

Reflection  
Covenanting Day 2018  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace  
Eastern Region

Today we celebrate our on-going commitment to the associates vows and being a member of the CSJP Community.

We celebrate our founders and the fact that we were touched by their Spirit. For most of us, our connection to the community came from getting to know someone from the community. For some of us, this happened through a friendship, working at one of the CSJP's outreach programs, joining in a march for Peace, retreat, a prayer service, or working continually for those in need or to preserve our sacred environment. Putting life on the line working with immigrants. Whatever way, their spirit has touched us.

Let us at this time take one minute to honor those from the CSJP Community who are no longer with us. After 3 gongs on the bowl, and your own inner silence and focus, their faces, words, and actions will come forth. You can see yourself waving or embracing each one. At this time your silent thank You to them can be shared. The single gong will bring us back to the present moment.

As the life of Jesus is still with us, so are their lives, and their energy remains. If the universe is an undivided wholeness, the potentiality that is at work in the evolution of life is the cosmic potentiality. This is possible because living systems are endowed with an intelligence that allows them to be active in other domains: potentiality and actuality.

We direct our blessings on those who are renewing their vows and those who are saying yes for the first time. If we ever need each other and the new cosmology, it is today. Our Charism has always called us into personal action that comes from our call to PEACE. Together we can, as Thomas Berry would say, continue the great work!

The Zen Master and teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, tells us if we want peace, we must become peace ourselves. This seems an impossible request in today's political climate where each side refuses to listen. Last Sunday our own New Jersey newspaper, the Bergen Record, had an article stating the APA reported that politics edged out the usual causes of stress which were money, work, and the fear of another September 11th. This year the reports tell us 60% say "they believe the current time to be the lowest point in the U.S. history that they can remember." Mental help professionals are swamped with calls for assistance.

How can we as a community navigate these trouble-filled days?

A teacher once said "words are very important". It was suggested that at times, just by saying fewer words or changing a word in our vocabulary, we can change the course of our on-going dialogue with people who think differently than we do about an issue. This teaching became very important to me. May we, in the remaining days of Lent, allow the words "tolerance" and "perseverance" and "trust" to direct us by listening more and talking less. It is always our actions that speak more than our words. Changing our words to more meaningful ones can also assist us. The word perseverance does not mean rigid and fixed, but flowing like water, willing to meet the conditions at hand, yet never giving up. If we change the word hope to trust, we will be less disappointed, due to the fact that our energy will be in the present moment and not looking towards the future for answers. The

present moment is all we truly have. If we live the word Tolerant, we will be less defensive. If we live the word Perseverance, we will never give up.

The writer, Tracy Cochran, tells us “things happen all the time in this world that can make you feel as if the ground is giving way beneath your feet. Things that you think are solid and unchanging are not. The body that seemed so reliable, the relationship you thought would last for life, the narrative about your life you took to be reality, everything is subject to change.” What can we trust in such a world? It turns out we can trust our deeper wish to wake up and truly see just this moment and also watch our own actions and how we speak.

If we realize we are one, we will stand in the circle of life with our teacher, Jesus, embracing all creation. This includes those who have come before us. Their energy and faithfulness surround us.

As the Christian writer, L. R. Knost tells us: “Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.”

Shalom

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