on the defensive. They have no place in a society that has embraced clean energy. It's inevitable. The only question is: How quickly will we get there?

Healing Through Music

I've been an advocate for many progressive environmental stands and issues since my youth. I was spending a great deal of time on eco-activism and on music, but never realized that combining them might be possible. Prayer, meditation and long, honest conversations with myself led me down this path ... My belief is that God can heal anything. We live in a world very much in need of healing - people, families, habitats, faith communities, eco-systems, nations, the ozone layer... the list goes on.



Over the years, people have been moved to greater faith by music. People have used music to march into battle, to strive for equality, to be paid fair wages for their work - all kinds of music from classical to folk. I believe that songs can be powerful tools to nurture and encourage both action and a depth of understanding about important ideas. Every great social movement has marched to the strains of its own music. So yes, I believe that music is one possible vehicle for healing.

Science and medical studies have documented the power of learning via the affective domain of the brain, where new concepts and ideas are learned and remembered more deeply through the senses and emotion. There is a reason that most of us learned our ABCs by singing them - because they are more quickly and deeply learned with music! Music Therapy and its practitioners facilitate healing every day through music and song.

The Great Work

Our generation suffers from information overload. Because our brains are so full of technical knowledge and trivia, we have lost a great deal of practical Earth-basic knowledge, or Earth Literacy. Songs are melodies with a message attached - and they have a way of getting inside of



you and sticking. Only by relearning and respecting the critical basics of living in harmony with nature can we hope to continue the human race and live sustainably on the planet.

Songs such as "Only Take What You Need," "Tree Polka," "Less is More," "Travel Light" and "For Alex" are my way of sharing a bit of Earth Literacy with the world ... My songs carry a message and provoke a call to action. For too long, our society has ignored the problems in the environment which we have created. We've swept them under the rug. By singing about these issues, I'm removing the rug and letting people see what's there. For example, the song "Away" (from the CD Grass Roots!) makes the point that you can't really throw anything "away." Those Styrofoam peanuts and that nuclear waste will be there for thousands of years. That song was my translation of the First Law of Conservation of Energy and Matter into music.



Thomas Berry, writer, prophet and geologist, writes that we are certainly at the end of the Cenozoic era and we stand at a divide in the continuum of history. Our actions will determine whether we enter the Ecozoic era, in which we learn to live in harmony with the Earth, or the Technozoic era, in which we will depend on technology to solve all of our problems - with a dwindling supply of resources. He refers to our task as The Great Work. We all have a role to play in The Great Work - mine is to compose and sing, and REMIND people of our connection to the Earth! And I hope that many will join in the singing.

No Peace Without Justice

The First Law of Ecology is "It's all connected." I cannot be only working on air quality issues in Ohio, without considering the issue of water quality in China or the workplace health at the Maquiladoras in Mexico. It only takes a couple of steps examining nature's cycles and systems to make that connection. And we cannot scratch the surface of environmental destruction in this country without exposing massive examples of environmental racism and the need for eco-justice. It all stems from the same source. And there is really only one remedy - The Golden Rule: Do unto others!

...I am continually challenged to live more simply, and with greater ecological integrity, as I wrote and sang about in my song "Stuff" (from the CD Around The World). I have to remind myself that no one is doing this perfectly. No one in our culture is living the perfect ecologically sustainable life. But we can all do a little better each day to make this planet a healthier, safer place. Recycling everything you can is a great place to start.

Many people have a growing awareness but a sense of helplessness because the problem seems so big.

Individuals truly can make a difference. Through our actions we can develop a new Earthic - an ethic for the Earth - to overcome these problems. It is heartening and empowering for me to be able to work with organizations committed to Earth restoration. I see these springing up in almost every major faith community and in secular grass roots community organizations. There is powerful change happening and I feel blessed to be a tiny part of it.

Joyce Rouse is Earth Mama, a musician and environmental activist who began singing and writing songs as a child in rural Iowa. With a Masters of Arts in Earth Literacy and extensive music and theatrical training, she has traveled the country for over ten years, spreading the concepts of Earth connection and sustainability. Earth Mama's music is heard in over eighty countries on syndicated public radio programs, like My Green Earth, Every Living Thing, and Environmental Directions. Her original music has been used extensively by educators and by international and environmental and peace organizations, such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, UNESCO, and Earth Charter. Visit Earth Mama at www.earthmama.org.



Frederick Street

The desire for Sisters to experiment in living in small communities continued to grow in the Province and in 1972 four sisters formed a new "team" on Frederick Street in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. The purpose of this venture was not directly apostolic, but rather to experience a different style of community living. One sister was a full-time student at San Francisco State, another was working at a University of California hospital, a third worked full-time in the Office of Religious Education of the Archdiocese, and a fourth worked with the Hispanic community.

This was the "heyday" of the Haight-Ashbury. The sisters lived in a flat of a Victorian house and below them was a "commune," very popular in the Haight-Ashbury days. Across the street was a storefront Buddhist temple and the Helpers awoke each morning to the sound of drums and monks dancing in the parking lot. While each one had her own ministry, there was time for reflection and evaluation, and friends and acquaintances came to the apartment to share prayer and liturgy. The young people in the commune below were fascinated with the sisters living upstairs and invited them from time to time to come downstairs and share in philosophical discussions. The Vietnam war was going on and the sisters participated in the marches, protests, and organizing against the war. The time at Frederick Street had been a time of awakening, learning, evaluating, and growing. However, for different reasons, one sister after another had to move, and Frederick Street closed in 1974.





21st Street

It was a time of turmoil, a time of consciousness-raising, a time of organizing ... the mid-70s. Cesar Chavez led the country in the lettuce and grape boycotts; Filipinos were trying to overthrow Marcos; civil wars were going on in Central America; political prisoners in Chile had been granted amnesty and were arriving in the San Francisco Bay Area; the Vietnam War was over and the streets of San Francisco were filled with veterans--psychologically and physically wounded. Civil wars were going on in Central America. Elderly Filipinos were being evicted from the International Hotel in San Francisco. And, the Helpers all played their own little part in these movements: they worked on the boycott and "billboarded" every weekend with the United Farm Workers; they wrote letters for political prisoners in Chile to get their release; they spent a whole month being trained in nonviolence. One Sister was a social worker in the Resettlement Program for Vietnamese of Catholic Charities, and, when the time came for the eviction of the elderly Filipinos at the "I" Hotel in San Francisco, the Helpers were there while helicopters flew over head and fire ladders went up. Police peacefully rode in on horses waving their batons as they accompanied the elderly out of the hotel, making sure they remained unharmed.

The flat was a meeting place for many people, some more radical than others. The community was never sure who would drop in, and all were welcome. A lay woman joined the two Helpers living at the flat and became part of the extended community. The meetings of "Christians for Socialism," founded

in Chile, met at the flat. And when in town even the highly respected German theologian, Dorothee Sölle came to the meetings to join in the discussion. Two community members attended classes at the Liberation School in the Mission District where they learned to perform a type of social analysis they had never been taught in school.

Perhaps the greatest gifts of 21st Street were those of growth and maturity, of looking at the world with new eyes, and a more intense commitment to the work of peace with justice. From 1975 to 1979, 21st Street was a school like no other.

Holly Park

Between 1981 and 1987, different people made up the small Holly Park community, including a Jewish couple. The living situation at Holly Park provided deeper enrichment and widening perspectives. Sharing community with those of another culture and/or another faith became the occasion to learn about "dialogue" in a profound way.

During those years, a Helper went several times on delegations to Central America to learn about the plight of the people and the involvement of the United States in perpetuating the civil wars in Central America. These experiences led her to make a decision to go to El Salvador to accompany the people in time of war. The small community of Holly Park was closed in 1987.



"Somewhere over the Rainbow"



Shige Mizuno
Sister Stanislaus Mizuno

Born: March 1, 1924 in Osaka, Japan
Died: July 24, 2013 in Chicago, IL

The Bible holds up the rainbow as a sign of hope. In Osaka, Japan, 1924, God gave the world a girl who loved looking for rainbows. Born Shige Mizuno, she was a precocious child gifted as a musician, athlete, and artist. She loved to remember her mischievous antics avoiding her maid.

Searching marked her early years in school where she experimented with different religions, eventually counting four times being baptized. In 1943, she studied English at Sacred Heart Academy followed by English literature. Here in the shadow of Mt. Fuji, she found her home as a Catholic and received the lifelong friendship of her spiritual director, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ.

Responding to a call for religious life as a Helper, she chose the name Sr. Stanislas. Her journey then turned out to the world. She studied theology at Lumen Vitae in Belgium in 1962, and in 1964, she studied the French language at Institute Catholique. In 1977, she was called to Los Angeles to assist with

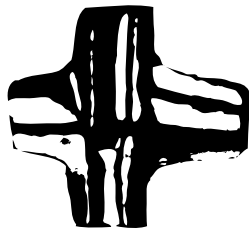
catechesis in the growing Japanese community. Then in 1980, she went to New York where she established her major ministry as a kindergarten Head Start teacher. Her work began in Chinatown and spread into the Hispanic and African-American communities. Amongst these little ones, her many talents were effective.

When she entered eternal life on July 24, 2013, an invitation was given to her friends in New York to celebrate Eucharist and a dinner together in memory of her goodness to us. Present were persons from eight different cultures who shared memories and laughter. On the following weekend, the Japanese community in Manhattan remembered her at Mass followed with refreshments.

Among her belongings the following poem was found:

*The world is a rainbow with many kinds of people
It takes all kinds of people to make the world go round
Now you be you and I'll be me
That's the way we were meant to be.
But the world is a melting cup
Just look what happens when we stir it up
It's such a sight to see
the world is beautiful when we live in harmony.*





Sr. Jean Kielty, SH
Society of Helpers
4721 J South Woodlawn Ave.
Chicago, IL 60615

